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## Creation of the Marimo Festival: Ainu Identity and Ethnic Symbiosis

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### INTRODUCTION

Since the Marimo Festival was first held in 1950 at Lake Akan, in the town of Akan, Hokkaido, it has been held 50 times. This festival, which was started for the purpose of “protecting aegagropilas from poaching and the lowering of the water level due to hydroelectric power generation,” evolved through the creation of a new festival, incorporating aspects of traditional Ainu “sending-off” rituals. However, Ainu people from other regions and Ainu culture researchers criticized this newly created event as not being a genuine Ainu festival or one in which Ainu culture was being misused for the sake of tourism. Nevertheless, the Ainu who host the festival feel that there is nothing wrong with creating new festivals since all festivals were created ceremonies at one time. They even explain that this festival is a forerunner of the current green movement, considering the original idea of the festival.

In this paper, I would like to reveal the process of the 50 year-old Marimo Festival’s creation and changes, its discourse, the relation between the Akan Ainu *Kotan* (village) and the tourism economy, as well as the process of the Ainu identity and the ethnic symbiosis through the analysis of the current Marimo Festival. *Ethnos* is a group of people who are considered to have common features among them while not sharing said features with outsiders. “Common features” refers to their language, culture, origin and history, as well as people’s recognition of these features. Ethnicity can be defined as the entirety of features which an individual, belonging to a certain group, distinguishes his own group from others, and which makes this group unique (Irimoto 1997). “Ethnicity” is an abstract noun originating from the adjective “ethnic,” which was derived from the word “*ethnos*” (Chapman et al. 1989: 15).

“Identity” is an awareness that certain characteristics belong to certain categories (Irimoto 2000: 215). Therefore, “ethnic identity” is a person’s conscious awareness that he belongs to a certain *ethnos*, based on ethnicity. As a matter of fact, ethnic identity is alterable, and ethnicity is not a fixed idea either. *Ethnos* itself is an inventory concept in the first place, which originated under social and political situations and has changed since. The very notion of *ethnos* is idealistic and manipulable (Irimoto 1998).

The facts and analysis mentioned in this paper are based on my visit to Lake Akan in August 1984, my three acts of participation in and observation of the Akan Marimo Festivals in October 1992, 1994, 1999, my visits to Akan Ainu *Kotan*, Teshikaga Kussharo *Kotan* and the Maeda Ippo Foundation in October 1994, December 1995, June 1997 and October

1999, and my interviews with Mr. P and Mr. Q of the Akan Ainu Association and Mr. L of the Akan Kanko Kyokai, as well as old documents, documentary materials, reports and minutes of meetings. Please note that “aegagropila” is used when referring to it as a biological species, and “marimo” (lake-ball) is used when referring to it culturally—quotations do not follow this rule.

## CREATION OF AND DISCOURSE ON THE MARIMO FESTIVAL

The first Marimo Festival was held in 1950. In the organizing guidelines, the purpose is cited as follows: “Various kinds of events are to unfold under the name of the ‘Marimo Festival’ to awaken people’s love, which (has) faded for the marimo, among people within the (Kushiro region), and inspire them to protect them in order to preserve the fresh green marimo which lives at the bottom of Lake Akan, famous for its grand scenic beauty, as an eternal cultural property.” (Words in parentheses are annotations by Irimoto.) While the date of the festival was set as September 1 to 25, a broadcasted discussion titled “Let’s protect the marimo, Lake Akan’s cultural property” was held on August 29 between the village mayor of Akan and Kushiro region’s bureau chief of the Hokkaido Board of Education. In addition, a marimo related poetry, essay and poster contest was held for the students in primary and secondary schools within the city of Kushiro and the Kushiro region from September 15 to 20. Moreover, there were various other events such as the “Haiku no kai” (Haiku gathering) where haiku poems are read related to marimo while enjoying Lake Akan’s scenic beauty; “Yagaigeki” (open-air drama), where Akan-local young men performed the dramatized Marimo legend outdoors; and the “marimo odori” (marimo dancing), in which the locals and tourists all danced to a dance rich in local taste, throughout the night. Finally, the “Marimo osame” (returning the lake-balls) is held on October 7 with the cooperation of Priests Tasuke Yamamoto, Shitakara Ootaku and other Ainu members. In this event, after holding a return-ritual at Akan Shrine, the above mentioned members, as well as the Kushiro region’s bureau chief of the Hokkaido Board of Education, the President of “Akan-ko no marimo aigo kai” (Protective Association of Aegagropilas of lake Akan) and other volunteers, marched to the lakeside Bokke, at the end of Akan lakeside’s downtown, where they got on a boat to return the aegagropila to their propagation grounds; *Kinetanpe* (Akan Kanko Kyokai 1989: 5, 9; Sitaku 1990: 30). It can be said that the Marimo Festival was a comprehensive event held by governmental, nongovernmental and academic organizations, placing its main emphasis on protecting the aegagropila.

An account of the first Marimo Festival appeared in the newspaper (Hokkaido Shinbun Press 1950. 10. 09) under the headline “Rich in local flavor, Ikebe, Mifune and Shimura, the Toho location members watch as well / Record-breaking crowds of people gather at Lake Akan at its autumn heights.” It said, “The ‘Marimo Festival,’ ...targeted to both promote and protect Lake Akan...took place rich in local flavor.” Regarding the ceremony of “Marimo osame,” it said, “The service was held gracefully with ancient customs by 20 elderly Ainu people dressed in formal attire. The 48 balls of aegagropila (gathered through the return movement), ready to return to the lake, were placed in front of the alter where five *kamuy* (deity) such as the Me-akan Peak and O-akan Peak were enshrined.... It started

with a *yukar* (ritual prayer) meaning ‘the Ainu share the joy of the aegagropilas returning to the nature world’ in the Ainu language.... Picturesque scenery arose at the mystic Akan, touching the spectators’ hearts.” (Words in parentheses are untouched from the original text.) This describes how the members of the Toho film staff, carrying out their location shoot in Hokkaido, and tourists visiting the lakeside from throughout the country numbered approximately 600 at the time.

Nonetheless, the Marimo Festival then became the center of criticism by the Ainu in another regions and the public from the viewpoint that Ainu culture was being abused for the sake of tourism. In addition, scholars were also skeptical about it. In the January 14, 1954, edition of the Hokkaido Shinbun Press (cf. Shitaku 2000: 15–16), the headline reads, “Experts find the Ainu-aegagropila link irrelevant and disagreeable.” In this article, they quoted remarks made by the Director of the Kushiro Library. Considering the way they linked aegagropilas with deities as a “weather alga” and relating it to the Ainu, he was worried about the public’s perception of the festival, because there were no written documents, records or legends to connect the Ainu with the aegagropilas.

In the Ainu language, aegagropilas are called *tokarip* (*to*—marsh, *kari*—go round, *p*—object: thus meaning “marsh ball”) (Sarashina 1942: 77–78; Chiri 1953: 254) or *torasampe* (*to*—marsh, *rasampe*—monster) (Yamamoto 1940: 15; Chiri 1953: 254; Takahashi 1966: 15). According to the myth explaining this origin (Sarashina 1942: 78; Takahashi 1966: 14–15), *Pekanbe* (water caltrop) was enraged since he was expelled from the lake by the deity of Lake Akan saying *Pekanbe* would pollute it, so he yanked the grass and threw it into the lake with his cursing words, “Become an alga and pollute the lake!” There is also another “legend of Marimo.” After an Ainu girl’s love with a youth ended in tragedy, she drowned herself in the lake immediately after he drowned in it. The body, or the two bodies turned into a ball of aegagropila (Aoki 1924: 106–113; Yamamoto 1940: 15–16). Although this legend is well known through the tour guides, it was not passed on among the Ainu, and its source cannot be traced (Izumi 1955: 11). In any case, aegagropilas were not only unused by the Ainu, but were even a nuisance for them since they got tangled in their fishnets.

Regarding these criticisms, Mr. Setsuro Tanba (Director of Kushiro Community Center in 1950, President of Kushiro UNESCO Association in 1975 when the discussion was held), one of the creators of the Marimo Festival, made an objection at a discussion held on September 28, 1975, titled “Discussing the past of the Marimo Festival” (Akan Kanko Kyokai 1989: 24–35) hosted by the Akan Board of Education. He said, “It (the Marimo Festival) was not a festival to show to people, but was really held (in order to) protect them. However, reading what has been written about it in Sapporo, it is described as if the purpose was to attract tourists.” (Words in parentheses are annotations by Irimoto, as well as those in parentheses here after.) Responding to this, Mr. Yoshihide Matsuoka, who was Manager of the Akan Kanko Hotel in 1950, established an association to defend the protected species, “Akan-ko no marimo” (Aegagropila of Lake Akan) to become the president, and was the President of “Akan kohan onsen ryokan kumiai” (Akan lakeside hot-spring hotels union) at the time of the discussion, also agreed by saying, “The idea of it is completely irrelevant (to attracting tourists).” In addition, Mr. Akira Benibayashi, who was Kushiro region’s bureau chief of the Hokkaido Board of Education in 1950 and Chairman of the Hokkaido Board of

Education at the time of the discussion, or 1975, said, "When we were discussing the original approach, we were not thinking at all about how to create a new step for tourism. There is no sense in doing so if the local people's understanding, interest, and consciousness for protection of the aegagropila cannot be reflected." All of them had reached a consensus on the point that the festival was created for the sake of the aegagropila's protection.

