**3 million middle-aged 'parasite singles' in Japan: gov't statistics**

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There are about 3 million unmarried people aged between 35 and 44 in Japan who live with their parents, and 11.5 percent of the so-called middle-aged "parasite singles" don't have jobs, according to data released by the Statistical Research and Training Institute at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Many of the people who were referred to as parasite singles when they were in their 20s and 30s in the 1990s are believed to have continued to remain unmarried and live with their parents. In those days, parasite singles were those who lived with their parents beyond their late 20s in order to enjoy a carefree and comfortable life.

The Statistical Research and Training Institute estimated the number of middle-aged parasite singles based on the labor force survey conducted in September 2010 by the internal affairs ministry. According to the estimates, there are 2.95 million people aged between 35 and 44 who are unmarried and live with their parents. They account for 16.1 percent of the total number of people in the same age bracket.

The number of middle-aged parasite singles has jumped from 1.12 million in 1990 (accounting for 5.7 percent of the total number in the same age bracket) and 1.59 million in 2000 (accounting for 10 percent of the total number in the same age bracket). Their employment status is also unstable, with their unemployment rate at 11.5 percent against 4.8 percent for the total number of people in the same age bracket. Their non-regular employment rate (with the length of a contract less than one year) stood at 11.2 percent.

Analysis made by experts, including Masahiro Yamada, professor at Chuo University, who coined the term parasite singles, shows that the average annual income for unmarried people aged 35 or older who live with their parents dropped to 1.38 million yen in 2004 from 2.04 million yen in 1994. The real picture of parasite singles that used to represent youths who were leading easy lives in those days has changed. Fumihiko Nishi, an advisor at the Statistical Research and Training Institute, said that they tended to live with their parents longer apparently because they could not afford to do otherwise financially.

There are also 10.64 million unmarried people aged between 20 and 34 who live with their parents. Professor Yamada said, "If the number of people who cannot care for themselves increases, the birthrate could decline further and the number of people who live on welfare could rise."

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