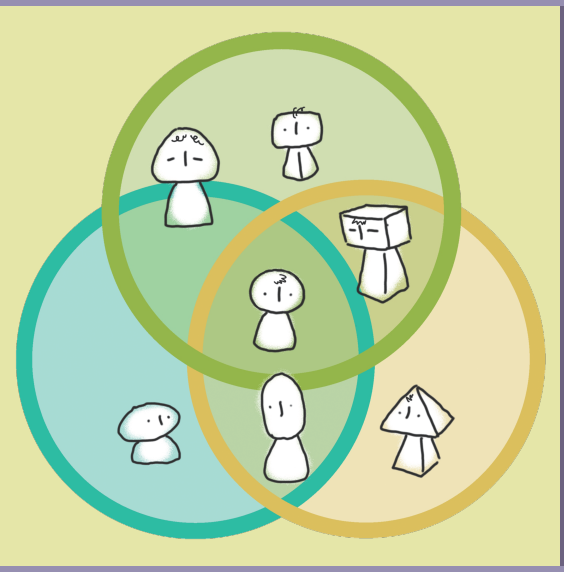
Connecting and Disentangling Ainu and Wajin



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Hokkaido University
Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies
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Contents

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Mokottunas Kitahara

Introduction

The Hokkaido University Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies (CAIS) is pleased to publish *Connecting and Disentangling Ainu and Wajin* as CAIS Booklet Vol. 13. Who is Ainu? Who is Wajin? In which group do you belong? Confronted with these questions, some might pause to wonder whether they should have to choose between the two. One of the aims of this booklet is to guide you in considering this.

The lifestyles of Ainu have been diversifying. If you take in account gender, occupation, age group, sexual orientation, non-Ainu roots (e.g., other Asian descent, African descent, European descent, etc. (see Table 1), 4,096 potential combinations of descriptive attributes can be calculated. In reality, there are many more attributes, as Ainu people live in various places and their roots, occupations, and other aspects of their lifestyles are diverse. Further, the general feeling today is that people should have the freedom to choose their own way of life and that this choice is underpinned by when, where, and to what kind of family a person was born into. If a person is compared to a tree their birth can be likened to a tree putting down roots

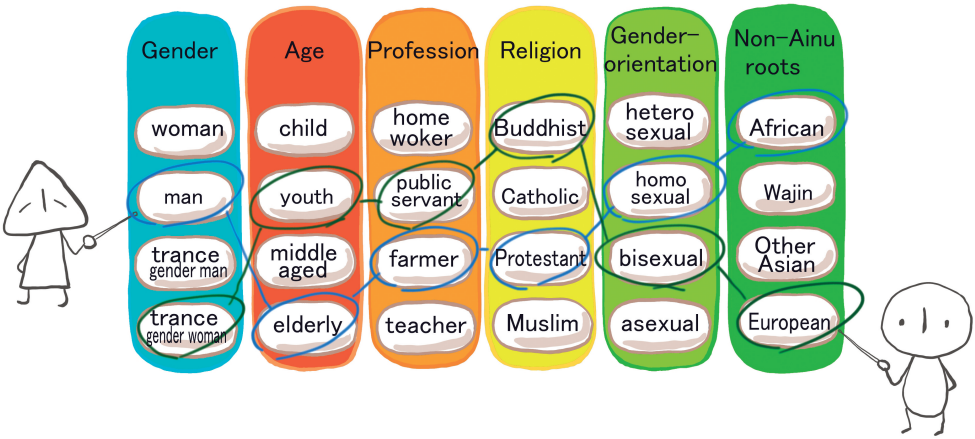
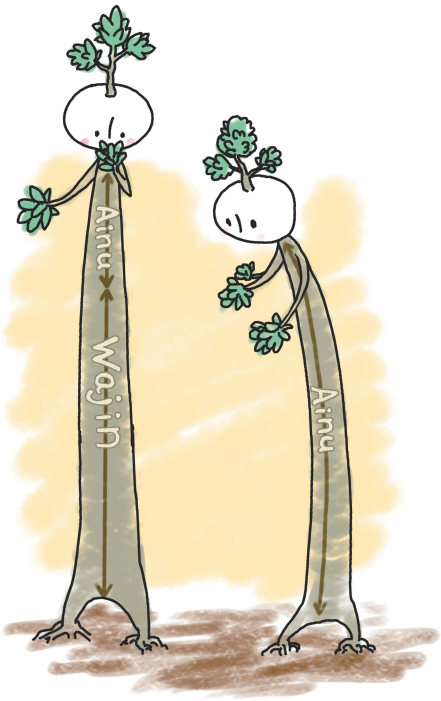


Table 1. Based on "Diversity Captured in Six Frames" in Kim and Yoon (2021)

and budding, and the environment into which someone is born can be likened to the soil in which the tree grows. Even though, people can choose their way of life after birth, for example, by relocating and forging relations with others, where and how a person is or becomes rooted is not a matter of choice. Such fundamental "root experiences" shape whether a person identifies as Ainu, Wajin, or of a different descent. With regard to trees, there are hybrid seeds produced through cross-pollination, for example, willow seeds that combine long-leaved and round-leaved varieties. Likewise, for people of mixed descent—with Ainu, Wajin, and/or ancestry from other peoples, some may choose to identify with one of their ancestries, whereas others may feel that all their ancestries have played equal roles in making them who they are. While people's roots cannot go unchanged, how a person feels about those roots is up to them.

