

**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
(CERD)**

96th session (6 – 30 August, 2018)

**Japan Committee for Citizen's Rights and Honors Report
on Response to the Tenth to Eleventh Periodic Report of
JAPAN**

The Ainu in Japan

July 12, 2018

Japan Committee for Citizen's Rights and Honors (JCCRH)

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Relevant recommendations and statements

Concluding observations (CERD/C/JPN/CO/7-9) : Paragraph 20 and 24

Government Report (CERD/C/JPN/10-11): Paragraph 17-33 and Paragraph 201- 222

The actual facts of the Ainu in the history of Japan are substantially different from those of indigenous peoples outside Japan, which, however, are not necessarily recognized by the member countries of the United Nations. In this context, their verification is going to be carried out as follows.

1. Were Ainu people forced to become Japanese nationals?

Although many people insist on the Ainu, “After the Meiji Period, the government forced the Ainu to become Japanese nationals and robbed them of their lands, cultures, etc.”, such assertion is not the case. That most of them willingly became Japanese nationals and have been living with Japanese since then is an undebatable fact, while no one can deny the possibility that Ainu people thought at that time, “We don’t want to be subject to discrimination” under then-situation where Japan was involved in more than one war. (Reference Material 1)

2. Did the government of Japan establish an “unjust law” for making the Ainu obey Japanese people and also impose it on the Ainu?

Entering the Meiji Period, the government of Japan established “Hokkaido Native People Protection Act” with concerning about the future of “Ainu” people whose living and academic standards were considerably low compared to those Japanese other than Ainu people (wa-jin). You should immediately know the true fact if reading the minutes explaining the reason the bill was submitted to the Diet, which says, “Even if the Ainu is an inferior race destined to be extinguished, we Japanese have to protect and save them from the spirit of chivalry.” (Reference Material 2)

Also, “Hokkaido Native People Protection Act” was a law being established simply because in light of the fact that many Ainu people were not able to read/write or do

figures at that time, Ainu people themselves wished, “We want you to protect us and establish a law enabling us to soundly receive Japanese-style education”. Therefore, such assertion as “Meiji government established an unjust law for taking control of the Ainu” is clearly consistent with the historical facts.

Actually, there remains an article from a newspaper at that time saying, “the representatives of the Ainu in Hokkaido visited the Diet in Tokyo to request the establishment of a law protecting them”. Such newspaper article is stored in a literature supervised and issued by Hokkaido Utari Association, the previous organization of “Ainu Association of Hokkaido”. (Reference Material 3)

3. Did the government of Japan rob the Ainu of their cultures?

A spreading false rumor says, “The government of Japan robbed the Ainu of their cultures and lands that they had been governing in Hokkaido by establishing a discriminatory law named ‘Hokkaido Native People Protection Act’”. In fact, there has ever been no type of human race like “the Ainu” since old times because many peoples including wa-jin immigrated to Hokkaido and have been repeatedly interbred there from old days. People made a distinction between “Ainu and Non-Ainu” solely from the differences in their appearance. In addition, it is no doubt that the Ainu formed tribes everywhere, but such tribes constantly and repeatedly engaged in various kinds of wars among them such as looting, revenge and the abduction of young girls, totaling in as many as 78 wars just on record. Taken all together, it is hard to say that the Ainu governed Hokkaido before the Meiji Period. They were nothing but a tribe spending primitive lives. Further, regarding Ainu cultures as well, an Ainu doctor from Hokkaido University specializing in the Ainu once testified that most of Ainu cultures had already become extinct before the Meiji Period and that in the Meiji Period Ainu-derived Japanese barely conserved its cultures. (Reference Material 4)

Specifically, the Ainu language didn’t have letters. Globally speaking, those languages without letters have been going extinct and, not surprisingly, no one actually came to use the Ainu language as his/her native one in 1960’s. In this context, many researchers visited Hokkaido to study the Ainu language for the purpose of recording it anyway. Therefore, we have to say that such assertion as “the Meiji Government robbed the Ainu of the Ainu language” actually being on the verge of death as explained above is too

biased, one-sided one. It is true that several Ainu cultures were banned, but such bans were imposed based on fully convincing rationales at that time. For examples, “the ban on tattooed faces” was imposed from an idea that any difference in an Ainu’s appearance with that of other Japanese was likely to cause disadvantages to him/her; “the ban on trick nets with poisoned spears” was imposed because a danger to many passengers had developed; and “the ban on the burn-off of residential buildings where people have passed away” was put since such custom had made the Ainu poorer. It can be said that Meiji Government banned these Ainu cultures based on clear, convincing and consistent rationales.

