

## **Trends in Barley and Wheat Eating Habits and Observed Changes in Saitama Prefecture : Questionnaires Used for the Emergency Survey on Folk Materials in Japan and the Distribution of Eating Habits in Saitama Prefecture**

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This study investigates current people's daily eating habits in Saitama Prefecture, based on the questionnaires used for the Emergency Survey on Folk Materials, a nationwide survey conducted by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. We also examine their eating habits during Japan's high economic growth period (from around 1955 to 1973) and the changes seen since then. The Saitama Prefectural Board of Education conducted the Saitama Prefecture Folk Cultural Property Distribution Survey from FY1977 to FY1978 based on the questionnaires used in the national survey, and completed questionnaires for 150 survey sites prefecture-wide. Based on the answers to these questionnaires, we analyzed people's dietary habits in Saitama Prefecture, which was one of the major barley and wheat production sites in Japan before World War II, from the perspective of staple foods, namely grain-based foods and noodles. From around 1912 to 1935, a mixture of barley and rice was a popular grain-based food in the prefecture. However, the composition of different grains varied according to region. The percentage of barley was higher than rice in areas where paddy rice cultivation was challenging, such as plateaus and mountainous areas. There were two types of noodles made from wheat flour. One requires prior boiling (e.g., udon noodles) to prepare them, and the other can be prepared without any prior boiling (e.g., okkirikomi noodles). At that time, noodles were ordinarily eaten in the central and northern parts of Saitama Prefecture, mainly at supper. However, on celebratory occasions, people ate noodles as a special meal throughout the prefecture. It was found that the people's habits of eating barley and wheat foods varied from region to region because for reasons that included the production status of barley and wheat, their milling efficiency, and the prevalence of noodle-eating habits in each region. Due to reduced production during Japan's high economic growth period, dietary habits that included barley and wheat products disappeared and there were fewer opportunities to serve them at home. On the other hand, noodles eaten on special occasions became more popular and remained as regional foods, since they could be rapidly prepared at restaurants and other dining facilities.

Key words: the questionnaires used for the Emergency Survey on Folk Materials, staple food, barley, grain-based food, noodle

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