Adoption, parental remarriage, and other circumstances bring some people into human relationships that differ from those at birth. If such a change occurs early, their "roots" and "shoots" will adapt to their environments. It is also not uncommon that various circumstances can prevent people from knowing or being conscious about their roots until they have grown up. Ainu have come to believe they have the freedom to consider such new environments and roots they find later in life as parts of their own identity (see p. 90). This may raise the question of whether anyone can choose to become Ainu or Wajin. Of course, things are not that simple (see p. 106).

Some may say that they do not care what their roots are and that it does not matter, but things that are trivial to some may be important to others and may defy easy explanation. The main reasons for this include discrimination and ethnocentrism in society. Another aim of this booklet is



to foster empathy for other people among and within ethnic groups. Just as people in other ethnic groups do, Ainu people face many different circumstances, making it rather difficult for people to find others who are in exactly the same circumstances as they are. However, people need to empathize with one another while valuing differences, rather than eliminating them. Empathy is fostered when people spend time respectfully interacting with people. The psychological studies used as a reference for this booklet reveal that empathy is nurtured by the very thought that "one can empathize." Finding time or opportunities to interact with people may not be easy, but reading about other people's way of thinking and experiences can also have some effect.

With the aforementioned objectives of this booklet in mind, Chapter 1 discusses the structure and history of disparities and discrimination in Japanese society. Chapter 2 explains patterns of thinking about ethnicity (ethnic standpoints). People who want to learn about experiences and problems related to ethnicity and discrimination are advised to skip these chapters and start with Chapter 3, which explains statements and expressions that are bandied about regarding Ainu and other minorities, followed by angles from which to consider these comments. Chapter 4 is a collection of conversations with Ainu and Wajin about their experiences. At the end

of the booklet is a bibliography for those wishing to take a deep dive into each theme. It is hoped that this booklet will help you know and think about yourself and others.

Chapter 1. The Birth of Ainu and Wajin

The way "ethnicity" is constructed is new and fuzzy yet it is of great significance in today's societies. Let's take a look at the reasons for that significance.

People who lived in the Japanese archipelago from Hokkaido to the Tohoku region of Japan's main island of Honshu, on Sakhalin, and on the Kuril Islands are referred to as Ainu, whereas those who lived on the remaining parts of Japan's main islands (Shikoku, Kyushu, and the rest of Honshu) are called Wajin (ethnic Japanese). Living to the south of Kyushu were the Amaminchu (people native to the Amami Islands) and the Uchinanchu (people native to the Ryukyu Islands). On the Bonin Islands (a.k.a. the Ogasawara Islands) were settlers who included indigenous Hawaiians and settler Europeans.

In the Meiji era (the late 19th century), Wajin established a new nation-state and integrated people around it into that state. This brought groups of people who had lived separately from each other into majority-minority relationships within a single state, gradually leading to clear-cut definitions of who was Ainu and who was Wajin. (Note: in this booklet the terms "minority" and "minority group" will be used as that is common nomenclature and many readers are not yet familiar with the term "minoritized," which better clarifies how the state of being minoritized is not a natural given and is a result of oppression.) The sense of bemusement people have today as to whether someone is Ainu or Wajin is a consequence of an oversimplistic impression from that time, one that fails to reflect diversity that exists in reality.

Some of you may have never seen the word Wajin. Despite the availabil-

ity of the common term, "Japanese," there is a reason why the term Wajin is used. According to the authoritative *Kōjien* dictionary, the term "Japanese" has two meanings: people with Japanese citizenship, regardless of their roots; and an ethno-racial group of Japanese-speaking Asians who are thought to have descended from Mongols. People with roots in various places can acquire Japanese citizenship, but those who have become Japanese citizens only recently differ from the majority of the population who have lived in Japan for generations in terms of language, culture, and consciousness. Although both groups of people are Japanese nationals, the term Wajin is used to distinguish the majority in discussions of language, culture, and roots from other peoples. The term Wajin began to be used by Wajin themselves in the Edo period (1603 to 1868). In prewar days, Wajin were also referred to as *naichijin* (mainlanders) and *ittō kokumin* (first-class citizens).

Ainu and Wajin are considered ethnic groups: *minzoku* in Japanese. In modern parlance, *minzoku* is often associated with "people who wear particular clothes, have their own customs, and are bound by pre-modern values and customs." This may make some people feel a certain awkwardness when they learn that "ordinary" people like Wajin are also members of an ethnic group, but it is better not to overthink it.

Discussions of Ainu history and Wajin history often start with the beginning of human settlement in the Japanese archipelago, thereby giving the impression that ethnic groups have existed from long ago. However, a closer look at history shows that this is not necessarily the case.

Indigenous Peoples

Senjū minzoku（先住民族）is the Japanese translation of the English term "Indigenous Peoples". The term refers to a certain a circumstance in which a modern nation-state that was established elsewhere (by Ethnic Group A) has expanded to take over an area of land without the consent of the indigenous people living there (Ethnic Group B). Indigenous peoples differ from immigrants and ethnic minorities who voluntarily go to live in a country

