A Study of the Migration and Cultural Transmission Activities of Ainu People in the Greater Tokyo Area: Wandering Days of Indigenous People

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This paper aims to reveal the idea of "mobility" ("wandering") beyond physical migration by analyzing the characteristics of cultural transmission activities of the Ainu people who migrated from their original habitats to the Greater Tokyo Area. A focus on wandering can enable us to overcome the dualism of settlement and migration and pave a path to the place of living with others.

Being in the lifeworld (Lebenswelt) of the "margin" (Sekine, 2009) or "hinterland" (Abe, 2007) means "mobility" ("wandering") that leads to a different understanding of identity and culture, regardless of whether it is physical migration or not. In terms of the relationship with mainstream society, wanderers only become passive, reconstructing the representations imposed by others. By doing it, wanderers can establish themselves as living things. In other words, it is a result of the identity they barely retain. This identity manifests itself in the unique face-to-face interaction with other people as an important factor of the "hinterland."

Based on the above recognition, this paper focuses on the efforts of people who lack the function of producing representations, unlike people in mainstream society, to explore their own ways of living by changing the representations imposed upon them to other forms. Exploring the human way of life (way of living a "wandering" life) forms the practices of people who are inseparably bound to the identity of "Ainu" even after physical migration.

The lifeworld in the context of Ainu’s cultural transmission activities has four characteristics: (1) consideration for individual ways of living; (2) sustainable face-to-face relationships; (3) self-solutions; and (4) direct transmission of culture from a flesh-and-blood person to another flesh-and-blood person through community life. In this lifeworld, driven by face-to-face relationships, people pass down culture along with its different understanding caused by the uniqueness of the relationships. Although they try to transmit a certain authenticity as it is, it ends up "wandering" because it is deeply involved in the lifeworld.

Key words: migration, wandering, lifeworld, cultural transmission, Ainu people