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Mistaken Assertions: a response to Mark Ramseyer / マーク・ラムザイヤー論文について前近代史の叙述部分に関する問題点

Teraki Nobuaki and Fujii Toshikazu, translated by Ian Neary

The Japanese version of this article follows this English translation.　日本語版が英語版の後に掲載されています。

Reviewing the arguments about the early modern and pre-modern history of Buraku communities we would draw attention to the following mistaken assertions:

All quotes are from "On the Invention of Identity Politics: The Buraku Outcastes in Japan", The Harvard John M. Olin Discussion Paper Series: No. 964

Mistaken assertions on the origins of *Hisabetsu Buraku*

> *In fact, the burakumin are not descended from leather-workers. They are descended from poor farmers. (1)*
>
> *Most do not trace their lineage to tanners, executioners, or leather workers. A few do, but not most. Most burakumin instead trace their ancestry to poor farmers. (24)*

It is clear from these quotes that JMR subscribes to the 'poor peasant' origin thesis denying that from before 12th century (the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, aka *chūsei*) there was a close connection with 'leather workers' as the ancestors of Burakumin. However current research uses documentary and archeological evidence to demonstrate that those known as *kawaramono*, *eta* and *kiyome* etc. were closely related by social lineage to leather workers and slaughtermen.

Mistaken assertions on the occupations of *kawata* and *chōri* in the early modern period

> *Most importantly, most kawata never skinned carcasses and had nothing to do with the leather trade. (19)*
>
> *...the vast majority of the kawata never dealt with dead animals at all. Instead, they farmed. (20)*

The use of qualifiers such as 'most' and 'the vast majority' in these quotes means that these assertions are not completely inaccurate but nevertheless his account is likely to mislead the reader into disregarding the connection between the disposal of horses and cows and the tanning and leather craft industries (e.g. making *setta* or drums) as important occupations of *kawata* in the early modern period. In fact, throughout the whole of MR's account the strong link between *kawata* and

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leather production is either ignored or minimized.

There is ample historical evidence that before the early modern period leather manufacture prospered and a considerable number of *kawata/chōri* were engaged in leather production and leather related crafts including those resident in Dazaemon's area of control in the Edo region, Watanabe-mura in Settsu, modern Osaka, and Kawata-mura ruled by Tanabe in Kishū domain.

While it is true that many *kawata* across the country were engaged in agriculture and that this is of great significance, we should also note that they were engaged in a range of occupations not only leather work but, depending on the region, fishing, bamboo-ware production and medicine.

> *In truth, the kawata never constituted a guild and had no monopolies to lose. Some did work in tanning or leatherworking, but none held any monopoly on either. p 20*

Setting aside the issue of 'guilds', it is certainly not true to say that they 'had no monopoly rights to lose.' The right to deal with dead cows and horses was something that seems to have been weakening in some areas towards the end of the Kinsei period but in most areas it was a *kawata* monopoly. Indeed, it was precisely because *kawata* held these monopoly rights that it was necessary for the Meiji government to issue the edict of March 1871 that opened up the task of disposing of dead cows and horses.

> *And historians Matsuoka (1975, 24-25) and Usui (1991, 205) both report that the shares could be -- and occasionally were -- transferred to commoner villagers. p 21*

A careful reading of the section of the book from which this quote is actually taken makes it clear that Usui is referring to the situation at the end of *chūsei* and start of *kinsei*. Immediately before the passage quoted he clearly states that 'In the *kinsei* period these rights were possessed by *kawata* alone and could not be transferred to those of another status.' (1980, 205) The quote from Usui is used in a totally unscholarly way in isolation from its context thus straining the interpretation of its meaning in order to support the author's argument. Moreover, while on this topic, the book from which this quotation was taken is Vol 1 which appeared in 1980, that published in 1991 was the third volume of the series.

Mistaken assertions about the conceptual origins of Buraku discrimination in the Kinsei period

> *Eighteenth-century Japanese would not have discriminated against them out of any concern for ritual purity. They would have discriminated against them because they were poor. (1)*
>
> *At root, the kawata faced bias because they were poor. (24)*

We have never seen any historical material concerning the early modern period, including the eighteenth century, which suggests that either the rulers or populace discriminated against *kawata/chōri* because they were poor. If he is going to make this kind of statement he

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should explicitly show the sources on which he bases such claims.