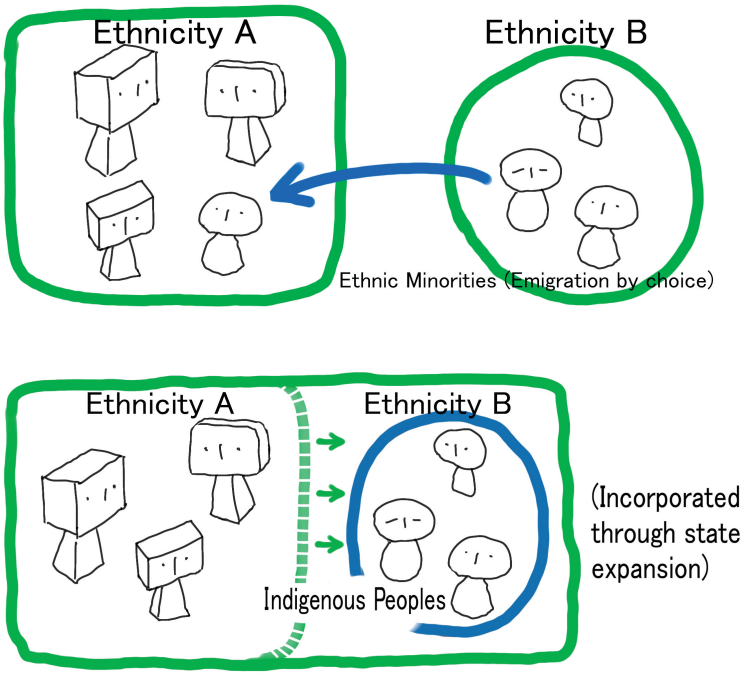


Illustration 1.Minorities and Indigenous Peoples (Reference: Based on handout by Kenichi Ochiai entitled "FY2021 Open Lecture at the Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies: Local Initiatives and Issues under the Ainu Policy Promotion Law: Cases in Biratori and Akan")

that is not their own. Evidenced by the fact that Indigenous Peoples are those who have been incorporated into a nation-state against their will, their free will and sovereignty (their right to self-determination) is often not protected. During this incorporation process, they are forced to make compromises with the mainstream of the state in terms of language, ways of thinking, lifestyles (e.g., how to work, how to choose an occupation, and how to go about education), and various other aspects of life. Indigenous People have no choice but to make these compromises in order to survive. Because of the use of the character 先 (previous/prior)" as in "先に住む(live somewhere first)" in 先住民族(Indigenous Peoples) the term is often misunderstood as a person who has first inhabited a piece of land. For instance,

some argue, incorrectly, that Wajin are an Indigenous People of Honshu. They are not in a situation that coincides with having indigeneity, because they established a state that is primarily their own and have placed other peoples within the state in a subordinate status.

“Pure-blood syndrome”: Ethnic groups are neither unchanging nor pure-blooded

It is said that humans migrated through various routes to the Japanese archipelago from about 35,000 years ago and that Yayoi culture arose south of the main island of Honshu thanks to techniques introduced by people of migratory descent. Later, the introduction of the products of different civilizations continued as people from various nation-states in China and on the Korean Peninsula were invited to Honshu and elsewhere in Japan. Also in Hokkaido, the settlement of people from the north led to the prosperity of their culture, known as the Okhotsk culture. These immigrants are thought to have blended into local communities. This means that both Ainu and Wajin have several lineages when their ancestors are traced back to their roots. The fact that a group of people with such diverse backgrounds—be it Ainu

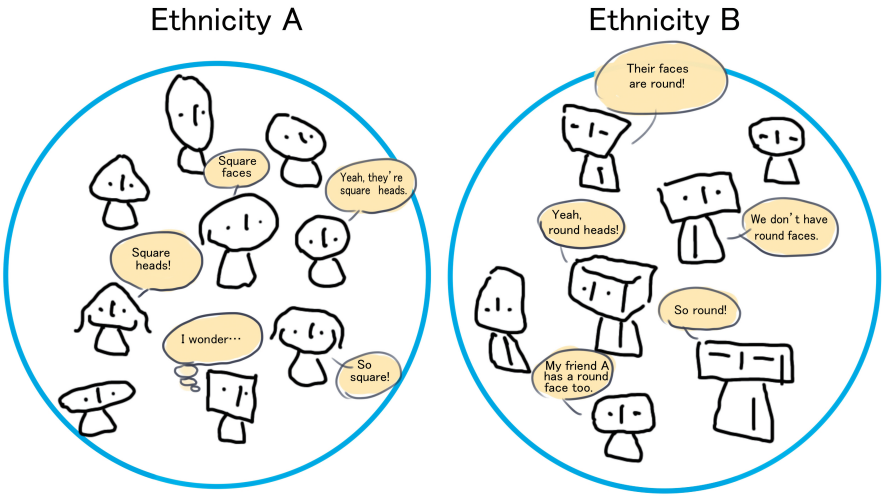


Illustration 2.Racialization =normalization of stereotypes

or Wajin—is regarded as a single ethnic group suggests that the concept of ethnicity was hatched recently enough for people to forget the history of migration.

That said, fervent nationalists may assume that their ethnic group has remained unchanged since ancient times and is pure-blooded. Some scholars diagnose an obsession with racial purity that contradicts reality as "pure-blood syndrome" (see 10 and 11 in the bibliography). It may seem imprudent of these scholars to liken a state of mind to a disease, but the analogy perfectly explains how some ardent nationalists unknowingly allow an obsession with racial purity to become ingrained in themselves.

In this framework, ethnic groups resemble teams and other ordinary groups. They are feelings and emotions are what connects the members. People develop a sense of "us" with those whom they see every day and those who become involved in one another's lives, such as family, neighbors, and acquaintances from school or work. There are no rules about who makes it into the "us" group ; they are selected intuitively, and there are times when people move in and out of the group due to circumstances such as relocation. Given the average range of human activities, a person's group of acquaintances is not very large. People may feel close to those in their neighborhood and in the next town, but they do not usually know people beyond that. In modern times, however, a movement emerged toward both clarifying which people belonged to the nation-state (the group) and enlarging that group. Once a large, unified group is created, the members become aware of the existence of other groups outside of it.

