“Fermented Food Culture”

Most of Japan's climate is classified as temperate, with Hokkaido and areas west of Amami in the subarctic and subtropical regions, respectively. There is ocean on all sides, and the air tends to be humid. It is blessed with mountain ranges and has abundant water.For this reason, Japan has four distinct seasons, is a treasure trove of diverse creatures even in Asia, and can be said to be a land of lush greenery. In this environment, the Japanese people developed sensitivity and a diverse culture. This time, I would like to take a look at Japan from the perspective of fermentation culture. The moderate temperature and presence of moisture are suitable for microbial fermentation such as mold, and Japan has a unique fermentation culture. These include soy sauce, miso, natto, pickles, bonito flakes, sake, shochu, and sushi.

In addition, a variety of microorganisms thrive in the soil, decomposing organic matter brought from the mountains, creating a fertile earth that provides bountiful crops such as stone-backed vegetables, fruits, and flowers. On the other hand, there are pathogenic microorganisms such as athlete's foot and infectious diseases, but they fade with the changing seasons.

Now, antibiotics are medicines produced by actinomycetes, a type of fungus found in soil. Judging from Japan's climate, it seems that there are numerous types of actinomycetes, so we can say that we live on a treasure trove of antibiotics. Ivermectin, an antibiotic obtained from the culture of soil actinomycetes, is effective against endemic African diseases that lead to blindness, and saves hundreds of millions of people every year. The discoverer, Satoshi Omura, won the Nobel Prize in 2015 for his achievements.

Japan is said to be a resource-poor country, but I feel that it is by no means a resource-poor country, including its excellent technology, diverse culture, tourism, deep-sea food, and the antibiotic deposits mentioned above. But is this just me?