Also, Isabella Bird, a well-known British explorer and essayist, who visited Hokkaido at that time clearly stated in her book that the Meiji Government of Japan gently dealt with the Ainu instead of cracking down on them, that the Ainu failed to build sound cultures, and that the living of the Ainu was a little more than “that of primitive people”. (Reference Material 5)

4. How did Ainu people understand their situations?

After Japan was defeated in the Second World War, GHQ called in four Ainu people representing them for opinion hearing. In a book published by Hokkaido Utari Association (currently Ainu Association of Hokkaido), as their communication with Lieutenant General Joseph M. Swing who was responsible for the hearing, there remains a portion titled “Record of Meeting between Ainu Representatives including Mr. Kenichi Shiiku and Lieutenant General Joseph M. Swing”. This material successfully explains how those four Ainu people representing them viewed their own situations at that time.

In that meeting, Lieutenant General Swing asked the Ainu representatives, “Are you guys special Ainu people? This is the time when you Ainu people should attain their independence if you want.” Then, all of the four Ainu representatives replied, “We are all Japanese, not a special race.” In response, Lieutenant General Swing made extra sure by saying, “You guys shouldn’t have a fight with samo (meaning other Japanese). Never ever fight with samo, especially after intentionally overlooking an opportunity to attain your independence.” We cannot help being impressed by Lieutenant General Swing’s such insight if looking at the current situation where the argument has been

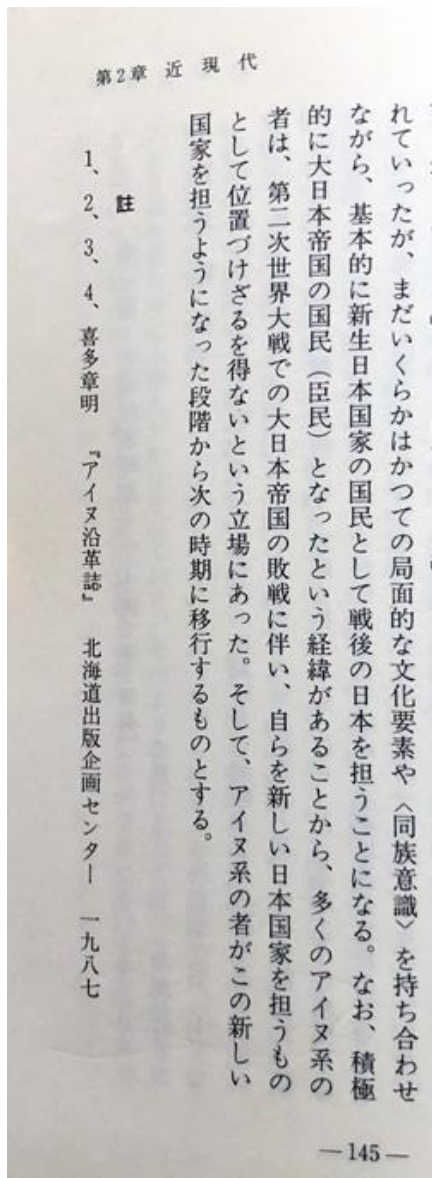
advancing almost surely in a way he was concerned then. (Reference Material 6)

5. Conclusion

As above, we have, by presenting the facts only, made cases against the opinions on the Ainu expressed by other NGOs. We also strongly would like to add a historical fact that the Ainu should not be categorized as an indigenous people by UN standards from the perspective of their historical backgrounds as well and that unlike indigenous peoples of other countries, Meiji Government squarely faced them in a gentle manner without killing or cracking down on them. Most Japanese have hard feelings for praising the Ainu with lies and delusions in a same way as they have done to indigenous peoples of other countries, even fearing that this issue would tear Japanese people apart. We would very much like the members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to make a good decision on this issue.

(Reference 1)

Ainu History/Overview Motomichi Kono (Note 1), author 145p



…Due to the background that they actively became nationals (subjects) of the Empire of Japan, along with the defeat of the Empire in the Second World War, many people of Ainu descent were forced to position themselves in the new Japanese state.