As a matter of fact, before 1921 when the aegagropila was designated as a protected species, they were sent to Tokyo for sales purposes. They had died out by 1941 at the river mouth of the Shirikomabetsu River, which flows into Lake Akan, due to tree felling upstream and subsequent transportation down the stream (Kuroki 1976: 80–81). Heavy damage to the aegagropila was reported in the spring of 1950, when they were exposed to the open-air since the water level of the lake had dropped. As to the cause of this damage, Mr. Misao Tawewaki of Hokkaido University cites lumber being sent down the river, poaching, pleasure boat users and the effects of dipping scoop nets from fishing boats, as well as permits given in 1949 and 1950 to lower the water level to meet post-war electric power demands. As a countermeasure to this situation, related organizations proposed establishing a lovingly protective association, saying "kind treatment is necessary before mere protection." As part of this approach, they established a countermeasure committee, started strictly to control poaching, established a research committee for aegagropila, conducted investigations involving power generation, and dispatched members of the Ministry of Education to make reports (Kuroki 1976: 81–82; Nakazawa 1989: 167–169; Sakai 1991: 167–168). In other words, it becomes clear that from the viewpoint of the aegagropila's academic value and biological elucidation, biologists pointed out the need to take measures against its decrease, which then led to the proposal for the establishment of the protective association.

The aegagropila, *Cladophora sauteri* (Nees.) Kützinger, of Lake Akan (Sakai 1991: 142–144) is a fresh-water alga, classified as a Cladophoraceae of the Chlorophyceae phylum. A few examples of what creates the aegagropila are its nature of radiant protonema, the water flow, collision of sand particles and its revolutions on sand (Kuroki 1990: 96; Nakazawa 1989: 75, 100; Sakai 1991: 90, 102–103), which leads them to form a ball that is one to 20 centimeters, or even 30 centimeters in diameter, covered with a beautiful green velvet. Although the aegagropilas grow in certain lakes in Northern Eurasia and North America besides Japan, large beautifully round aegagropilas are only found in Lake Akan, with the exception of the recently discovered colonies in Lake Myvatn, Iceland (Hokkaido Shinbun Press 2000.07.04) and Lake Oisu of Estonia (Hokkaido Shinbun Press 2000.08.02). The aegagropila itself is a rare species, and its biological clarification has been an essential academic task.

When such movements were under way on the administrative side, the "Marimo taisaku kyogikai" (Aegagropila Protection Committee) was established on June 10, 1950. Moreover, the Akan lakeside residents' interests in the aegagropila increased, which led to the establishment of the Protective Association of "Akan-ko no marimo" (Aegagropilas of Lake Akan) on October 5, 1950, to actively promote its conservation and growth. This association became the Preservation Society of "Aegagropilas of Lake Akan," the Special Natural Treasure, in 1964, and later changed its name to the Conservation Society of "Aegagropilas of Lake Akan," the Special Natural Treasure, in 1979. The association appealed to the public

across the nation to return the aegagropilas, and created the Marimo Festival, aiming to spread the idea of conserving the aegagropilas (“Akan-ko No Marimo” Hogokai 40-Shunen Kinen Jikko Iinkai 1990: 109; Akan-cho 1966: 753).

Mr. Setsuro Tanba, who played an active role in creating the Marimo Festival, explained the process at the 40th Anniversary Celebrative Discussion of “Marimo Hogokai” (Conservation Society of Aegagropilas), held on April 7, 1990, as follows:

I went to investigate the drift of pond smelts with the fishermen’s union of Akan Lakeside, where we found aegagropilas exposed on the ice surface. Mr. Iwamatsu, a staff writer for Doshin (Hokkaido Shinbun Press) publicized this, which caused a great uproar. Mr. Kuribayashi called me and asked me for advice. After a discussion among all those concerned, including members of Hokuden (former Hokkaido Power Distributing Company, which later became the Hokkaido Electric Power Company), we decided to hold the Marimo Festival. We felt that we had to show gratitude to the aegagropilas. Mr. Kuribayashi suggested making it an Ainu festival. I was in charge of the dancing and Mr. Ono of Asahi Shinbun was responsible for writing the words (to the song of aegagropilas) because he was a good writer.

In addition, Mr. Akira Benibayashi, who was the Kushiro region’s bureau chief of the Hokkaido Board of Education at the time, said at a round-table discussion held on September 28, 1975, titled “Discussing the past of the Marimo Festival” (Akan Kanko Kyokai 1989: 31):

Just putting the aegagropilas back into the lake seems rather... and we certainly are going to return them every time. But since I wanted to return them in a ceremonial manner, I thought about it a lot, and suggested we carry out the festival following Ainu traditions. So we asked Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto and Mr. Otsaku Shitakara for help and left it all in their hands.

Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto, who was one of the priests who gave the service, explained the details when he was interviewed by Mr. Toyojiro Shitaku for the 40th Marimo Festival, held in 1989, as follows (Yamamoto and Shitaku 1990: 89).

Speaking of how this event (the Marimo Festival of Lake Akan) came to be held, I told Mr. Setsuro Tanba, who was the Director of the Kushiro Community Center at the time, the idea about this event. And he said that it would be very significant. The aegagropilas had been poached and the situation was hopeless at that time. When the autumn wind starts to blow, the off-season begins, and there is nothing spectacular in Akan. At the time, even in high season, tourists only came to visit during a short period of time from June to August. I asked Mr. Tanba, as the Director, to consult with Mr. Yoshihide Matsuoka, not only to preserve the aegagropilas, but also to extend the tourist season, even for a short period. Being a highly respected person in Lake Akan, he willingly agreed to do so, and this was how the Festival came to be established.

In this explanation, he says that the Marimo Festival was held in the hope of prolonging the tourist season, as well as protecting the aegagropilas. As a matter of fact, the purpose of extending the tourist season, as I will mention later on, became the main reason after the 11th Marimo Festival, held in 1960, which posted successful results.

In addition, regarding the opinion that the Marimo Festival is not a genuine Ainu festival, Mr. Toyojiro Shitaku has cited Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto's words in the editor's notes of the interview:

There is nothing wrong in creating festivals, just because they didn't exist from ancient times. Ancient people made up ceremonious events because they had something important to pray for, which we have surely inherited over a long period of time. As for the Marimo Festival, I will take full responsibility for it, because it is something I set up with Mr. Setsuro Tanba, Mr. Yoshihide Matsuoka and other concerned members. At first, it was a simple concept of doing a ceremony for the returned aegagropilas to send them back into the lake. But I said, if we are doing it at all, we should respect Ainu worship toward nature, and show gratitude to the "great nature" through aegagropilas at least once a year. This is the way I have been leading the ceremony so far.

Moreover, Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto comments on the appreciation of nature:

So I have never referred to the aegagropila as a deity in the *kamuynomi* (prayer to deities). (Of course, the aegagropila is not a deity. —annotated by Mr. Shitaku.) We human beings, animals and fish can live solely because the "great nature" exists. This "great nature" cultivates the aegagropilas, protected by the deities of heaven, the sun, mountains, lakes ...and much more. It is a thanksgiving festival toward nature.

As to the Marimo Festival itself, he said, "I don't know when the green movements started in Hokkaido, but I think the Marimo Festival is a forerunner. Now that it has been going for 40 years, it is a respectable festival! Ha, ha, ha." So he defends himself now (in 1990) on the grounds that he was protecting nature. Of course, it is true that behind the purpose to "protect the aegagropilas" against its decrease, which was the motive for creating the Marimo Festival, there was the necessity of Akan National Park's maintenance—an inseparable factor for the tourism economy—as well as the academic need to investigate aegagropilas scientifically. Moreover, Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto is not only evaluating the Festival within the concept of natural conservation or of gratitude toward nature in an abstract sense. Fundamentally, nature conservation and gratitude toward nature are very practical. "Bear festival" is a ritual in which the Ainu send the spirit of a bear (*kimun-kamuy*, a mountain deity) that visited the human world back to the world of *kamuy*. It is a ritual aiming to maintain the reciprocal relationship between the *kamuy* and humans; namely a positive survival strategy to wish success in hunting and to maintain a practical lifestyle (Irimoto 1988: 147; 1994a: 330; 1996a: 301). As a matter of fact, Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto said, "Although the Marimo Festival developed originally from scientific and

business-related problems, it is now (1975) helping tourism” (Akan Kanko Kyokai 1989: 31). In addition, Mr. Toyojiro Shitaku commented, “Whether you are an Ainu or a *Wajin* (non-Ainu Japanese), those who live by Lake Akan are involved in tourism through the running of hotels, souvenir shops or restaurants because of the “great nature.” So, each one of us should be a nature-observer. We must all get together, whether an Ainu or a *Shamo* (*Wajin*), and reconsider the whole lakeside of Lake Akan” (Yamamoto and Shitaku 1990: 90–91).

The fact that aegagropilas support the tourism economy is well expressed in the following words, introduced by Mr. Toyojiro Shitaku (Shitaku 2000: 18–19) as “simple and clear words that have expressed the real Ainu spiritual values,” said by numerous elderly priests starting with the first officiating priest, Otosaku Shitakara *Ekasi* (elderly), Yamamoto Tasuke *Ekasi*, up to the current and fourth officiating priest.

The aegagropila is common property for Akan. The Ainu and *Wajin* should appreciate the blessings of nature and continue to hold the Festival with a protectionist spirit.

