

**Topic-Setting Program to Advance Cutting-Edge
Humanities and Social Sciences Research**

(Responding to Real Society)

Progress Report
(Summary of Final Report)

[A Study of Interconnectedness between Kombu Culture in Japan and Economic
Connections of the Places for Producing Kombu in Hokkaido]

Core-Researcher: Takayuki SAITO

Institution: Hokkaido Musashi Women's Junior College

Academic Unit: Department of Liberal Arts

Position: Lecturer

Research Period: FY 2015 – FY 2018

1. Basic information of research project

Research Area	Interrelationship between institutions, culture, public spirit, and socioeconomic systems
Project Title	A Study of Interconnectedness between Kombu Culture in Japan and Economic Connections of the Places for Producing Kombu in Hokkaido
Institution	Hokkaido Musashi Women's Junior College
Core-Researcher (Name, Academic Unit & Position)	Takayuki SAITO (Department of Liberal Arts, Lecturer)
Project Period	FY 2015 – FY 2018
Appropriations Plan (¥)	FY 2015 JPY 3,200,000
	FY 2016 JPY 2,750,000
	FY 2017 JPY 2,500,000
	FY 2018 JPY 2,620,000

2. Purpose of research

Kombu has played an important part in the wide array of traditional cultures in Japan for a long time. The interrelationship between Japan's traditional cultures and socioeconomic systems in the places where kombu is produced in Hokkaido can be characterized in the following manner: kombu forms an element in Japanese cultures and the places where it is produced in Hokkaido, but the self-regard stemming from this fact has provided spiritual support for the socioeconomic systems of kombu-producing sites in Hokkaido. However, only one direction of this dual consideration is prominent because of the unarticulated way that kombu supports Japanese cultures and the places where it is produced in Hokkaido or because the producers and the other residents in the places where kombu is produced who realize and take pride in kombu's fundamental nature are very few, resulting in that unarticulated way. For this reason, no interrelationships that will lead to economic development and sustainability or the revitalization of local communities can find traction.

Thus, this study strengthens the interconnectedness between kombu culture in Japan and the economic connections among the places where it is produced in Hokkaido and contributes to their economic development, sustainability, and revitalization. Moreover, this study indicates how development of education and educational policy beyond the borders of local governments can be extended by utilizing the results of this research and the holdings of the local museum.

3. Outline of research (Including study member)

The use of kombu has a regional diversity in its uses other than for food, particularly regarding ceremonial use in the congratulatory places (for example, the manner that it is

displayed in New Year' s decorations and the *kagami-mochi*), as seen in our previous investigation. This diversity exhibits some features that differ from the regional diversity found in the use of kombu in food, as described in “Studies on the Distribution of the Kelp Eating Habit in Japan” of Oishi (1987). Thus, there is a strong likelihood of finding a peculiar historical background to the distribution of the non-food uses of kombu. A study of this kind may lead to raising the social awareness of kombu in Hokkaido by clarifying the importance of the role that it plays in Japan' s traditional cultures.

To complete this research efficiently, first, a wide variety of literature was read on the use of kombu, and extensive field surveys were performed where it is produced in Hokkaido (such as Rishiri, Kushiro, Hakodate, Hidaka, and Rausu) and areas along the Japan Sea. In Hokkaido, the changes in the production, transportation, and trade of kombu, its use for food and for other purposes, and its role pertaining to the formation of local communities are gathered to provide an ethnography of life with kombu.

Second, all details of the relationship between Japan' s traditional cultures and kombu produced in Hokkaido are attempted to be grasped through creating a distribution map of the non-food purposes of kombu. Thus, the following research questions were pursued. How diverse are the non-food uses of kombu? How was this diversity generated? What influence did this diversity have on the formation of Japan' s traditional culture?