Each group usually has subgroups, such as neighbors, people in the next town, and those beyond. When "the people over there" are made an object of comparison to the group, a sense of solidarity naturally develops among the members of the group. A product of this dichotomy building created the notion of "pure Japanese." Most have heard someone say, "We Japanese have such-and-such traditions flowing through our blood" even though that blood is certainly shared with people elsewhere, such as those in other parts of Asia, including Siberia, in North and South America, and in various plac-

es in the Pacific Ocean. To put it bluntly, an "us versus them" dichotomy that is based on "blood" is pure imagination.

What is known today as ethnic groups came to have clear ranges and members only around the dawn of modern times. Furthermore, it is argued that since the peoples with great power established modern nation-states, the range and membership of ethnic groups became further clarified. While the notion of an "ethnically homogeneous state" exists, when a state seeks to expand its territory, it often annexes other nations or ethnic groups. In such cases, the original members (the ethnic group) of the state usually fail to treat newly integrated members as equals, treating different ethnic groups differently. Essentially, there is a double standard, as the members consist of true members and new members. In Japan, such a double standard is evident in distinguishing among "first-class citizens" (namely, mainlanders), "second-class citizens" (Okinawans and Koreans), and "former aborigines" (Ainu) (see 3 in the bibliography). Once again, the question of who belongs to a certain ethnic group arises. Against this backdrop, attention is drawn to physical characteristics (racialized features) and culture in order to explain the scope of ethnic groups.

Explanations like "The so-and-so People" refers to a people with such and such physical characteristics and culture" turn a blind eye to the diversity of the people and are based on the belief that all those people have similar physical characteristics that are genetically inherited from generation to generation. The process by which groups of people are designated as different is called "racialization" (see 12 in the bibliography). Examples of racialization include exaggerations such as, "People from Okinawa are loose with time," "People from the Kansai region are funny," and "Ainu are devoutly religious." It is said that different races exist naturally and that each race has its own characteristics, even though the opposite is true. People were divided into groups solely based on intuition and those divisions were justified by racializing noticeable physical characteristics.

Boundaries established based on physical characteristics (racialized features)

Race is said to have been studied to justify or explain discrimination and domination over people. Although there is no space in this booklet to cover the details of this, a brief explanation follows. Humans have various physical differences, such as in eye color, hair color, and bone shape. A theory was developed to differentiate Europeans from non-Europeans based on cranial morphology (whether the head is long or short from front to back relative to its width from left to right). However, research revealed that skull shapes actually differ significantly amongst northern and southern Europeans and that the skull shape of aboriginal Australians resembles that of a people in Northern Europe. The theory ultimately fell out of currency, because of the inconveniences it had in delineating between Europeans, Africans, and Asians. After examining one thing after another, skin color was selected as a proper characteristic for categorization—based on foregone conclusions (see 6 in the bibliography). Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, who owned an incredibly large amount of slaves (over 600) slaves, asked scientists to prove that people of African descent were inherently inferior, and research was conducted to find evidence that races other than Anglo-Saxons, who made up the majority of the U.S. population, were inferior. This led to the spread of the theory that different races have different abilities (see 16 in the bibliography).

[Column 1] Who decides whether a person is white?

In the United States, the term "white" began to appear in the law around the end of the 1600s, and 100 years later, a question on race was included in the census. White U.S. citizens were entitled to tremendous preferential treatment. Some peoples from Europe (such as from Italy and Ireland), who are considered whites in Japan, also used to have to undergo screening to immigrate to America and become treat-

ed as white U.S. citizens. Armenian immigrants who were classified as non-white were later reclassified as white based on scientific views.

Today, no one would think that Wajin are white. However, a lawsuit was filed in 1922 over whether or not a Japanese immigrant in the U.S. was white. Because explaining whiteness was difficult no matter how much the parties to the lawsuit argued, the justices ultimately stated that whiteness should be based on "the common understanding of the white man." In the U.S., anyone with even one African Black ancestor ("one drop of Black blood") was not considered white even if that person looked white. This is known as "the one-drop rule." Racial differences seem to be obvious to everyone, but there is no objective way to decide them (see 16 in the bibliography).

Cultural boundaries

The idea of evolution also applies to culture. Culture is said to have evolved from the most primitive hunter-gatherer societies to nomadic societies to agricultural societies and on to industrial societies. This idea gained currency among Europeans in the 19th century. They considered their own society to be the pinnacle of human evolution, viewing other cultures as still being in lower stages of evolution. In other words, Europeans came to view their contemporaries elsewhere as primitive or uncivilized depending on the types of their cultures—just as those who call others stupid are stupid themselves, those who call others uncivilized are uncivilized themselves.

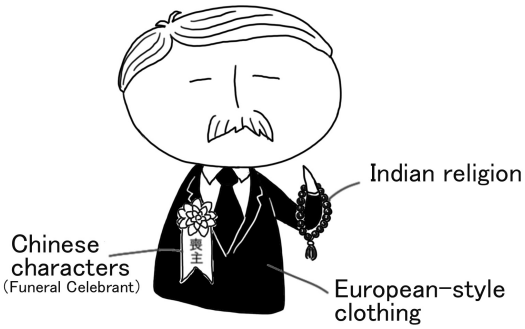


Illustration 3: Mixed cultures

In addition to physical characteristics, culture also came to be used as a frame of reference for classifying people. Hunt-

er-gatherer cultures were distinguished from agricultural cultures, and so were oral and written cultures. Based on these classifications, phrases like "a hunting people" and "an agricultural people" came to be used, giving the impression that these groups of people *only* engaged in either hunting or agriculture. In addition, the extent of a people's cultural evolution was thought to have been dependent on innate abilities. While culture and race may appear to be separate topics, they are strongly intertwined.