Therefore, appreciations to nature, which are “real Ainu spiritual values,” are something practical linked to daily life. In other words, since the tourism economy is dependant on the nature of Akan, it does not radically contradict the Ainu worldview—based on the gathering and hunting economy—to say that the Ainu show their gratitude to the nature of Akan through the Festival.

At the same time, “the real Ainu spiritual values” are also something quite religious. At the 40th Marimo Festival, 87-year-old Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto said, “Although I can’t go to the *cise* (house), where the ritual will be held, because I’m weak in my legs and back, I will take part in the festival by saying the *kamuynomi* (prayer to deities) at home” (Yamamoto & Shitaku 1990: 91). This indicates that he seriously prays to the deities of Akan, such as deities of the forest, river or lake.

What’s more, if the “appreciation to nature” aims to maintain the reciprocal relationship between the Ainu (humans) and *kamuy* (deities), based on their worldview, the important point here is that this ceremony must be held every year without interruptions, just as the other spirit-sending off ceremonies of bears and salmon. Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto expressed this intention when he said, “The protection of aegagropilas, and this event, must be continued every year, for 30 years, 50 years, or even 100 years” (Akan Kanko Kyokai 1989: 31). As a matter of fact, at the 39th Marimo Festival held on October 8, 1988, the pre-festival on the 8th and the Marimo Dancing procession on the 9th were cancelled due to the emperor’s (Emperor Hirohito) illness. Although “the Ainu made a big deal out of the emperor’s life and death, and hesitated in celebrating the festival,” Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto said, “I swore to myself that I would make them carry it out. To perform the Marimo Festival conscientiously .... In that case, if he dies, we would only pray that his soul may rest in peace, and if he is alive, we would pray for his recovery, and hold the festival. (Ainu) formalities have been practiced even before the Emperor system was established, so there is no reason to refrain from continuing to do so” (Yamamoto and Shitaku 1990: 89–90). Hence, the Marimo ritual was carried out as usual. In this case, he seems rather formidable as he has valued the

Marimo Festival as a religious ritual unique to the Ainu, and has explained its justification using a flexible logic depending on the circumstances, in order to keep the festival running continuously.

It can be said that the Ainu uniqueness is “our peoples’ custom of valuing things in relation to nature,” as well as their worldview and spiritual values, which support the Ainu ethnicity. In the same sense, Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto said, “I am surprised at how...the Marimo Festival has been continuously held. I think it was only possible because we, mainly our people, admired the feeling of harmonizing with nature” (Yamamoto and Shitaku 1990: 90). This self-awareness of their uniqueness actually determines the ethnic identity, which is expressed by Mr. Yamamoto’s words, “our people.” Regarding the opinion that the Marimo Festival is a “touristy” event, he said, “It is not just for tourism. I have never been hired by a tourist agency in Lake Akan. We have been showing gratitude to nature through our own efforts” (Yamamoto and Shitaku 1990: 90). The word “*oretachi* (we)” or “*jibuntachi* (we)” that he used refers to the “Ainu,” distinguished from the *Wajin* tourist agents by their ethnicity. This means that they are manifesting their own ethnic identity through these words.

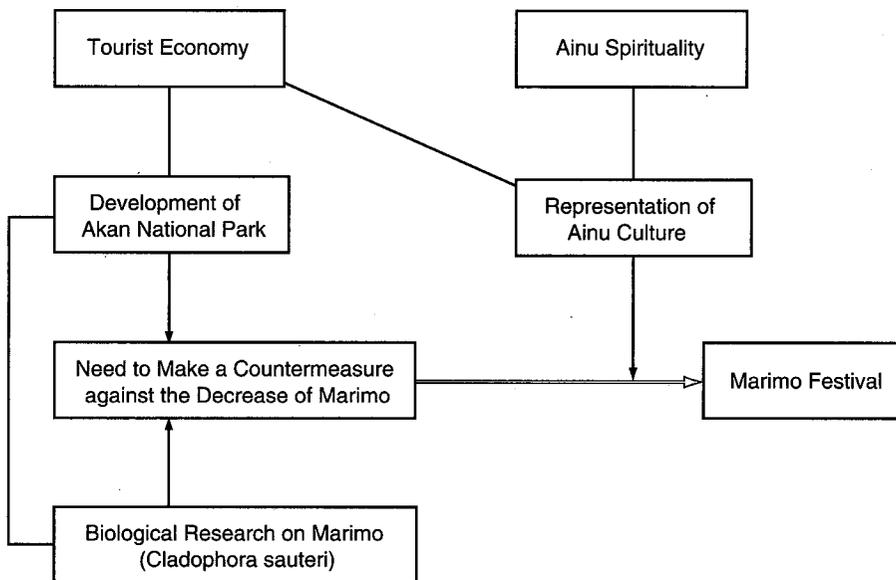
According to the personal history of Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto (Yamamoto 1991; Hokudo 1991: 154–172; Kushiro Ainu Bunka Konwakai 1993: 190–192; Zaidanhojin Ainu Bunka Shinko · Kenkyu Suishin Kiko 2000: 77–78), he was born in Harutori, Kushiro, in 1904, and was brought up in a bilingual environment, using Ainu at home and Japanese at school. In 1934, when Akan was designated as a national park, he sensed the “possibility of tourism” at the sight of the Kawayu hot springs being crowded with tourist groups. So, in the following year, he started to make and sell woodcarvings on the beach of Lake Kussharo. He was the first to start this kind of business within Akan National Park. Eventually in 1939, he shifted to the beach of Lake Akan, where there were more visitors staying overnight, and ran a direct sales store for wood-carved souvenirs. After the war, he started to become seriously involved in Ainu rights restoration movements, where he took a strong lead among the Ainu people. In 1946, he became the chairman of the Kushiro Branch of the newly established “Shadanhojin Hokkaido Ainu Kyokai” (Hokkaido Ainu Association Corporate) and fought for the improvement of Ainu life and education. Aiming to pass on traditional culture, he also established the “Kushiro Ainu Koten Buyo Hozonkai” (Kushiro Ainu Classic Dancing Preservation Society) in 1948, of which he became the president. Then he helped in the creation of the Marimo Festival, which was first held in 1950.

The striking point here is that Mr. Yamamoto never considered tourism and Ainu culture separately, regarding them as part of their everyday lives. In fact, although tourism is a recreational time period far from day-to-day life from the tourists’ point of view, it is synonymous with the daily lives of those who live on tourism. For the Ainu, who were undergoing severe changes and poverty due to the destruction of their traditional lifestyle, it must have been an active survival strategy to try to secure their livelihood by sensing the potential of tourism.

Yamamoto’s religious, but utterly realistic way of living brought him to contact with Mr. Setsuro Tanba, born three years after him in Hakodate in 1907. As previously mentioned, Mr. Tanba, who was involved in creating the Marimo Festival as Director of the Kushiro Community Center, worked as a substitute teacher after graduating from Kushiro Secondary

School. Graduating from Sapporo Shihan (teachers college) and Aoyama Shihan (teachers college) majoring in Buddhism, he became a teacher at a primary school. In 1945 when the war ended, however, he made up his mind to quit “in order to hold myself responsible as a teacher” (Kushiro Ainu Bunka Konwakai 1994: 241). When he became the first full-time director of the Kushiro Community Center in 1950, he not only organized the Marimo Festival, but also revived the “Shiranuka koma odori” (Shiranuka Horse-like Dancing—traditional Japanese folk dance), established the “Kushiro Takuboku-kai” (Kushiro Takuboku—famous haiku poet in Japan—Society), and became a founding member and president of the Kushiro UNESCO Association. In addition, he inaugurated the “Kushiro Busshari-to” (Kushiro stupa of Buddha) in 1959, showing extensive understanding and cooperation in cultural and charity activities. In 1986, he founded the “Kushiro Ainu Bunka Konwakai” (Kushiro Gathering for Ainu Culture Discussion), and attended 80 regular meetings without fail over seven years, until he passed away a year after Mr. Tasuke Yamamoto in 1994 at the age of 88. His devoted and benevolent personality was revealed in the message of condolence (Kushiro Ainu Bunka Konwakai 1994: 238) addressed by the bureau chief, representing Kushiro Ainu Bunka Konwakai.

As is evident from the conferment of the honorific title *michi* (father) by “Akan-ko Ainu Kyokai” (Lake Akan Ainu Association) in 1975, Mr. Setsuro Tanba was a highly trusted personality by the Ainu as well. His sympathy toward the socially weak Ainu brought Tanba and Yamamoto together, making possible the creation of the Marimo Festival, which integrates Ainu formalities. In other words, despite the Festival’s notably pragmatic goals involving the tourism economy and academic research of aegagropilas, it can be said that



**Figure 1** Relationships among biological research on Marimo, tourist economy, and Ainu culture, to make the Akan Marimo (lake-ball) Festival in 1950.

the factor that linked these different fields, matched other ethnic groups together and unified them as a whole by adding some Ainu cultural taste, was the encounter between these two strikingly religious and humane characters (Fig.1).

### AKAN AINU *KOTAN* (VILLAGE) AND TOURISM ECONOMY

Currently, there is an Ainu community called “Ainu *Kotan*” on the lakeside of Akan. However, despite its traditional name “*kotan*,” all the buildings which make up the village look artificial; souvenir shops, coffee shops and restaurants. Therefore, in this section, I would like to clarify the relationship between Ainu *Kotan* and tourism by throwing light on the development of Ainu *Kotan* and the current subsistence of the local citizens.