It has been clearly shown in previous research that people with *kawata* status encountered discrimination (contempt, exclusion, persecution etc.) which was closely tied to the concept of defilement (*kegare*) which had grown powerful in the ancient and middle ages and continued into the early modern era. Of course, there were other elements of race and status which were linked to the discrimination against those who had *kawata* status but one should not ignore or underestimate the link to the concept of defilement. There is a great deal of documentation of the existence of discrimination based on notions of defilement by both the authorities and among the population.

He bases his argument on the premise that the early modern *kawata* villages and people were poor but recent research on Buraku history has shown that *eta/chōri* in the early modern period were engaged in a variety of occupations: leathercraft, *setta* making, drum manufacture, agriculture, bamboo-ware, medicine such that by virtue of their positive economic engagement their living standards were in no way inferior to those of other peasant farmers and indeed in some areas they led prosperous lives. This is reflected in the population increase within *kawata* villages in the early modern period which was greater than that in other rural and urban communities and can be ascribed to this well-developed economic base. While it cannot be denied that it is possible that there were some poor *kawata* villages in some parts of the country in the Edo period, overall the view that Buraku have experienced a history of poverty is disproved by the historical data

So, the idea that they were discriminated against 'because they were poor' or that 'at root the feudal bias was because they were poor' while possibly having some validity as a partial explanation in some areas, as an overall evaluation has absolutely no academic validity. Rather in fact even where *kawata* villages or *kawata* people were prosperous, the authorities and the general population discriminated against them.

There are a number cases of selective quotation that remove them from their contexts in order to suit his argument or generalisations from unusual examples and overall displaying an unscholarly attitude.

29 January 2020

マーク・ラムザイヤー論文について前近代史の叙述部分に関する問題点

２０２０年１月２９日

寺木伸明・藤井寿一

被差別部落の成り立ちについての記述の間違い

ラムザイヤー氏は被差別部落の成り立ちについて、「部落民は皮革労働者の子孫ではない。彼らは貧農の子孫である。」（１頁）とか「ほとんどの部落民は、宗教的に不浄な仕事に特化した人々に彼らの祖先をたどらない。ほとんどは、なめし職人、死刑執行人、革職人にその血統をたどらない。そういう人も何人かはいるが、ほとんどそうではない。むしろ、ほとんどの部落民は彼らの祖先を貧しい農民にたどる。」（２４頁）として、部落の先祖の人びとと「皮革労働者」との緊密な結びつきを否定して「貧農」起源説を主張しているが、現在の研究では、中世以来、河原の者とか「穢多」とか「清目」とか呼ばれて皮革業・屠畜業に従事していた人々と社会的系譜において緊密な関係があったことが文献的にも考古学的にも明らかにされている。

近世の皮多/長吏の人々の生業に関する記述の間違い

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同氏は、①「最も重要なことは、ほとんどの皮多が動物の死骸の皮をはいだことはなく、皮革取引とは何の関係もなかったことである。」（１９頁）や、②「皮多の大多数は死んだ動物をまったく扱っていない。代わりに、彼らは農業に従事した。」（２０頁）などと述べているが、近世の皮多の重要な仕事の一つは、斃牛馬処理・皮革業および皮革関連業（雪駄作りや太鼓の製造など）であったことは今日の研究では疑い得ないところである。

①～②に関して言えば、「ほとんど」や「大多数」という限定語がはいっているので、間違いではないにしても、その記述では近世の皮多の重要な仕事の一つであった斃牛馬処理・皮革業および皮革関連業（雪駄作りや太鼓の製造など）との関係を無視してしまうことに読者を誘導しかねない。実際、全体の叙述を通して皮多と皮革関係業との強い結びつきを無視ないし軽視している。

江戸の弾左衛門の囲内や摂津の渡辺村や紀州藩田辺領の皮多村をはじめ、近世以来、相当数の皮多/長吏の人々が皮革業および皮革関連業に従事していたことは史料的に確認されているところである。もちろん、皮多の人々が全国的に農業に従事していたことは確かであり、その意義は大きいのであるけれども、皮革業はもちろん、その他に地域によっては水産業、竹細工、医薬業などの多様な生業に従事していたことにも注目すべきである。