The research team were as follows:

Position	Name	Academic Unit & Position	Research Items
Core Researcher	Takayuki SAITO	Hokkaido Musashi Women' s Junior College, Department of Liberal Arts, Lecturer	Controller of research in charge of investigation in the areas of Rausu, Tohoku, and Hokuriku
Principal Investigator in Kinki and Sanin	Eizi NISHIYA	Rishiri Town Museum, ex-Curator	In charge of investigation in the areas of Rishiri, Kinki, and Sanin
Principal Investigator in Hokkaido and Tohoku	Yoshiyuki OKANIWA	Obihiro Ohtani Junior College, Department of Regional Liberal Arts, Professor	In charge of investigation in the areas of Tohoku and Hokuriku
Principal Investigator in Food Culture Research and Regional Community Innovation Research	Yorikazu YUSA	Sapporo International Junior College, Department of Integrated life Career, Associate Professor	In charge of investigation in food culture
Principal Investigator in Kyushu and Okinawa	Yoshito AIDA	Hokkaido Museum, Curator	In charge of investigation in the areas of Kyushu and Okinawa

	Satoshi ONODERA	Shinhidaka Town Museum, Curator	In charge of investigation in the areas of Hidaka and Tohoku, Hokuriku
	Hiroshi KURUMAZUKA	Akkeshi Town Museum, Curator	In charge of investigation in the areas of Kushiro, Nemuro, Tohoku, and Hokuriku
	Kyosuke OYA	Hakodate Municipal Board of Education, Cultural Properties Section, Curator	In charge of investigation in the areas of Oshima, Tohoku, Hokuriku, and Kyushu

4. Research results and outcomes produced

Due to this study, it was found that the non-food use of kombu in Japan had the following features:

From the Kinki region and to the east, although the use of kombu in New Year' s decorations and the kagami-mochi was found in the areas along the Japan Sea, in other areas, the use was only marginal. The further north the site was, the less kombu was used with mochi. There was no continuity, however, in the areas along the Japan Sea, since non-food purpose of kombu is almost never found in the northern parts of Fukui Prefecture, in the southern parts of Ishikawa Prefecture, in Niigata Prefecture, and so on. A separate kombu culture was found in northern Tohoku, along the Pacific.

Kombu was found in Obon decorations in Aomori Prefecture, Akita Prefecture, and Yamagata Prefecture (the Obon kombu cultural region). There are few spots like this in the entire country, and they may share a historical context. There is a high possibility that these features are expanding toward Fukushima Prefecture and the northern part of Kanto region.

The use of rolled kombu in New Year' s decorations was found in the northern part of Kyoto Prefecture and the Wakasa area of Fukui Prefecture (the Maki kombu cultural region). However, a difference in the manner of display is found: a bitter orange is left on the rolled kombu in Fukui Prefecture, and it is rolled in the kombu in Kyoto. Although such cases are few in numbers, they were nevertheless found again in northern Kyushu region and on the Noto Peninsula. It may be that this is expanding toward Hyogo Prefecture and Osaka Prefecture.

The Kinki region and to the west, following the westward sea routes (in kitamae-bune boats), in an expansion from northeast Japan to Osaka or Kagoshima, it was found that the use of kombu in New Year' s decorations and kagami-mochi showed a diversity in the areas along the coast of

the Seto Inland Sea and the western part of the Kyushu region.

Thus, this study indicated that there is significant regional diversity of the non-food use of kombu. In particular, it was found that the peculiar historical background and distribution of the use of kombu for non-food purposes differed from the regional diversity suggested by Oishi, that is, a region was found that used kombu in Obon decorations and another that used rolled kombu in New Year' s decorations. Moreover, it was found that there was a separate kombu culture exists in northern Tohoku, along the Pacific, and in areas along the coast of the Seto Inland Sea.

Using the results of this study, exhibitions were held at Hakodate Municipal Museum during the summer of 2018 to show the findings to the public.

This research will continue to pursue all details of the relationship between Japan' s traditional cultures and kombu in Hokkaido, in the following manner. A field survey will be performed along the coast of the Pacific in Tohoku and along the coast of the Seto Inland Sea, as well as other sites, expanding the survey area using the results so far. Additional investigation of the Maki kombu and Obon Kombu cultural regions will be performed. Thus, this study will pursue the following questions. How is the diversity of the non-food use of kombu generated? Why does this diversity have this distribution? What kind influence does this diversity have on the formation of Japan' s traditional cultures?

This research will promote local educational programs and strengthen the interconnectedness between kombu culture in Japan and the economic connections among the places where kombu is produced in Hokkaido. Furthermore, this research will show the fact that kombu in Hokkaido supports many Japanese cultures provides spiritual support to the socioeconomic system in places for that produce kombu in Hokkaido. These will lead to the creation of a community based on local museums. This can develop the pride of local industry and the love for one' s home district in the children who live there.