

Color and Costume in the Ainu Epic Poem “Yukara”

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Ainu ethnic clothing is decorated with distinctive Ainu patterns employing kiribuse cutting and embroidery techniques. I was myself involved in a survey of Ainu ethnic clothing in the Tosabayashi Collection in the possession of the Faculty of Letters at Waseda University, in which capacity I studied the needlework of Ainu women primarily from the standpoints of decorative techniques such as kiribuse and embroidery. Detailed surveys made it possible to obtain objective data concerning sewing and decorative techniques appearing in various documents, but the meaning and symbolism of Ainu patterns that appear on clothing are not clear and have not been entirely brought to light by previous research. There would seem therefore to be scope for explaining the patterns and for studying how they might be classified and arranged in a methodical manner. In order to understand the meaning and the symbolism of the patterns appearing in traditional Ainu clothing, I believe that it is necessary to take a look at the expressions used to describe clothing and colors in the Yukara, to delve into the view of the world and the aesthetic consciousness unique to the Ainu people, and to offer an interpretation of their sense of color and visual ideas. Very little research has been done hitherto on clothing on the basis of the Yukara epic. My studies in this area will serve, therefore, as basic research in connection with elucidating the features of

Ainu patterns.

Methodology

The Yukara epic is an example of oral literature handed down from generation to generation by the Ainu people, who did not originally possess an orthography for their language and literature. It may be regarded as the most effective material for throwing light on the Ainu people's distinctive spiritual culture, their aesthetic attitudes, and the intentions that underpin their creative work in the visual arts. On this occasion I have focused primarily on the Oina sacred transmission which stands at the foundations of Ainu culture, using the Ainu *jojishi Yukara shu* (Anthology of the Ainu Epic, the Yukara), which consists of the epic as written down in the Ainu language by Kannari Matsu and translated into modern Japanese by Kindaichi Kyosuke. I have extract sections and phrases from the epic related to clothing style and coloration, and I have thrown light on the cosmic vision and preferences of the Ainu people as well as on colors and clothing that possess symbolic meaning.

Results

As far as color expressions are concerned, the emphasis is on basic color terms such as white, black and red that seems to have emerged from out of the relative brightness of light. White and black appear frequently as a

pair in poetic couplets. Other color terms such as blue and yellow appear very rarely and are all subsumed under the same color names. Subtle changes of hue caused by light and references to gold appear frequently. The way in which everything lights up in gold along with expressions related to hearing such as beautiful sounds and voices are expressed in terms of metals coming into contact with one another. One can see here the yearning of the Ainu people for metals such as gold and silver and their personal tastes. Silk and flax have a special importance for women in terms of how they dress: tiny fragments of fabric are often shown being treated like jewels, and women engage in embroidery as a means of achieving oneness with their gods. I thus gained an idea of the feelings that Ainu women directed towards the costumes that they created. Extant materials including necklines, armholes and hem sections incorporate Ainu patterns created by means of kiribuse or embroidery; variants of red appear in many documents in the case of cloth used in the creation of kiribuse patterns. It should be noted that the costumes worn by ancestral deities worshipped by the Ainu people are characterised by the use of red woven atsushi creating the impression of fire burning around the hem. One may surmise, therefore, that red cloth is used similarly to create the impression of fire burning at the base of the costume in the same way as the gods and that this fitted in well with the aesthetic attitudes of the Ainu people. Apart from this, I was able to confirm the connection between clothing style and pattern structure in the Yukara and to demonstrate how the spiritual world of the Ainu people is reflected in their traditional clothing.

アイヌ叙事詩「ユーカラ」にみる色彩・服飾表現

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目的

アイヌ民族服飾には、切伏せや刺繍技法により獨特のアイヌ文様が施されている。筆者はこれまで早稲田大學文學部所蔵「土佐林コレクション」のアイヌ民族服飾の調査研究に携わり、主に切伏せや刺繍などの装飾技法の側面からアイヌ女性の針仕事について調査を行った。詳細な調査により、各資料の縫製技法や装飾技法については客観的なデータが得ることができたが、衣服に施されたアイヌ文様の意味や象徴性などについては明らかでなく、先行研究においても必ずしも明解ではないことから、文様の解明およびその体系的な分類整理には検討の余地が残されていると考える。アイヌ民族服飾の文様の意味や象徴性を理解するには、『ユーカラ』にみられる、服飾や色彩などに關わる表現を涉獵し、アイヌ民族固有の世界観や美意識に迫り、色彩感覚や造形意志を読み解く必要があると考える。このような『ユーカラ』を基にした服飾研究は僅少であり、アイヌ文様を解明する上での基礎研究として本研究を位置付ける。

方法

『ユーカラ』は文字をもたなかったアイヌ民族によって、代々語り継がれてきた口承文學であり、民族固有の精神文化や美意識、造形意志を明らかにする上でもっとも有効な資料と考えられる。今回は、金成まつ筆録、金田一京助譯『アイヌ叙事詩ユーカラ集』から、アイヌ民族の原点ともいえる『オイナ（聖伝）』をとり上げ、服飾表現や色彩に關わる記述、語句を抽出し、アイヌ民族の世界観や嗜好、象徴的な意味をもつ色や服飾に關わる概念等を明らかにした。

結果

色彩表現に關しては、白、黒、赤などの、光の明暗から生まれたと思われる基本色彩語が主で、白と黒は對句の表現が多くみられた。その他の青、黄などの色彩語はごく僅かで、これらはすべて同一の色名で表わされている。また、光による色合いの微妙な変化や、金色の表現が頻出し、あらゆるものが黄金色に光り輝くさま、美しい音や聲など聽覺に關わる表現も金屬の触れ合う音で表わされ、アイヌ民族の金、銀などの金屬への憧れ、嗜好を知ることができた。服飾表現では、女性にとって絹や布は格別なものであり、小さな裂地でも宝物のように扱う様子や、神と一体となって刺繍に没頭する姿があらわされており、アイヌ女性の衣服に込めた思いを知ることができた。また、現存資料の衿、袖口、裾部には切伏せや刺繍によりアイヌ文様が施されているが、切伏せ布として多くの資料に赤系統の布が用いられている。これは、アイヌの尊崇する始祖神の装束が「裾に火の燃える赤織のアツシを身に纏う」と特徴づけられていることから、神と同じように裾に燃え立つような「赤色の布」を施すことが、アイヌの人々の美意識に適うものであったからではないかと推察される。その他にも、ユーカラにみられる服飾表現と文様構成との關連性が確認でき、アイヌの精神世界が民族服飾に反映していることが明らかとなった。