Incidentally, does the range (distribution) of a culture match that of the people? The distinctions between people in Japan (in Honshu and more) and those in China (Tang) and India (Tianzhu) must have existed since long ago, but many living in Japan use Chinese characters (*kanji*) to write their names, embrace religions of Indian or Chinese origin, and consider the rice that originally came from Southeast Asia to be the core of their culture. In this way, the perceived range of who is "us" and who is "them" is often inconsistent with the language and cultural boundaries. And yet, this inconsistency has been overlooked because of the ease with which ethnic groups are characterized based on culture and language. In the Edo period, Wajin stressed their differences from Ainu by describing the latter as not having a writing system, not engaging in agriculture, being like beasts, and the like. Conversely, some argued that the supposed common ancestry of Ainu and Wajin makes Ainu settlements Japanese territories (an argument known as "the common ancestry theory").

Ainu were also aware of differences between their culture and Wajin culture, as evidenced by Ainu words and phrases such as *sisam* ("Wajin"), *ainu cise* ("a traditional Ainu house"), and *sisam uwepeker* ("folktales handed down from Wajin"). Ainu traded with Wajin and northern peoples, enthusiastically sharing aspects of their culture with one another. Such a cultural network connected neighboring ethnic groups like a chain, with the network spreading across Asia more broadly. Contrary to Wajin descriptions of Ainu as a hunting people, Ainu engaged in agriculture and brewed alcoholic beverages from the grains they harvested. Both Ainu and Wajin practiced hunting, fishing, and gathering, although the details of these activities and

what they hunted, fished, and gathered differed.

In modern times, Wajin logic held Ainu to be in a markedly different stage of cultural development from Wajin. Wajin also drew a line between them and other ethnic groups in the region, including those in the Ryukyu Islands, on the Korean Peninsula, and in Taiwan, considering them inferior peoples. By comparing themselves with these peoples, they thought of themselves as superior and monolithic, with few internal differences.

Contrary to this, historical studies have revealed that Wajin and other ethnic groups were connected to each other in terms of lineage and culture, and some have maintained that the Japanese are an ethnic group formed through a blending of all of these groups and cultures (“the mixed nations theory”). This assertion was also meant to justify the Japanese colonization of Ainu lands and of lands in Okinawa and on the Korean Peninsula. The argument was that integrating ethnic groups with shared roots was not an attempt at taking them over, but rather, was tantamount to extending a helping hand to “inferior siblings.” Of course, those who were integrated strongly disagreed with this contention. In reality, Wajin continued to discriminate, both institutionally and emotionally, against those to whom they said they had extended a helping hand. By way of example, Japanese forced Ainu, Okinawans, and Koreans to adopt Japanese names with surnames and characters different from those of mainlanders for easy classification. This is an example that shows how Wajin continued to create new boundaries with other ethnic groups while trying to eliminate cultural boundaries. If the purpose of integration was truly to unite, such manipulations would not have been necessary (see 4 and 14 in the bibliography).

Majority–minority relations

The *katakana* [the Japanese script for words borrowed from other languages] words for “majority” and “minority” have been in currency in reference to *tasūha* (largest part of a group) and *shōsūha* (smaller part of the group) respectively. However, these terms are also used when comparing men and women even though there are almost equal numbers of

both groups; the implication is that men are in a privileged position. In this way, people in an advantageous or mainstream position in society are often called the majority, and the rest the minority.

The majority and the minority are two sides of the same coin, which will be touched upon later. Majority group members often feel removed from minority group members, as shown by statements such as "I do not understand what women think" but their lives and circumstances are tied together. "Being of the majority" means "not being a minority." Just as "right" can only be explained as "not left," "Wajin" can only be explained as "non-Ainu" or "non-Okinawan." The existence of a certain position or circumstance makes the other position or circumstance relevant, and what is considered as evidence or proof of differences is nothing more than an afterthought.

The argument that "Both groups are pretty much the same" is not valid

A situation in which a majority group has privilege is sometimes described as "asymmetrical." It can also be portrayed as disproportionate or unequal. Majority group members tend to center themselves when considering society, and view their thinking and values as normal and a matter of course. While their views and culture are unique to them, what they do hold is the power to institutionalize their views and culture as something that can be applied equally to all members of society. Minority group members also center themselves when considering the state of society. Therefore, one may argue that "Both groups are pretty much the same." However, the overwhelming power of the majority group does not allow for minorities to force their thinking and customs on the majority. Theoretically, it may appear that majority and minority are both in the same situation, considering how both groups center themselves, but in reality they are not. While there are cases in which majority group members become friends with minorities and adopt their customs and ways of thinking that they like, such cases are limited to an individual level and rarely affect the other members of the

majority or change social institutions. Since it is extremely difficult for individuals to change society through their own efforts, individuals and society must be considered separately.

