

Judaism's view of humankind: creation of a textual database on minorities and suggestions for modern society

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【Outline of survey】

The purpose of this research is to gather primary texts (in Hebrew, Aramaic, Judeo-Arabic, Yiddish etc.) related to the problem of minorities in Judaism without regard to era, region or genre, read them carefully, analyze them, translate them into Japanese and English, register them in a database, and open them broadly to the general public. Specifically, this research shall create a comprehensive database of various types of text — searchable in the source language, Japanese and English — addressing the theme of how various types of minorities are created within the Jewish community by the Torah, which is founded on views on the pure/impure, the sacred/profane, and the noble/humble, and how these minorities were the object of differentiation/discrimination. Furthermore, the structure of this sort of differentiation/discrimination within Judaism shall be compared with the structure of differentiation/discrimination suffered by the Jewish minority at the hands of the majority during the Diaspora. The ultimate objective is to understand the nature of the Jewish view of humankind which lies at the root of its view of minorities.

【Expected results】

This research shall obtain a comprehensive understanding of the theme of minorities in Judaism, which has not been rigorously studied in Japan nor abroad. This research may also enable the establishment of a more universal model of the minority problem and the structure of discrimination by comparing the manifest Jewish view of minorities with those of other religions and cultures. It is expected that by examining this model, we will deepen our understanding of the minority problem in contemporary society, and obtain clues for solving it.

【References by the principal investigator】

- Naoya KATSUMATA, *The Liturgical Poetry of Nehemiah Ben Shelomoh Ben Heiman HaNasi: A Critical Edition*, Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill Academic Publishers and Styx Publications, 2002
- Naoya KATSUMATA, *Hebrew Style in the Liturgical Poetry of Shmuel HaShlishi*, Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publishers and Styx Publications, 2003

【Term of project】 FY2008 — 2012

【Budget allocation】

81,400,000 yen (direct cost)

【Homepage address】 http://www.h.kyoto-u.ac.jp/staff/221_katsumata_n_0_j.html