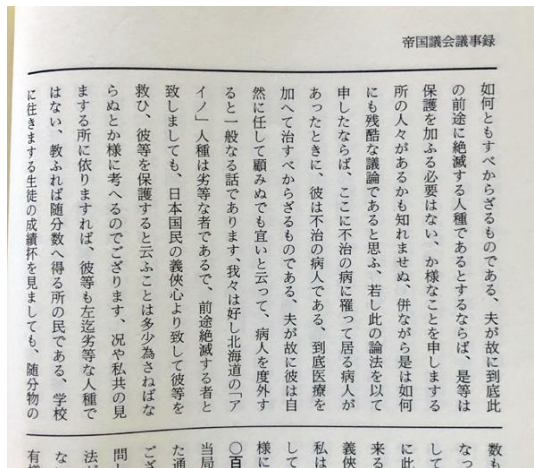
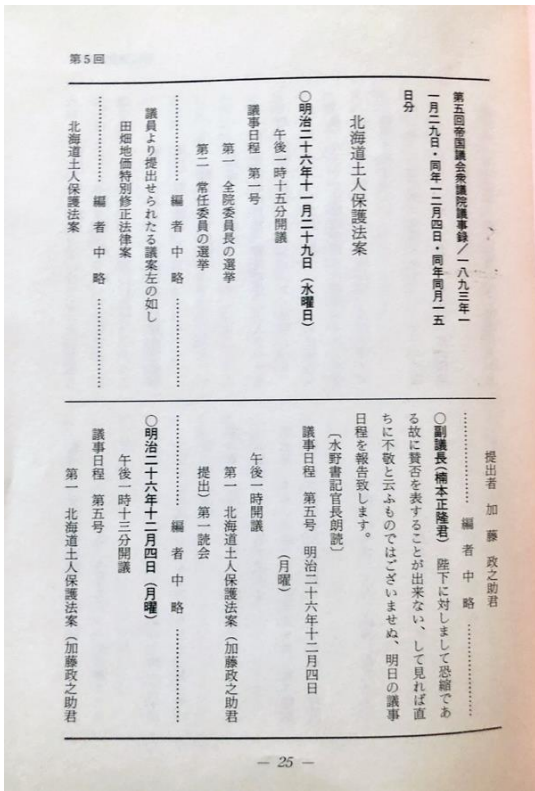
(Note 1) Motomichi Kono (1939–March 2, 2015 [1]) was a Japanese cultural anthropologist and archaeologist. His specialty was cultural anthropological and archaeological research on the Ainu.

(Reference 2)

Minutes of Imperial Diet

Minutes of 5th Imperial Diet, House of Representatives/November 29, 1893/December 4 of same year/15 of same month and same year

Masanosuke Kato (No. 222)