また、皮革について「失う独占権もなかった」（２０頁）とは決していえず、皮革の取得と関連深い斃牛馬処理権は、近世末期には地域によっては動揺も見られるものの、近世を通じてほとんどの地域での皮多人々の権利であった。皮多の人々がそのような権利を保持していたからこそ、明治政府は１８７１年（明治４）３月に死牛馬勝手処理令を出す必要があったのである。

「歴史学者の松岡（１９７５、２４－２５）と臼井（１９９１、２０５）はどちらも普通の村人に株式を譲渡することができ、時には譲渡することもあったと報告している。」（２１頁）

について臼井本該当箇所を読むと、中世末期・近世初頭のことを述べているのであって、彼自身、そのくだりの直前に「近世ではこの権利は皮田独自の所有として、決して他身分に渡ることがなかった」と明確に述べている（臼井寿光『兵庫の部落史』神戸新聞出版センター、１９８０年、２０５頁）。全く我田引水の、全体から切り離して都合の良い部分だけを取り上げる非学問的な記述である。なお、ついでに言えば、当該の臼井本は、１９８０年出版で、１９９１年出版のものはその第３巻である。末尾の参考文献の箇所も、１９９１年と間違えている。

前近代の部落差別の観念的要因についての記述の間違い

同氏は、「１８世紀、日本人は清浄への懸念から彼らを差別したのではない。日本人は彼らが貧しいから差別したのである。」（１頁）とか「根本的には、カワタは貧しいため、偏見を受けていた。」（２４頁）と述べている。

これについて言えば、１８世紀を含む近世において、支配者や民衆が、皮多/長

吏の人々が貧しいから差別したことを示す史料を私は見たことがない。もしこのようなことを主張するのであれば、根拠となる史料を明示すべきである。

今までの研究が明らかにしてきたところでは、古代から中世にかけて強まり、近世に引き継がれてきたケガレ観念と強く結びついて皮多身分の人々への差別がなされてきた。もちろん、貴賤観念・優劣観念・異種観念などの意識も皮多身分の人々への差別と関係があるとみられるが、ケガレ観念との関係を無視したり軽視したりすることはできない。なお、同氏は、引用文に見られるように近世皮多村や皮多の人々は貧しかったということを前提に論を展開しているが、最近の部落史研究の成果として、近世の皮多村/長吏村が皮革業・雪踏作り・太鼓製造業・農業・竹細工業・医薬業など多彩な生業に従事し、積極的な経済活動により、他の百姓村と遜色のない、地域によってはさらに豊かな生活をしていたことが明らかにされてきている。そして、皮多村の、こうした再生産構造と活発な経済活動を基盤にして近世の皮多村の人口増加（百姓・町人のそれを上回る増加率）が確認されてきている。近世に関する限り、地域によっては貧困な皮多村も存在した可能性は認められるが、全体としてみた場合、「部落貧困史観」は、史実によって覆されてきているのである。むしろ、

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たとえ豊かな皮多村であっても、あるいは豊かな皮多の人たちであっても、権力や民衆が差別してきた事実が今、問われているのである。

その他、論述の中には、他人の論文の内容全体から切り離して自己に都合の良い部分だけを引用したり、希少例を一般化して述べるなど、各所に非学問的な態度がみられることも付け加えておきたい。

以上

This article is part of **Japan's Burakumin (Outcastes) Reconsidered: A Special Issue Assessing and Refuting Ramseyer's Interpretation.** Please see the Table of Contents.

Please also see our previous special issues on **The Ramseyer controversy on the 'Comfort Women'** edited by Alexis Dudden, **Supplement to Special Issue: Academic Integrity at Stake: The Ramseyer Article - Four Letters**

See also, a special issue on **The 'Comfort Women' as Public History** edited by Edward Vickers and Mark R. Frost.

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published in English in 2010 and in Japanese translation in 2016. His book, *Dōwa Policy and Japanese Politics,* will be published by Routledge in July 2021.

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