Majority group members are generally perceived as "typical," whereas minority group members "atypical." This perception is reflected in language. For example, in Japan, a doctor who is a woman is called a *joi* (a female doctor), but a doctor who is a man is simply called an *ishi* or an *isha* (a doctor). The same is true of *kami* (deities). A female deity is called a *megami* (a female deity), but a male deity is simply called a *kami* (a deity). No adjectives of maleness are required because doctors and deities are publicly perceived as males. The phrases "Tokyo-based musicians" and "university faculty members" connote that these people are Wajin, so they are not described as "Wajin musicians" or "Wajin faculty members." In contrast, if they are Ainu, they are described as "Ainu musicians" and "Ainu faculty members." Likewise, able-bodiedness and heterosexuality are perceived as "ordinary," whereas disability and homosexuality are not: "an able-bodied person" and "a heterosexual person" are simply called "a person," whereas their so-called "non-ordinary" counterparts are described as "a disabled person" and "a homosexual person."

As shown in these examples, people who are considered to be within the mainstream of society are usually described without adjectives of the groups to which they belong. A female doctor, a disabled athlete, and an Ainu writer, for example, are seen as belonging to a group before being seen as individuals. In contrast, majority group members are usually described without such adjectives, so they view themselves as individuals rather than as group members. Despite the great privileges and power accorded to majority group members, a lack of group adjectives causes them to be seldom conscious of belonging to a group.

The majority has the power to determine who is a member of society. Many non-Wajin Japanese nationals, particularly those who acquired Japanese nationality before the number of immigrants from abroad increased in the 1980s, have a history where their people have been incorporated

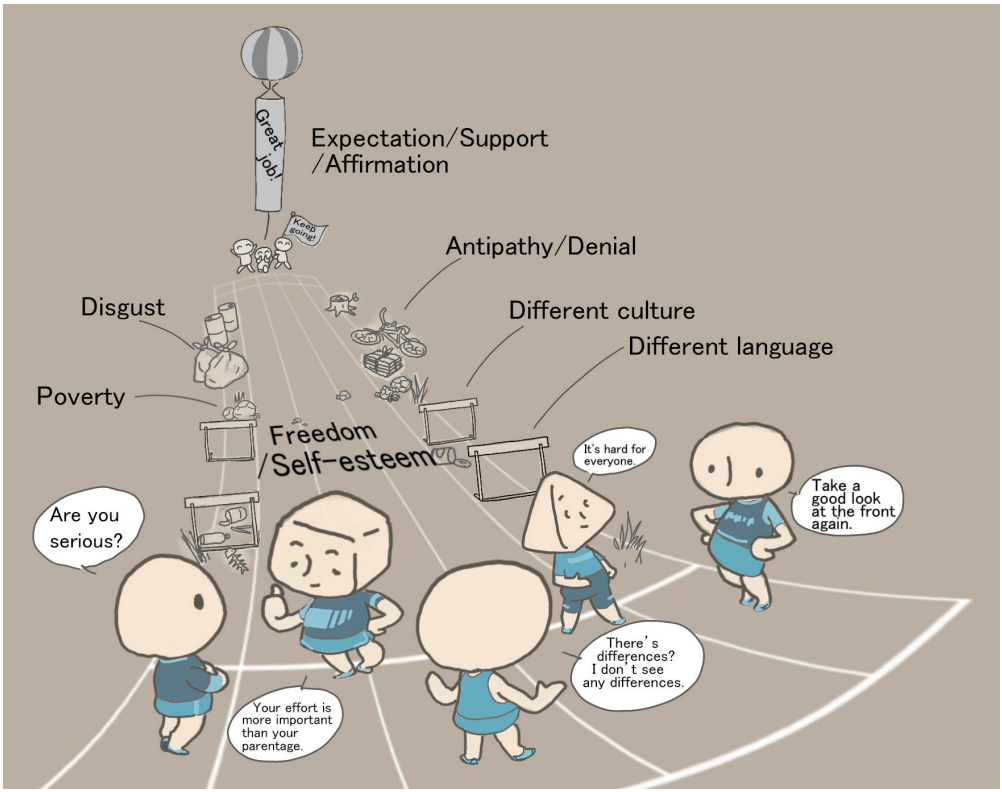


Illustration 4. Two different positions and views OR The differences between the positions and points of view

into Japan by Wajin. (Note: those arriving after the 1980s are referred to in Japanese as *nyūkamāzu* (newcomers). Meanwhile, Wajin can redefine who is Japanese (Wajin) and can exclude certain people from being legitimate members by saying, for example, "People of mixed race (*hāfu*) are not purely Japanese" or "So-and-So was born elsewhere but is pretty much Japanese." The cultural and lineal diversity of Wajin makes it impossible to objectively define the what constitutes a person who is Wajin. Therefore, just like the aforementioned ruling that "Whiteness should be based on the common understanding of the white man," Wajin themselves decide who is a Wajin and why, and reasons why certain people can be called Wajin are

also decided by other Wajin.

Able-bodied, heterosexual Wajin are never questioned on whether they are legitimate members of Japanese society. Moreover, they are expected to play active roles as rightful members of Japanese society and are supported in those roles. On the topic of sumo wrestling, the wish for Japanese to be successful is expressed without hesitation when they say "a Japanese became Yokozuna (the highest rank) for the first time in a while." Meanwhile, non-Japanese sumo wrestlers cannot help but feel at risk of being called or actually receive the message that they are "unauthentic." While some Japanese sumo enthusiasts may feel threatened by non-Japanese sumo wrestlers, it is not possible that Japanese society becomes dominated by foreigners. The expression of hostility or open dislike of the activities of a few foreigners is only possible by those who hold power in society.