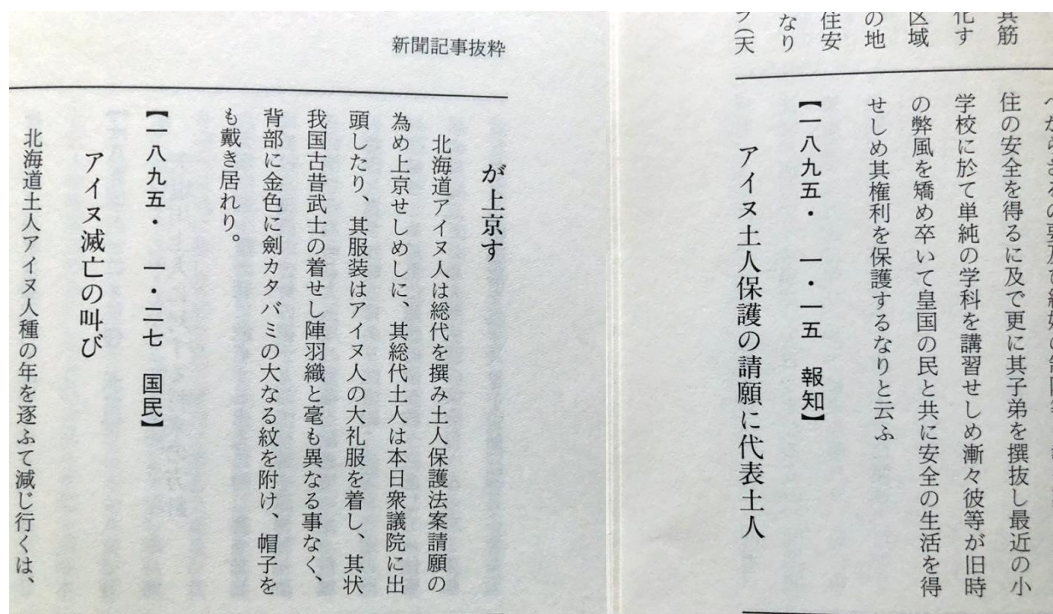


I will explain the reason why the bill for the Hokkaido Aborigines Protection Act was submitted. (Omitted) We like to think that that the "Aino" race of Hokkaido are an inferior race, and if we regard them as a race that will become extinct (this means that even though we Japanese are fine and Ainu people in Hokkaido are inferior and destined to become extinct), based on the chivalrous hearts of the Japanese people, we must to something to save them and protect them.

(Reference 3)

Ainu History Reference Section 4 Published by the Hokkaido Utari Association
(currently the Hokkaido Ainu Association)

Newspaper article excerpt 721p-722p



January 15, 1895 Hoki Shimbun

Ainu representatives came to Tokyo to petition to establish the Hokkaido Aborigines Protection Act

The Ainu people in Hokkaido selected representatives, who went to the current House of Representatives in order to petition the establishment of the Hokkaido Aborigines Protection Act. At that time, the formalwear of the Ainu was not at all different from the Nishijin fabric which the samurai have worn in our country from ancient times; on their backs was a large gold colored "steel oxalis" crest and they wore hats.

(Reference 4)

Hokkaido University Newspaper dated January 31, 1955

From contribution by Professor Mashiho Chiri of Hokkaido University (Note 2)



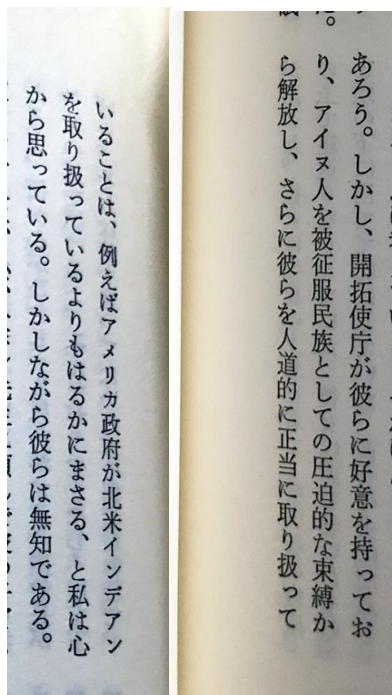
(Why are the Ainu are treated as a different ethnic group)

...The Ainu culture has already been destroyed in the Meiji era, and the culture has been subsequently maintained somewhat by the so-called Ainu-Japanese people.

(Note 2) Mashiho Chiri (February 24, 1909–June 9, 1961) was an Ainu linguistics scholar. Doctor of literature. His specialty was Ainu language studies. His older sister Sachie Chiri was the author of "Collection of Ainu Mythology" He was a professor of Hokkaido University. His supervising professor was Kyosuke Kindaichi. Born in Noboribetsu Town, Horobetsu District (currently Noboribetsu City)

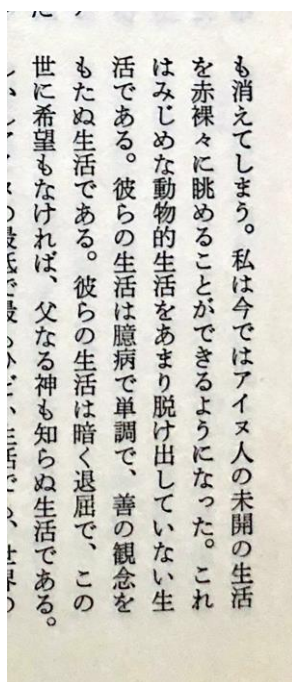
(Reference 5)

“Unbeaten Tracks in Japan” Author: Isabella Bird (Note 3), Publisher: Heibonsha



286p–287p

… *The Hokkaido Development Commission (a government agency for Hokkaido development by the Japanese government) is favorable toward them, and I sincerely believe that liberating the Ainu people from the constraining bondage as a conquered people and dealing with them more humanely is far better than dealing with them as the United States government deals with the North American Indians.*