According to the description written by Takeshiro Matsuura (1985 [1858]: 283), who traveled across Hokkaido at the end of the Edo era, no permanent Ainu communities were found on the lakeside of Akan, with the exception of seasonal hunting huts. *Wajin* first moved into the lakeside of Akan in 1893 in order to set up a spawning center to start a transplanting business for Kokanee salmon (a landlocked variety of red salmon, *Onchorhynchus nerka*) native to Lake Akan. In the same year, due to sulfur mining activity that started at Me-Akan Peak, factory workers and laborers started to move into the lakeside. After 1897 they were there even during the winter season. In 1908, Mr. Seikichi Yamaura opened the first *ryokan* (Japanese hotel) on the lakeside of Akan (Akan-cho 1966: 701–702).

Moreover, Masana Maeda, from Satsuma (Kagoshima Prefecture) who was once an undersecretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, advocated “the establishment of commercial rights by incorporating various industrial organizations, and strengthening national power by direct trade.” Consequently, he not only founded Maeda Paper-manufacturing Company in Kushiro Village, Kushiro County in 1899, but also began to develop the lakeside of Akan by obtaining a 5,000-hectare forest by the lake in 1906, aiming to run a model forest and a model farm and to promote migration. Based on his principle that “*ippo* (one step) is important under all circumstances,” he named this business firm “Ippoen (One Step Farm)” and implemented the project. However, with the exception of forestry, the business experienced financial difficulties, while the charitable spirit toward the community, which was based on the family precept “the Maeda’s property shall be considered public property,” was admired by the locals. Mitsuko Maeda, the third owner was the wife of Masatsugu, the second owner. As I will mention later on, she loaned the land of the present day Ainu *Kotan* gratis in 1954. Then in 1975, when Setsuro Tanba was conferred the title *michi* (father); Mitsuko Maeda was given the title *hapo* (mother). During the Taisho era, the lakeside prospered in forestry, and many contractors, woodcutters and workers engaged in the transport of lumber down the river came to Maeda Ippoen. The number of workers reached its peak in 1914, when they lumbered as much as 35,000 cubic meters (Akan-cho 1966: 702–704; 709; Kushiro Ainu Bunka Konwakai 1994: 242; Zaidanhojin Maeda Ippoen Zaidan 1994: 2).

According to what Ms. R, born in Bokke at the lakeside of Akan in 1919, said (Hokkaido Kyoiku Inkai 1999: 214–216, 251, 253, 255–254), in her girlhood (beginning of the Showa era), there were five to six Ainu houses on the Akan lakeside. There were several

more beyond Bokke, where she was born. Her family and her aunt's family lived during the summer at the mouth of the Ibeshibetsu River, which flows into the lake from the north shore. They fished dace (*Cyprinidae*), smoke-dried them and transported them to Aioi of Tsubetsu-town on horseback to exchange them with pearl millet, beans and barley. Although not many *Wajin* lived on the lakeside of Akan at the time, many of them lived near the creek of the Shirikomabetsu River in order to work in the forest. She said that her father used to work there during the winter. This does not contradict the record (Akan-cho 1966: 47–48) that says many Ainu people gathered from places such as Piporo, Soushi, Fubushinai and Akubetsu at Lake Akan, made temporary huts near Bokke, fished freely, selling their catches to the *Wajin* staying there for lumber work, or preserved them after smoking them, until the early part of the twentieth century. After the Meiji era, the “kanno-saku” policy was carried out, in which the government encouraged the Ainu to engage in agriculture by giving them land. It is believed that the Ainu who could not adapt to the policy moved to the Akan lakeside, eventually living there throughout the year. In addition to hunting, they caught dace and Kokanee salmon, which they exchanged for field crops or sold to the *Wajin* who had come to lumber. Moreover, the Ainu themselves were hired as lumber workers and assistants.

Eventually, the forestry led by Maeda Ippoen was forced to close down due to the designation of the Akan National Park in 1934, which persuaded the Akan area shift its economic base to one based on tourism. Then in 1939, as I have explained already, Tasuke Yamamoto started to produce and sell Ainu woodcarvings at Lake Akan. After the war, the promotion of tourism was proposed again, and measures to protect the aegagropilas were also the subjects of arguments. Then, as described in the previous section, the first Marimo Festival was held in 1950.

In 1954, an idea was proposed to integrate all the Ainu houses and souvenir shops that had been scattered around the lakeside into one location. Maeda Ippoen came to loan the current location of Ainu *Kotan* gratis, and house construction began in 1955 after land surveys were completed. At the time, the Ainu *Kotan* was located on a hillside at the western end of the lakeside, far from the center of the town. As to why they built it at this location, Mr. P explained it as follows:

We, the Ainu, value the river. We have to live in a place next to a river. People would wonder, why do they have to go so far off when (there is so much land) available around here? Everybody (the *Wajin* tourist agents at the lakeside of Akan) laughed at us. But the Ainu people who joined (the Ainu *Kotan*) can live long if there are trees and a river. We joined it thinking, laugh at us as much as you like.

You can see how the Ainu *Kotan* was built in the current location, according to the Ainu tradition to establish residential areas along rivers. Furthermore, what Mr. P emphasized was the fact that although it was located far from the busy street at the time, the Ainu *Kotan* eventually flourished.

Saying, “As I thought, those who joined the Ainu *Kotan* first had a lot of foresight, didn't they? Ideas like using the river as a route. Now (October 1994) they (eastern lakeside of Akan, the former center of the district) have become...you know, go and take a look

now, professor. All the shops are closed over there. The district from Omizumae toward this hillside near our so-called 'Ainu community' (the current Ainu *Kotan* was previously called 'Ainu *buraku* [community]') has prospered with lights shining brightly (even at night)," he suggests to greatly evaluate "the Ainu's foresight" and "ideas." As he says the Ainu "admire the river" and have "ideas such as using the river as a route," the word "ideas" here refers to the relationship between the Ainu and nature, represented as the river, which is deeply rooted in the traditional Ainu lifestyle, or their way of looking at nature. Evident in his phrasing, "our Ainu community (Ainu *Kotan*)," Mr. P has pride in the Ainu "ideas," and is declaring his identity as an Ainu here.

According to the Akan-town's 1966 statistics (Akan-cho 1966: 39), out of the total of 103 Ainu townspeople, 45 (25 men and 20 women; 43.7% of the total) were legally living on the shore of Lake Akan. Supposing the average of members per household was 4.5 based on the statistics of household numbers and population before 1966, this means that there were 10 households on the lakeside. This not only does not differ much from the 11 households of 1955, when houses started to be built in the Ainu *Kotan*, but is also close to the number of the early Showa era around 1926 when there were eight to ten households, as the aforementioned Ms. R recalls. The population of Ainu *Kotan* as of October 1999 is 102 (50 men and 52 women), or 34 households (Akan-ko Ainu Kyokai 2000: 40), which means it has increased to three times that of 1955 (11 households in Ainu *Kotan*) in 44 years.

The tourists visiting the lakeside in the early stages asked about the Ainu names of places, plants, birds and fish, as well as legends, dances and songs passed on from the elderly (Yamamoto 1940: 10). Hoping to entertain the tourists, the *ekasi* (elder men) would dress formally and stand in front of cameras, while the *fuchi* (elder women) would tell old tales to the tourists (Takahashi 1966: i, 84).

Furthermore, in Ainu *Kotan*, an *onnecise* (large house) was built for use as a restaurant, lodging and dance venue, as well as a reproduction of a *poncise* (small house) as an Ainu lifestyle memorial hall to display traditional daily tools. Regarding this, Mr. P has commented as follows:

Mr. P: It was the idea of the locals (of Ainu *Kotan*) here, but everybody said we had to attract tourists, so they built it in 1970.

Irimoto: The rider's house (inexpensive lodging for young tourists traveling on motorcycles)?

Mr. P: It used to be called the "Ainu Tourist Center." We built it, and about 100,000 people came annually, and had lunch....

Irimoto: Oh, the restaurant.

Mr. P: The second floor was the restaurant and the entire first floor was a souvenir shop. Over the ten years from 1970 to 1980, we sold approximately 200,000,000 to 300,000,000 yens worth of goods. At the time, that *ryokan* (hotel) was short of workers, so they didn't serve lunch. Now they do serve meals. It's different from what we serve...they serve better meals, don't they? Therefore, the tourists go there. We immediately decided to quit, and now since the building is too old... I will now work socially, serve the community. Therefore, I decided to

accommodate visitors for 500 yen a night, with a hot spring bath. This has done quite well, and about 7,000 to 8,000 visitors come annually. These people come again and buy souvenirs too. So both (accommodation and souvenir selling) becomes ours (profit). See the current dance venue? That is just in its tenth year. The annual income is about 100,000,000 yen now. It's surprising, but this dance venue earns the most profit.

Irimoto: Because of its admission fee.

Mr. P: The expenses are low per performance.

Irimoto: I think the labor costs are quite high.

Mr. P: For instance, we sell souvenirs. These always have costs, right? There is no such thing in dance performances. Labor costs only add up to about one third.

The dance performance he refers to here is the "Ainu *koshiki buyo*" (Ainu ancient dancing) held at the *Onnecise* of Ainu *Kotan*. Currently, admission costs 1,000 yen for adults, and is performed twice a day at 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. between April 15 and April 28, and six times a day at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 8 p.m., 9 p.m. and 10 p.m., from April 29 to October 31.