Conversely, minority group members are dogged by negative images like being "emotional" or "not ambitious." In such an unwelcoming environment, they are also under pressure in that their failures could hurt the overall image of minority group members.

In today's society, whether one is born "just" into the majority or the minority makes a huge difference to one's life. This means that the fruits of the great efforts made by people born into a privileged environment may be brushed off as a matter of course because they are wellborn. This inequality may make some feel uncomfortable and wish to live simply as individuals, but they can never disentangle themselves from the structure and demands of society. That said, it is important to be aware of the inequalities and differences in circumstances, because such awareness makes it easier to start efforts to eliminate them.

[Column 2] For an even better understanding of Ainu people

You may have seen pamphlets or other publications with statements such as "Living in harmony with Ainu people" or "For an even better understanding of Ainu people." Similar expressions are used in pub-

lications about minorities such as people with disabilities, foreigners, and LGBTQ people. Such publications do not specify "who" lives in harmony with or better understands Ainu people, probably because the publications are intended for the masses. However, these presumably well-intentioned efforts fail to challenge the premise that able-bodied, heterosexual Wajin are in the mainstream of society; instead, those efforts reinforce that premise (see p. 27 and p. 28).

The circumstances of minorities such as Ainu are shaped by the majority. ("Circumstances" here means those that are experienced by Ainu as an ethnic group, aside from various personal circumstances.) To change this situation, it is important to make the privilege of Wajin, the majority in society, visible. A better understanding of Wajin and Ainu, not just of Ainu, will help create empathy with Ainu.

Social model: A majority-first society

Majority group members tend to believe that their positions, ways of thinking, and customs are social norms that are acceptable to everyone. People who do not fit in are considered "special" and "troublesome" members of society who are unable to keep up with society.

A physical disability has long been perceived to be a health condition in the person's body to be treated. By way of example, people who use wheelchairs ("wheelchair users") are considered "unable to walk" and in need of medical intervention to become able to walk. This perception is based on what is known as the medical model of disability.

Another point-of-view suggests that people are disabled by barriers in society that are caused by a lack of consideration for the disabled. Wheelchair users can move around with no difficulty as long as there are ramps, wide passages, accessible restrooms, and elevators. However, many buildings and public spaces do not have these features because they are designed only to meet the needs of people who are "walkers" who do not need these features. Focusing on this point, there is a view that the cause of the problems faced by persons with disabilities is the lack of consideration on the part of

society that corresponds to their standpoint. This way of viewing the world is known as the social model of disability.

Some people may argue that too much preferential treatment is given when accommodating wheelchair users. However, providing a barrier-free environment is comfortable for and benefits walkers as well. Whenever walkers go out, they do not have to worry about whether there are facilities like restrooms and elevators they can use, and whether transportation systems can handle them getting on and off. In this sense, it can be said that walkers are inherently advantaged, with privileges, and can also benefit from the realization of an accessible environment for those wheelchair users.

This way of thinking can be applied to other minority issues. A case in point is a university that had no women's toilets for decades. Another university had women's toilets only on student floors (with only men's toilets on floors with faculty rooms).

When considering languages, little support is available in Sapporo for using Ainu language, which has been in use for a longer period than Japanese, except some universities offering specialized courses and a few courses for the general public. Ainu is not spoken at places essential for daily living, including at government offices, hospitals, schools, transportation facilities, police stations, fire departments, and courts of law. The cause for these issues, be it the lack of women's toilets or Ainu language, stems from society having been designed to give precedence to male Wajin.

Some would ascribe the difficulties in using Ainu language to its decline with the times or to a lack of research opportunities because the language has no writing system. Their stance is that such difficulties are attributed to the inferiority of the language itself. However, the unwritten Ainu language remained in use until Wajin came to Hokkaido in the Meiji era (the late 19th century); the number of Ainu language speakers rapidly declined thereafter. This manner of this decline serves as evidence showing that the current state of the Ainu language was caused by the Japanese government and administration having failed to provide reasonable consideration (to

ensure Ainu the continuous use of their own language). Moreover, it is also the cause of Ainu being shrugged off as an inferior language. Considering this through the social model of disability, it can be understood that what is been perceived as an individual or minority issue is actually a social problem, that is also related to other issues.

[Column 3] You've never met an Ainu? Disclosing ancestry and zoning

Many people have probably never met a member of any minority group, let alone an Ainu. As explained in the introduction of this booklet, the ethnicity of people is determined by their fundamental "root experiences." Of course the use of "roots" here is an analogy, and they are not visible to the naked eye. No one else knows the roots of another person unless people go out of their way to talk about them. Majority group members tend to assume that other people are like themselves unless there is some noticeable difference, so they do not bother to ask about other people's roots.

So, should Ainu publicly disclose their ancestry? Below are six responses that Ainu received when they disclosed their ancestry.

1. "Is that so? I'm very interested in Ainu." (leading to a lackluster conversation)
2. "I do not know much about Ainu, but I think they are dorky and lack skills."
3. "What are you talking about? There are not any Ainu anymore." "There are. I'm one of them." "Then go back to where you came from."
4. [The person takes two or three steps back.]
5. "If I knew you were Ainu, I wouldn't have become friends with you."
6. "I want to introduce you to my friend who is looking for an Ainu friend."

Illustration 5. Disclosure of identity and zoning

There are many opportunities for Ainu to figure out what might happen even if they never disclosed their ancestry. The following are examples of conversations that have arisen when it was assumed Ainu were not present.

