

【Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research(S)】

Integrated Science and Innovative Science (New multidisciplinary fields)



Title of Project : Historico-Ecological Studies of Afro-Eurasian Inner Dry Land Civilizations and Their Modern Changes from the Viewpoint of Pastoralism

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Research Area : New multidisciplinary fields

Keyword : Cross-regional comparative studies

【Purpose and Background of the Research】

The vast dry inner land ranging from Sahara to Mongolia through Middle East and Central Asia has played critically important roles for human history from the Neolithic revolution to the Middle Ages. This “Afro-Eurasian Inner Dry Land” was the historical heartland of the human movements and of material flows, exemplified by the “Four Great Ancient Civilizations” and great empires.

Earlier studies have pointed out that the irrigation system could afford huge number of population of City-States which had risen in this dry land area. But this study focuses on the pastoral culture and insists its importance in forming civilization.

Domestic animals are not only food resources but also goods for exchange and accumulation of wealth. Moreover, animal's skin and hair can be processed to expensive craft products. Big domestic animals such as camel or dromedary, horses and asses could be utilized as economical and politico-military means, which were necessary both to long distant trades and to wide range political domination. Without these animals, the inter-national trade network would not have developed in this area.

In the modern era that started from the Age of Geographical Discovery, the world had been reorganized by developing oceanic routes radiating from Europe. On the other hand, in the Afro-Eurasian Inner Dry Land, the trade net has declined and even been extinguished because this area were outside the reach of the oceanic routes. Now this area is recognized as the poorest part of the world.

This study aims to understand the history of mankind totally by considering Afro-Eurasian Inner Dry Land Civilization as one unit of pastoral culture complex, and by analyzing the man-domestic animal relationship multilaterally and in the full detail.

【Research Methods】

We classify the Afro-Eurasian Inner Dry Land Civilization into four types; (1) cool temperate meadow zone, (2) tropical desert zone, (3) tropical savanna zone, and (4) mountainous

oasis zone. The dominant ethnic group and the domestic animal corresponding to each type, respectively; (1) Mongolia, horse, (2) Arab, dromedary, (3) Furube, cattle, (4) Persian, sheep and goat.

Of each type, we will collect data and analyze from two dimensions: (1) scientific dimension of the weather, geography, and ecology, (2) cultural dimension with ethno-epistemology for animals and knowledge for pastoralism.

We investigate the system of pastoralism in each type from two orders: (1) technological order of livestock management and usage, (2) symbolic order of religion and cultural symbols.

We also analyze the relation between pastoralism and irrigation agriculture, fishing, trade, merchandise and craft. Because each type has original political system and religion, these subsistence forms connected with pastoralism must be analyzed to reach the level of politics, economy, and religion.

【Expected Research Achievements and Scientific Significance】

1. By clarifying the inner structure of Afro-Eurasian Inner Dry Land Civilizations, new frame work of the history can be presented.
2. The importance of domesticating animals through the human history, and the multi-dimensional relationship between animal and man can be revalued.
3. It is possible to contribute to solve the problems such as decline of horse and camel breeding, privatization of the land, desertification, and inter-ethnic dispute over resource, from which Afro-Eurasian Inner Dry Land countries have commonly suffered.

【Publications Relevant to the Project】

Shimada, Yoshihito 2005 “Basic structure of human life in dry area *Chikyuu-kannkyou* 10-1, pp3-16 (in Japanese)
Shimada, Yoshihito 1995 *Anthropology of pastoral Islamic nations*, Sekaishisousya (in Japanese)

【Term of Project】 FY2009-2013

【Budget Allocation】 153,900 Thousand Yen

【Homepage Address and Other Contact Information】

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