There is a shuttle bus running between hotels that are located far from the Ainu *Kotan*. From the hotels nearby, tourists come to see it on foot. In fact, according to Mr. L from the Akan Kanko Kyokai, there were a total of 1,500,000 tourists annually, as of 1994 (800,000 over-night visitors and 700,000 day visitors), of which 80 percent visit Ainu *Kotan*. Therefore, the restaurants, rider houses and traditional dance performances are not just sources of income, but function as a contrivance to encourage tourists to visit these places and buy souvenirs. Accordingly, the daily activity for one of those who live in the Ainu *Kotan* is recounted in the extract that follows:

I have to pack this (souvenir) soon....This huge bear wood carving that costs 200,000 yen has been sold. It will be tough if I leave this (packing) until tomorrow, after I have finished packing this one. I've been packing since 10:30 (p.m.) and sending them out to customers. I must apologize, but professor, you must think this place is filthy. But actually, this serves as a living room, dining room and packing room. You see, if we do it in the shop, we will distract the customers. But then again, this is the only land-space we can rent. The second floor is everybody's bedroom, and we keep the stock on the third floor. So, when the shop closes, this place is used completely for packing. When they finish, the young ones drink beer or whatever they like here. I always have something to do, so I'm stuck with a pile of things here. I'm up until two to three (a.m.) everyday. You have to treat the employees with Yakitori, if you sell 500,000 yen a day, don't you? Once a week at least, telling them they've all worked hard. But there is a morning shift starting at five in the morning. There's a morning shift and a night shift. Under these conditions, I definitely sleep in until noon, or else the manager won't last through the day. Therefore, the younger staff takes the morning and night shifts. Those who get up at five eat lunch at twelve (noon,) and I get them to sleep until six in the evening. Since I can't sleep at that hour, I sleep in until eleven (a.m.) unless I have

some special meetings. Our breakfast is usually at twelve (noon.) We talk about work everyday, so it doesn't do any good to overwork. In Akan, the members of the boards of directors (of various organizations) usually start work around 1 p.m.

This cycle of activities continues from March to October, which is the tourist season. The number of visitors decreases from November to December, resulting in approximately 10 days without sales throughout the month in January and February. During the winter when tourists are scarce, people make woodcarvings. Thus their annual activity rhythm consists of woodcarving production during the winter and sales activity during spring, summer and autumn (the tourist season).

This discourse reveals how they observe the tourists' movements, and set devices and strategies for the tourists to enjoy the visit and buy souvenirs, from the visitors' view. They sell goods, pack them, and then send them out to their customers. There are management tasks to do, such as taking care of the employees who do all this work. Therefore, they are carrying out their daily activities based on a positive strategy to make a living out of tourism. The Ainu *Kotan* itself is a survival device strongly connected to the tourism economy. As I will mention in the next section, the Marimo Festival too, despite its original purpose directly being a countermeasure to protect aegagropilas, has increased its role as a part of people's survival strategy based on the tourism economy, after 50 years.

## CHANGES AND DISCOURSES OF THE MARIMO FESTIVAL

The Marimo Festival, which started in 1950, has been held every year along with the nationwide movement of returning poached aegagropilas to Lake Akan. In 1955, when the sixth Marimo Festival was held, the number of aegagropilas returned was 3,500. By the 1960's, however, there were no aegagropilas to be returned from anywhere in the country, so the restoration movement had completed its mission. The Akan Kanko Kyokai shifted the festival's purpose to prolong the autumn tourist season of Akan, because the festival became nationally renowned and a highly popular event (Shitaku 2000: 15). Referring to this point, an article in the Hokkaido Shinbun (1979. 10. 04) explains, "Since the protection of the endangered aegagropilas spread, the festival followed a peaceful, stable road. Therefore, in the 1960's, the festival's nature transformed from a protective one into a tourist-oriented one." In addition, Mr. P points out that the Festival "started to aim at both nature protection and what is called the 'economic effect' from about 1965 to 1970," and explains how it came about as follows:

At the time, the current president of the sightseeing boat...he really is a shrewd man, he's clever. The reason the festival is held on October 10 is because in those days, he wanted to extend the business season for 10 days, since the visitors stopped coming at the end of September. That was the idea behind it. It really worked; we ran the business for 10 more days. At the time, everybody...all the bus companies and travel agents cooperated in doing this. The locals living there and those who were involved all got together and extended the business season for 10 days. We brilliantly took advantage of the Marimo Festival.

As a matter of fact, the articles written every year about this festival (Akan Kanko Kyokai 1989: 9–12; Akan-ko Ainu Kyokai 2000: 10) tells us the festival changes that occurred in those years. The aegagropilas, returned from all parts of the country, were taken to the eastern lakeside of Akan after holding a “returning ceremony” at Akandake Shrine, and were then put back into the propagation grounds, *Kinetanpe*, by boat. At the 12th Marimo Festival in 1961, the Marimo procession, after leaving the Ainu *Kotan*, gave an appreciative prayer in front of the bust of former Masana Maeda, paid a visit to the Akandake Shrine and headed for the festival stage at Bokke. In the following year in 1962, the *Kamuy* Festival and “Taimatsu” (torchlight) procession was held as a pre-festival event. In 1963, in addition to the usual events, a boy’s fife and drum corps paraded and the sightseeing boat was illuminated at night. The 18th Marimo Festival in 1967 was held for three days from October 9 to 11. On the ninth, aegagropilas were brought up from the lake, taken to the Ainu *Kotan* by torchlight procession and the lake was illuminated with fireworks and lighted boats. The actual festival was held on the tenth, in which the customary aegagropila procession left the Ainu *Kotan* and the aegagropila-sending off ritual was held. On the eleventh, the local women and hotel employees held a Marimo dance parade. Since there were no more aegagropilas to be returned, the program of the festival changed, just as Mr. P explained, “They used to bring a few of them from the lake and do the *kamuynomi* (prayer to deities), but started to hold a welcoming ceremony in 1965.”

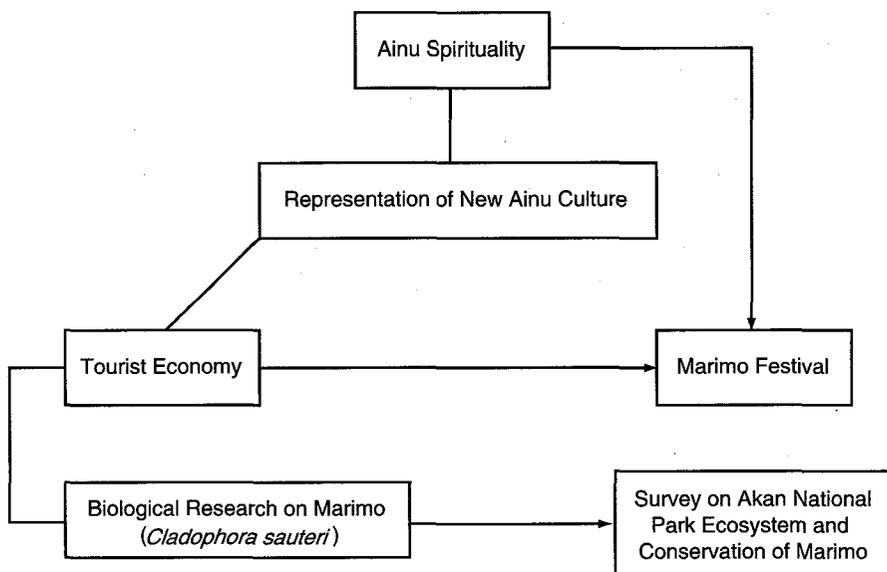
At the 21st Marimo Festival held in 1970, fireworks manufacturers gathered from all parts of the country for the customary fireworks display, setting off impressive fireworks, such as skyrockets, water-born fireworks and ground fireworks such as the “Niagara Falls” effect. From the 25th Marimo Festival in 1974, the date was fixed to be held between the eighth and tenth, which is a national holiday (Health and Sports Day). For the 29th Marimo Festival held in 1978, the torchlight procession was moved so that it was held on the second day, while on the eighth the Marimo procession carried out by executives of the Sightseeing Association and Women’s Society was held during the day and a pre-festival welcoming ceremony for the aegagropilas, and Ainu dances, were held in the Ainu *Kotan* at night. A ritual welcoming of the aegagropilas, fireworks display, torchlight procession and the *kamuynomi* (prayer to deities) were held on the ninth, and a ceremony sending off the aegagropilas came to be held on the tenth. Subsequently, various other tourist events were added—i.e. “Miss Marimo” contest was held at the 34th Marimo Festival in 1983, a music festival was held using a tourist cruiser as a stage in the 38th Festival in 1987, and a symposium and an exhibition were held as the centennial celebration of the aegagropilas’ discovery and naming in the 49th Festival in 1998. And so the Marimo Festival entered its 50th year in 1999.

These records indicate that the Festival was held as a part of the “homecoming” movement to protect the aegagropilas for the first ten years from 1950 to 1960, but its nature transformed into a tourist event in the next ten years from 1960 to 1970. 1960 was the first year in which tourism became a big trend after the war. From 1970 to this day, the schedule and program has been formalized. Although various events have been added to it, the Marimo Festival has established its position as the most important annual tourist event in Akan. Over these years, the number of tourists increased from 600 at the first festival to 800 at the fifth,

2,000 at the tenth, 10,000 at the twentieth and 20,000 at the twenty-eighth, which suggests that the festival's role as a tourist event has grown.