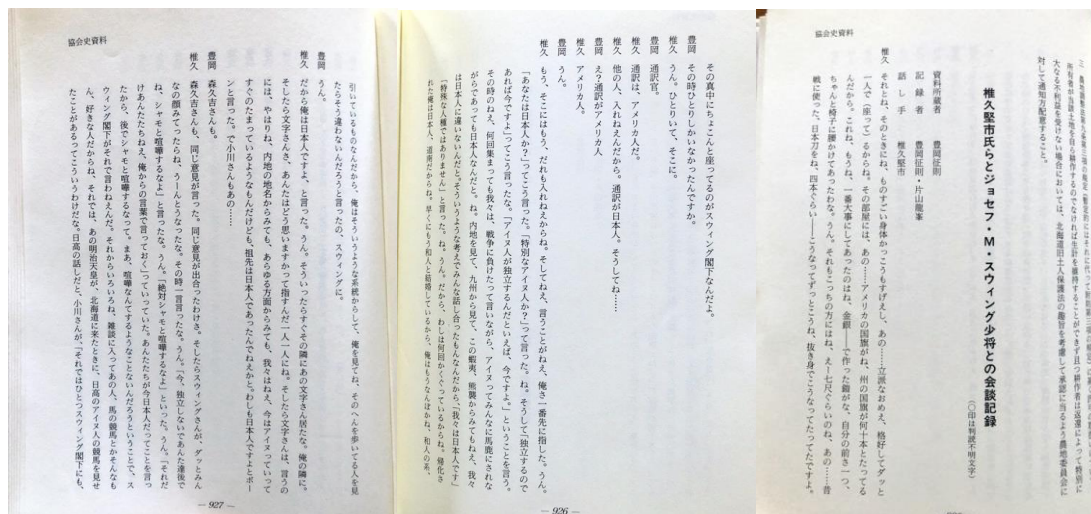
290p

I now can see clearly the Ainu people's unexplored lifestyle It is a lifestyle that has not escaped the miserable lives of animals. Their lives are cowardly and monotonous, with no concept of Zen. Their lifestyle is dark and monotonous, with no hope in this world, and God the Father is unknown in their lives.

(Note 3) Isabella Lucy Bird, (Oct 15, 1831–Oct 7, 1904) was a traveler, explorer, and travel writer of the 19th century British Empire.

(Reference 6)

Ainu-shi Shiryo-hen 3 (History of the Ainu, Reference Material vol.3), Shadan-hojin Hokkaido-utari-kyokai (Hokkaido Utari Associasion, the present day Hokkaido-ainu-kyokai, or the Hokkaido Ainu Association)



Records of Conversation Between Kenichi Shiiku and Major General Joseph. M. Swing (Note4)

Shiiku (Note5) : They called me first. He (Major General) asked me, "Are you Japanese?" He then said "Or are you an Ainu, someone special." Then he said, "If you are going to gain your independence, now is the time." "Now is the time for the Ainu to become independent." At that time, every time we gathered, we were talking amongst ourselves like this. Although we lost in the war, and although people mock us for being Ainu, we are Japanese. From the perspective of the mainland people, Kyushu people, from the Ezo or the Kumaso people, we are without doubt Japanese. That's how we thought, and talked among ourselves. So I told him, "We are Japanese, not a special race." ... I was naturalized, and am Japanese, living in southern Hokkaido. I told him, I married a Wajin (Japanese) early in my life, and I have some Japanese lineage. That's my lineage. So I'm not that different from any Japanese walking about. That's what I told Swing. So I'm Japanese, I told him. ... then Mr. Monji said... that his ancestor was probably Japanese. And that he is Japanese, he said, just like that. And then Mr. Ogawa too... and Mr. Hisakichi Mori said the same thing. We all had the same opinion. Then Mr. Swing looked at us all, said hmmm, and commented. "If you are not going to fight for independence now, don't fight later with the Shamo (Japanese). Be sure not to fight with the Shamo."

(Note 4) He held hearings with the Ainu after WWII, as a leader of the US military that occupied Japan at the time.

(Note 5) The four men, Shiiku, Monji, Ogawa, and Mori were present at the U.S. military hearing as representatives of the Hokkaido Ainu.