The interesting point here is that contrary to the strengthening connection between the tourism economy and the Marimo Festival, the biological elucidation of the aegagropila and its academic aspects are beginning to be segregated from tourism (Fig.2). In the discussion held in 1990 ("Akan-ko No Marimo" Hogokai 40-Shunen Kinen Jikko Iinkai 1990: 50, 52) the executive director of the Maeda Ippo Foundation said that since "the Marimo Festival is a business that should be done by the Tourist Association because it is promoting tourism," and "the main purpose of the Marimo Conservation Society is to carry out a diffusive enlightenment movement to protect (the aegagropila)," these "should be carried out separately, because some people might not accept it if the Conservation Society is unified with the Tourist Association, which will be a problem." This presumably means that the ecological investigation of the Akan National Park, which the Foundation is carrying out, is necessary for the protection of the aegagropila, so they cannot be directly involved with tourist-oriented events, such as the Marimo Festival. It is an undeniable fact that the Marimo Festival, in its fortieth year, had already been established as a tourist-oriented event, rather than an event to protect the aegagropila.

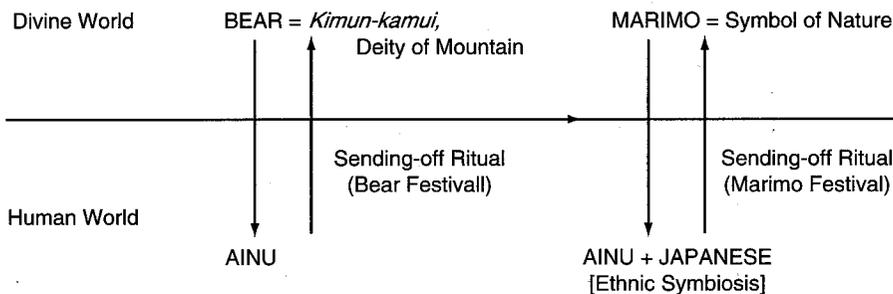
Regarding this opinion, however, Sakai Taneichi, the director of the Teshikaga Library said "the starting point (of the Marimo Festival) was to return the poached aegagropilas to the lake," so "I think the protection movement of the aegagropilas is related to the Marimo Festival to some extent" ("Akan-ko No Marimo" Hogokai 40-Shunen Kinen Jikko Iinkai 1990: 51). Moreover, Masanori Toyooka, the president of the Akan Ainu Association said,



**Figure 2** Relationships among biological research on marimo, tourist economy, and Ainu culture, to operate the Akan Marimo (lake-ball) Festival in 1999.

“(When you think about) how much the Marimo Festival has helped to spread the idea of appreciating the aegagropila, (the Marimo Festival) cannot be looked upon as mere tourism propaganda.” These opinions are appropriate when considering the situation in which the Marimo Festival was created, and they do not contradict the Foundation’s opinion. However, it is interesting to note that as Masanori Toyooka has said “I would like to thoroughly study with you all how we must live together with nature, through the aegagropila, which is designated as a protected species,” the Marimo Festival is not merely a tourist-oriented event, nor a protective countermeasure, but he values it within a large framework of the symbiotic relationship between nature and human beings. This shares its worldviews with the discourse of Tasuke Yamamoto, as I have already mentioned, in which he said, “(the Marimo Festival) shows appreciation to the ‘great nature’ through the aegagropilas, once a year, based on the Ainu’s nature worship.”

This new evaluation of the Marimo Festival apparently became clear as the ceremony welcoming the aegagropilas from the lake was newly created, after which they guarded them in a *cise* (house) in the Ainu *Kotan* and returned them to the lake the following day. This is precisely the reciprocity between nature (deities) and humans, based on the traditional Ainu complementary dualistic worldview (Yamada 1994: 58, 224; 2001). If they are considering the Marimo Festival that seriously—regarding the aegagropila as a symbol of natural blessings, instead of bears, fish or plants—and carrying the festival out in that sense, in the same way as the bear-sending ceremony, the Marimo Festival must be an event in which the relationship between nature (deities) and humans is portrayed, affirmed and reproduced. The Ainu worldview created a new festival theme of appreciating the “great nature.” In addition, the essential factor here, as I will mention in the next section, is that a field of ethnic symbiosis is created, in which the festival is not only organized by the Ainu, but also by the locals living at the beach of Lake Akan, including the *Wajin* (Fig.3).



**Figure 3** The idea of reciprocity between divine world and human world in bear festival and marimo festival.

## EVENTS AND DETAILS OF THE MARIMO FESTIVAL

### Program

The new altered role of the Marimo Festival does not only concern the tourism economy. I would like to comment on this through the field data obtained by observing the Marimo Festival. I will mainly write about the 45th Marimo Festival held in 1994. The schedule and program of the festival was as follows:

Sat. October 8, 1994

10:00 Lecture about the growth of aegagropilas (Akan Lakeside Visitor Center)

12:00 Field trip to the habitat of aegagropilas (Kinetanpe Bay)

Sun. October 9

13:00 Marimo dance procession, Marimo *mikoshi* (portable shrine) procession  
(from the entrance of Bokke to the Ainu *Kotan*)

Night festival

Fireworks display over the lake

18:30 Departure of illuminated boat for watching fireworks

19:00 Start of fireworks display

Marimo Welcoming Ceremony

19:30 *Kamuynomi* (prayer to deities) (lakeside park)

20:00 Torchlight procession (from the lakeside park to Ainu *Kotan*)

Marimo Guarding Ceremony

20:30 *Kamuynomi* (Ainu *Kotan, cise*), Ainu traditional dance (Ainu *Kotan* square)

Mon. October 10, National holiday (Health Sports Day)

Marimo Sending Ceremony

10:00 *Kamuynomi* (Ainu *Kotan, cise*)

10:30 Marimo Procession (from Ainu *Kotan* to Bokke square)

11:30 Ritual returning of the marimo to the lake (Bokke square), *Kamuynomi*,  
Ainu dance performance, ritual sending off of the marimo from a dugout  
canoe.

12:00 Distribution of cultivated aegagropilas as gifts

12:30 Marimo cruiser leaves the shore

Stage Show (Lakeside park)

10:00 Sale of Marimo grab bags

11:00 Performance by Akanko Secondary School brass band

12:30 Catching the local fish of Lake Akan with bare hands

13:00 Canoe-tour

The event was hosted by the town of Akan, Akan Kanko Kyokai and the Lake Akan Ainu Association. In addition, the mayor of Akan Town, the chairman of the Akan Town Assembly, the president of the Akan Town Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the president of the Union of Neighborhood Associations and the executive director of the Foundation

of Maeda Ippoen served as advisors to the executive committee, while the president of the Akan Kanko Kyokai was the chairman of the Festival Committee, and the vice-president of the Akan Kanko Kyokai and the president of the Lake Akan Ainu Association were the vice-chairmen. The Akan Town Board of Education, the Conservation Society of Aegagropilas of Lake Akan and the “Kurin Akan suishin kyougikai” (Clean Akan Promotion Committee) sponsored the festival. Moreover, in the section of the Ainu ethnic ceremonies, the locals of the Ainu *Kotan*, such as the president of the Lake Akan Ainu Association, served as the chairman, the official priest, the priest committee, the counselor, the general affairs section, the person in charge of the *cise*, the preparation committee, the reception committee and the dance section.

### Events Carried out by the Ainu

In the program prepared by the committee of priests, the *kamuynomi* (prayer to deities) and *icharpa* (ancestral worship) was carried out separately from the above-mentioned program at 13:30 and 15:00 on October 9. While the Marimo dance procession and Marimo *mikoshi* (portable shrine) were being held by the non-Ainu locals living by the lake, the *kamuynomi* and *icharpa* were only carried out by the Ainu. Such events particular to the Ainu consisted of three elements; firstly, the *kamuynomi*, secondly, the making of ritual tools, such as the *inaw* (offering sticks), and thirdly, a social gathering. Non-Ainu locals of Lake Akan generally do not take part in these events, and tourists do not get to see them either.

First of all, the *kamuynomi* is called *kotannomi*, because it is carried out by the people living in the Ainu *Kotan*, and is held on October 9 at the *poncise* (small house). According to Mr. P, “it is a service in which we seriously pray to the deities that we genuinely honor,” which is why “we celebrate it solemnly by ourselves.” The prayer is offered to a total of 25 deities (*kamuy*); 12 *kamuy* starting with the *sikanto sikama kamuy* (a deity presiding over heaven), five deities of the mountains (*nupuri*) and eight deities of the river (*pet, nay*). The priest sits in front of the hearth and prays as he offers *sake* to the fire deity with an *ikupasuy* (libation stick). Then he offers *sake* to the 25 *inaw* (offering sticks) dedicated to each deity, laid out in the *nusa* (altar) outside the house. The *kamuynomi* is then followed by the *icharpa* (ancestral worship) in which they burn a fire in a corner of the *nusa*. All men and women receive a small *inaw* from the priest, which they put up at the end of the *nusa*. They then offer *sake* to the deities with an *ikupasuy* and offer torn pieces of food to their ancestors. This service, *kotannomi*, is a solemn religious ceremony in which they thank the mountains and rivers of Akan, and the deities representing them, for letting them make a living throughout the year, and pray that the Marimo Festival will be carried out safely. For the Ainu, the *kotannomi* partly supports their spirituality, which gives significance to the Marimo Festival within their overall worldview.

Secondly, the people living in the Ainu *Kotan* take part in making the *inaw* and other tools used in the ceremonies. For the *kotan-nusa* (altar of the community), 25 *inaw* sticks and four *sit-inaw* (*nusa sikama kamuy*) are necessary. In addition, besides the *nusa* built next to the *poncise*, another *nusa* (altar) for tourists is built in front of the *onnecise* (large house), at the top of the central path running through the Ainu *Kotan*. Another 25 *inaw* sticks are also needed for this *nusa*, which the Ainu call the “tourist’s *nusa*.” Moreover, 30 *sit-inaw* sticks,

80 *cimesi-inaw* sticks and two *inaw* sticks to use by the lake to welcome the “marimo,” and two more *inaw* sticks for the dugout canoe to send off the “marimo” are necessary. *Inaw* sticks are made from willow trees. Therefore, they take young men into the mountains about 10 days beforehand, and teach them how to cut down the willows. Then they skin the bark off and dry them out for a week, carve them with a *makiri* (knife) and make *inaw* sticks out of them. Mr. P is “teaching such things to the young ones to train successors,” so he says that making the *inaw* sticks for tourists provides them with opportunities to practice. “Though it may be once a year, that is how we have learned to make them.” Of course, in order to hold the ceremony of *kamuynomi*, you need to learn the prayer in Ainu, how to make *sake* and the program and formality of the ceremony, in addition to how to make *inaw* sticks. Therefore, it can be said that Ainu culture is being passed on through preparing and carrying out the ceremony. Although the Marimo Festival itself did not originally exist in Ainu culture, it is helping to preserve Ainu culture.

Thirdly, there is the social gathering, among the various events that the Ainu carry out on their own. From the start of the Marimo Festival, elderly people from the neighboring *kotan* (villages) of Kushiro or Kussharo came to serve as the priest. In the fourth Marimo Festival in 1953, 30 Ainu took part, and in the 22nd Marimo Festival in 1971, 150 Ainu from all over Hokkaido, from Tokachi, and Hidaka to Kamikawa, participated. In the 32nd Marimo Festival in 1981, the number grew to 300, and by the 50th Marimo Festival in 1999, the number of participants hit 500, the highest ever. These Ainu participants take part in the torchlight procession of the “marimo” welcoming ceremony, or in the “marimo” procession in the sending-off ceremony, wearing their traditional costumes. They also compete in dancing at Bokke, the square in the Ainu *Kotan*. The Ainu who come to participate from all over Hokkaido now play indispensable roles as co-participants at the festival. At the social gathering, the president of the Lake Akan Ainu Association, who is also the chairman of the “shisaibu taisai-iin” (religious section’s festival committee), the mayor of Akan (chairman of Akan Town Assembly by proxy) and the president of the Akan Kanko Kyokai, as well as the representative director of the Hokkaido Utari Association—representing the Ainu of Hokkaido—showed their gratitude to all those who cooperated, and the dean of the Ainu *Kotan*, who is also the official priest, proposed the toast. At the social gathering of the 43rd Marimo Festival, the mayor of Akan, the “Hokkaido kyoshokuin kumiai gojokai” (Mutual Aid Society of Hokkaido Teachers and Staff Union) and the president of the Lake Akan Ainu Association, as the chairman of the executive committee, all gave addresses. Masanori Toyooka, the president of the Lake Akan Ainu Association, in particular said, “Festivals light up people’s hearts, and festivals bring back peace. So we should transcend the ethnic barriers and hold this festival.” Then the participants sat on both sides of the eight rows of tables inside a large room, face to face, drinking beer and eating.

When they had almost finished eating, each branch of the Hokkaido Utari Association performed dances one after another on the stage. Watching each branch perform, both performers and spectators were engulfed in a happy and friendly atmosphere, with the room filled with cheer and laughter. A large number of the participants come from urban cities outside eastern Hokkaido, such as Sapporo or Obihiro where the relatives live. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons many Ainu come to the festival from all over Hokkaido is to see their

friends and relatives again. Regarding this point, I asked Mr. P if everybody looked forward to coming every year, to which he answered as follows:

If you come to Lake Akan, you can use the Ainu language without second thoughts, you can sing Ainu songs and dance freely. That is what we look forward to. Some elderly people came 10 years in a row. Then, when you ask what has become of that person, usually they have become ill and passed away. Many people didn't have an outlet (for their culture) until the festival started, especially in the beginning. They don't teach Ainu at home to their children, do they? There was a time when it was disgraceful to be an Ainu, or when they thought the Ainu represented the poor...so they said they really enjoyed themselves for the first time when they came here. They danced and sang openly in the language they had to hold inside for many years. They came every year, saying they could express their feelings.

The important point here is the fact that it was more significant to attend the social gathering for the Ainu visiting Akan, than the official event of the Marimo Festival. The gathering is a place where they reassure themselves as Ainu. An Ainu sense of identity emerges here through the use of Ainu songs and dances as a common symbol of ethnicity. The people from various regions, who could not express their ethnicity in their daily lives despite their Ainu identity, could show their ethnicity freely and solve the inner conflicts and deviations between their identity and ethnicity.

### **Marimo Ceremonies**

I will now write about the "marimo welcoming" ceremony, the "marimo guarding" ceremony and the "marimo sending-off" ceremony, all of which form the core of the festival, while they are also events that overlap with the tourist-oriented aspect of the festival.

On October 9, as soon as the fireworks display over the lake finishes at the lakeside park, the "marimo welcoming ceremony" starts at the same place. A dugout canoe appears and comes close to the shore from the dark water surface. Three people are in this canoe; a person rowing the boat, another holding the marimo and another holding a torchlight. Since the aegagropila is a protected species, they obtain permission and borrow it temporarily for this day. At the lakeside, people holding torchlights stand on both sides of the person who receives the marimo. When the dugout canoe arrives at the lakeside, the marimo, set on a small wooden stand, are handed over to the receiver. Tourists, people from the media and the recording staff all swarm around, filming and shooting with flashlights. The hundreds of tourists who are standing behind this cluster cannot see what is going on, but other tourists watch this scene from windows of the high-rise hotels at the lakeside. The "marimo" are then given to the priest who is standing on a stage built to the side. The prayer to welcome the "marimo" is said out loud then. The priest walks down the stage as he holds the wooden stand with the marimo in front of him, with both hands, and leads the procession to the Ainu *Kotan*.

The torchlight procession, starting from the lakeside park, proceeds through the central street of downtown Akan where there are hotels and souvenir shops on both sides, and after

a 30-minute walk, it arrives at the Ainu *Kotan*, located at the west end of the town. The marimo are placed on a platform at the tourist-*nusa* built in front of the *onnecise*. Then the *kamuynomi*, which is the “marimo guarding” ceremony, is held inside the *cise*. The Ainu, who had been walking in the procession, all dance in a circle at the *Kotan* square. This is followed by a dance contest between each region. The tourists stand around the square and watch this dance as they capture the scenes with their video and still cameras. Then the MC explains, “they will dance praying for the good health of the visitors who are watching this in the cold.” When they finish dancing, the Ainu, who came from various regions, go to the above-mentioned social gathering. The tourists walk around as they look at the souvenir shops and leave before 21:00. The “marimo” are guarded inside the *cise*, where they spend the night.

The ceremony to send off the aegagropilas starts at 10:00 in the morning on October 10. On one side of the hearth, which is built on the stage inside the *onnecise*, the priest, and other elder men (*ekasi*) of the Akan Ainu *Kotan*, sit in a row, and the guest *ekasi* from various regions sit on the other side. This is how the *kamuynomi* is held. Then there is an announcement explaining, “This is a ceremony in which we send back the ‘marimo’, which rested in the Ainu *Kotan* last night, to the lake. It is a *kamuynomi* ritual which is held, following the Ainu *Kotan* customs with the participation of many *utari* (fellow friends) from all over Hokkaido.” The *onnecise* used here is usually a place where tourists are charged admission fees and watch Ainu dances being performed. However, the visitors on this morning are mainly the Ainu who have come from various regions to participate in the festival.

The marimo are placed in the seat of honor around the hearth. Rice cakes (double-decked *kagami-mochi*, or a round rice cake offered to the deities) and vegetables, such as Japanese radishes, cabbages, eggplants, burdocks and carrots are placed on the left side of the marimo, and fruit such as apples, persimmons, watermelons and plums are placed on the right side. Although the aegagropila is talked of as not being a *kamuy* (deity,) it sits in the center as if it were a highly honored *kamuy*, and is placed on a wooden stand with a *sapanpe* (crown.)

Just as the other rituals, the “marimo sending-off” ceremony starts with the comment, “*sino pirika tonoto* (this is excellent sake)” made by the *sintoko-osimakkuru* who checks how well the sake has brewed. The two *iomarekuru*, the sake pourers, serve sake to the *ekasi* of the *Kotan* and to the visiting *ekasi*. Each person offers sake to the fire deity with the *ikupasuy* (libation stick). The priest dedicates salt, tobacco and sake to the fire deity and says a prayer to the *kamuy* out loud. After praying, they drink the sake in the *tuki* (sake cup). Then sake is poured into everyone’s cup again and it is also offered with sake lees to the *inaw* stuck into the hearth. These *inaw* sticks are set against the wall of the *cise* as well as on the shelf over the hearth. They pray, offer sake and drink sake together. In the end, the *fuchi* (elder women), who were sitting behind the *ekasi*, offer sake to the fire deity. Each woman representing her region gets up onto the stage and dedicates sake to the fire deity. *Tuki* filled with sake are handed out in the room. People offer sake to the deity, pray and drink it. This is how the *kamuynomi* ritual, which started at 10:02, ended at 10:40. When this ceremony is finished, people leave the room and the procession to the Bokke starts.

At 10:53, the Marimo procession leaves the Ainu *Kotan*. The priest holds the small

wooden stand with the marimo on it with both hands as he walks through the hotel district. In front of the hotels, the president and staff members stand in a row and welcome the procession by clapping their hands. A song is played from a car, which is leading the procession, sending off the marimo with “*marimo hopnina hof tsunde-te-tee*” emanating from its loud speakers. The Ainu in the procession wear traditional clothing—some wear jackets because of the cold—and proceed to the center of downtown Akan. At 11:15, as they head a little to the south, they arrive at the statue of Masana Maeda in front of the tourist information office. An announcement is made saying, “We will dedicate a *kamuynomi* and *ku-rimse* (bow-dance) showing gratitude to the founder of Akan, the venerable sage, Maeda.” The representative of the Foundation of Maeda Ippoen welcomes the procession, and dedicates *sake* with two others, including the priest, using the *ikupasuy*. Then the bow-dance is performed in front of the portrait bust of Mr. Maeda. The portrait bust was built in 1961 by the “Kyoza konryukiseikai” (society for building the portrait bust) in recognition of his services in developing Akan.

At 11:25, they leave the bust of Masana Maeda, walk down the central street, and arrive at the Akandake Shrine at 11:30. Led by the priest, only the male members go up the stone steps, walk through the *torii* (gateway) and worship at the shrine at the top of a small hill. The Shinto priest welcomes them, receives the marimo from the priest and places it in the outer shrine. Then he recites a Shinto ritual prayer and hands out a piece of sakaki tree with paper *gohei* (paper streamers) to each Ainu. When the person receives it, he puts it in front of the deity, claps his hands and prays. Then at the end, they all clap their hands together. The Shinto priest brings a large *sake* cup, gives it to the Ainu priest and pours *sake* into it. The priest drinks a sip and hands it over to the person next to him. In the same way, everybody in the line drinks this *sake* from the large *sake* cup, holding the cup with both hands, one after another. At 11:40, when the service in the shrine finishes, the Ainu priest takes the wooden stand with the marimo on it in his hands and continues with the procession.

At 11:45, the brass band of the Akanko Secondary School welcomes the procession at the wharf of Akan Kanko Kisen (Akan sightseeing boat) in the lakeside park. At the 45th Marimo Festival, the Akan Kanko Kyokai gave flowers to the priest, the Ainu representatives from other regions and the composer of the “Marimo no uta (song of marimo).” At the 43rd Marimo Festival, two women, designated as “Miss Marimo”, gave the flowers to the priest. Then the procession starts moving again at 11:55.

At 12:00, they go to the external gate in front of the Maeda Memorial Hall of the Foundation of Maeda Ippoen, at the entrance to Bokke. The priest expresses gratitude to the representative who welcomes them there. His speech also signifies praying to the spirit of Mitsuko Maeda, who leased the land, at no charge, where the current Ainu *Kotan* is located. Then the procession walks along the path through the woods and arrives at Bokke at 12:15.

On arrival at Bokke, those in the procession gather at a grassy area on the west side of the pier. They set up a *nusa* here, spread out a tarpaulin, and the priest and *ekasi* members hold a *kamuynomi* service. Then an *icharpa* is held for the Ainu who came from other regions, while a dance contest is also held in the open space in front of the *nusa*. When they finish at 12:25, they all move to the pier, which is about 20 to 30 meters from the open space. On the way, small bottles of cultured aegagropilas are given to people as gifts. These cultured

aegagropilas are different from the aegagropilas of Lake Akan, a protected species, in that they are *Cladophora algae* artificially formed into balls, which are widely sold as souvenirs in the Akan hot springs district.

The priest, *ekasi* members and men with *tafusa* in their hands all line up in a small sandpit at the foot of the pier. Women sing a “marimo sending-off” song from the rear. The priest with the marimo gets into the dugout canoe, in which two rowers are seated at each end. The canoe floats beside the pier, a slight distance from the lakeshore. A “marimo sending-off” song is being sung on the shore. The priest puts the marimo back into the lake one by one, as he also offers an *inaw* stick. He makes the marimo float on the surface by squeezing the water out of them. The rear rower on the dugout canoe scoops up the floating marimo with a net and puts them back into the canoe. Since these are a national specially protected species, they take them back to their propagation grounds later on. So, they put all of the marimo into the lake, take them all out and the “marimo sending-off” ceremony finishes at 12:40.

As I have previously mentioned, the Marimo Festival consists of ceremonies that are mainly held by the Ainu, re-propagation activities of the aegagropila’s academic research and events that are mainly held by non-Ainu locals of Lake Akan. The ceremonies welcoming, guarding and sending-off the marimo are the section where the Ainu ritual and tourist-oriented events overlap. This portion makes up the core of the Marimo Festival, originating from the sending-off rituals based on the Ainu worldview. Moreover, the history of Lake Akan is woven into the spatial movement—i.e. festive procession—in the form of a dance of dedication in front of the portrait bust of the owner of Maeda Ippoen, or offering of the marimo at the shrine. As it is evident in the act of renting the national specially protected aegagropilas and collecting them, the Marimo Festival—although it is based on fiction—is integrated and presented as a single festival by tactfully combining Ainu rituals, the history of Akan and tourist events together.

## CONCLUSION

### **Ethnicity and Creation of a New Ainu Culture**

Ethnic tourism means to market the ethnicity, which also means to dismantle and reassemble Ainu culture. It is to dissolve the system and its elements once—i.e. to build a new Ainu culture by using the songs, dance, rituals, clothes and patterns as symbols. When I say “a new Ainu culture,” I do not mean the Ainu culture of hunting and fishing, but an Ainu culture for displaying their ethnicity, which becomes their new means of subsistence. Namely, it can be referred to as Ainu culture as tourists culture. The Marimo Festival forms part of this new Ainu culture; adapting the rituals for tourism, while preserving the spirituality that lies at the very core of Ainu ethnicity. However, as the Ainu themselves say, if they consider the Marimo Festival a thanksgiving festival held once a year, and pray—seriously offer a prayer—to the deities of Akan, then it should become a genuine activity of their spirituality. This is a creation of a new Ainu culture, or it can also be called a spiritualization of tourism. Despite the criticism that the Marimo Festival is fictional, it transforms into a genuine festival when the Ainu evaluate it within their spirituality and carry out the festival earnestly. As the

changes and adjustments in the festival's program indicate, as well as the Ainu's repeated discourse that it is an appreciation rite to the "great nature," the tourism economy—their basis of living, their spirituality and the festival all fit together as one, functioning as their current Ainu culture.

### Identity and Ethnic Symbiosis

Consequently, the most interesting characteristic here is the fact that an ethnic symbiosis is formed through the creation and practice of this festival, and that it is being maintained. The creation of the festival, the history of the Ainu *Kotan* and tourism economy, as well as the current structure and management of the festival are all the process of ethnic symbiosis. The term "ethnic symbiosis" here does not only mean mere harmony, but is the result of a shrewd and flexible survival strategy (Irimoto 1997), as seen in their discourse and practice.

In addition, their identity is manipulated. They know when to use their identity as Ainu, and their identity as Lake Akan locals living on the tourism economy. It is interesting that the more they emphasize their Ainu ethnicity in the festival, the further their Ainu ethnic identity moves into the identity of the larger group of Lake Akan locals, including other Ainu and the *Wajin*. The awareness of the original oneness (Irimoto 1994b: 426; Irimoto 1996b: 4) of all the participants is established in the festival. This is a characteristic that authenticates the festival as a field, owing to their realistic reason of co-owning the tourism economy and the historic course. Nevertheless, as was seen in the creation of the festival, although the groups may be pursuing different interests, it may be stated that an ideologically common sense of identity was established among the people by integrating their different interests, and setting a new goal and framework covering them all.

Indeed, the survival strategy of Lake Akan was a process of ethnic symbiosis, as it is symbolized in the creation of the Marimo Festival. The "protection of the aegagropila" in the creation of the festival, or the current discourse saying that it is "an appreciation rite to nature" is their worldview and their explanation at the same time. However, there is always the reality behind it. The reality is that they need the presence of others in order for their own survival. The important point here is that their existence and the presence of others is not an opposing relationship. Through their assertions and compromises, as well as their ethnic expression, discourse and manipulation of identity, a form of living called "symbiosis" is established in order to lead a better life.

Utilizing the "discourse" stressing the universality of "kind protection," "appreciation" and "great nature," rather than the "discourse" provoking antagonism and conflicts, the relationship between ethnicities is evolving into a symbiotic relationship from a confrontational one. In addition, the Ainu use their Ainu culture as their symbols, while the *Wajin* use their *Wajin* culture as their symbols, which are integrated, leading to the emergence of a united field of oneness, although each group is representing their own ethnicity. As is evident in the discourse, "the Marimo Festival should be continued...by the Ainu and the *Wajin* cooperating together," the Marimo Festival is the very process of the ethnic symbiotic relationship of Akan, while it is also an event in which they confirm and reproduce this relationship.

It is certainly not only the economic reasons and the techniques of "discourse" that

make this symbiotic relationship possible. After all, I can point out that the human roles and humanity, which tie these dissimilar groups together by their ceremonial activities, are essential, as was evident in the creation of the festival.

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