7. "Yesterday I suddenly started wondering what I'd do if I were Ainu, and I could not sleep."
8. "So-and-So must be an Ainu."
9. "Are you okay with looking Ainu?" [from a Wajin teacher to a Wajin student]
10. "Don't accidentally marry an Ainu. I'll tell you how to tell Ainu from Japanese." [from a Wajin teacher to Wajin students]
11. "A lot of Ainu are [insert discriminatory comment)."

When these words reach a person's ears, they can haunt them for a long time. As a result, Ainu keep their ancestry to themselves and come

out only if they really feel comfortable talking about it. Distinguishing where people will and will not talk about their ancestries is called "zoning." While some may talk about their ancestry to people around them who they know and trust, there are others who will never talk about it, even to people to whom they are close. The greater the distance, the less reason to and the less chance a person will disclose their ancestry. For this reason, someone "having never met an Ainu" does not mean that there are no Ainu. In the case of comment No. 7 above, the speaker knew they was talking to an Ainu. The speaker feigned ignorance and insinuated that they would hate it if they were Ainu. People are able to make suppositions like "I am not sure myself but I may be Ainu" and make comments like No. 9 ("Are you okay with looking Ainu?") because appearance alone does not dictate whether someone is Ainu. Therefore, it does not make sense to say, "I'd be able to recognize Ainu if they were around. I haven't seen any around, so they must not exist anymore."

The cases of No. 8 above and Nos. 12 to 20 below are examples of Ainu experiences of their ethnicity having been identified by appearance.

12. Being stared at.
13. Being laughed at and pointed at by Wajin.
14. Hearing the word "Ainu" being said when walking in front of or passing Wajin.
15. Being asked "Are you from Okinawa?" [outside of Hokkaido].
16. Being asked "Are you from there?" [while pointing towards a place where many Ainu live] [in Hokkaido],
17. Being told "Your Japanese is good."
18. Being told "Go back to your own country."
19. Being asked "Are you a foreigner?" in a public facility.
20. Being handed a child from another country when picking up their own children from daycare.

The experiences described in Nos. 12, 13, and 14 are not limited to Ainu, and similar experiences likely befall people with visible diseases or disabilities or those who have a gender presentation that does not match the viewer's expectations." People may look at other people without any particular reason, sometimes unconsciously looking down at them, making those people feel they are being scrutinized. In Japan, children are told not to stare at other people because it is impolite and those stared at may feel they are being watched. People may ask whether someone is a foreigner, but never whether they are Japanese. No matter how delicately it is spoken, such a question is tantamount to asking why a person exists in a certain space. In other words, it is the same as telling that person they do not belong.

Even if people personally have a favorable impression of minority group members, it is inappropriate to tell them to have confidence and just say what their ancestry is because of the risk of eliciting negative reactions from others. When minority group members seem invisible, a better understanding can be gained by reconsidering the society where they live.

[Column 4] The populations of Ainu and Wajin

The exact population of Ainu in Japan is unknown. There is a reason for this. The government has never conducted a census of the Ainu population under its current system, which is based on "equality before the law"—this is interpreted to mean that Japanese citizens should not be classified by ethnicity or other characteristics. This is why there will not be a survey conducted to determine the Ainu population under the current system of the country.

In fact, the exact population of Wajin is also unknown. The total number of Japanese nationals is known, but for the same reason as above, no information is available about how many of them belong to

what ethnic groups. Many people would be surprised to know that no one knows a fact as basic as the Ainu population, but the same is true for the Wajin population.

In 1873 (Meiji 6), the population of Hokkaido was 121,310, of which 16,272 were Ainu (according to a survey by the Hokkaido Government). There were two thousand several hundred Ainu on Sakhalin Island, and fewer than 100 Ainu on the Kuril Islands.

"I do not want to be called 'Wajin'."

As described earlier, Wajin are the majority in Japan, the majority group can make the rules (has privilege) in society, and people in dominant groups are often unaware that they are in a privileged position. The first step toward addressing the issue of coexistence of ethnic groups in Japan, namely, inequality among ethnic groups, is to make it evident that Wajin are the dominant group in Japanese society.

However, both individuals and organizations often disagree with using the term "Wajin." Interestingly, a study found that whites in the United States are unwilling to use the term "whites." The majority groups in Japan and the U.S. have had similar reactions despite their historical and institutional differences.

In the U.S., racial color-blindness—the belief that people should not "see" skin color differences is widespread. Its proponents maintain that skin color is insignificant and that they do not discriminate based on skin color. This sounds like a great way to eliminate discrimination, but it actually helps perpetuate discrimination because it makes it difficult to discuss it. Nevertheless, majority group members believe that color-blindness is the best way to end discrimination and that the use of the term "white" will highlight racial disparities and thus cause discrimination. Further, the use of the term "white" catapults racial inequalities that have attracted little or no attention into the spotlight, and the discomfort that many white people feel when discussing their racial privileges manifests itself as anger at the term "white" (see 16 in the bibliography).

In Japan, the term *minzoku* (ethnic group) is often used in place of the term *jinshu* (race). Ethnic characteristics include appearance (physical characteristics) in addition to culture and temperament and are thought to be passed down from generation to generation by lineage and heredity. Hence, the terms "ethnic group" and "race" are used almost interchangeably. In any case, institutionally speaking, Japan has only one category of people—citizens—and it is considered almost a taboo to say that the citizenry consists of multiple ethnic groups. To refer to Ainu, the Japanese government uses various expressions like "*Ainu no hitobito* (Ainu people)," "*Ainu no hitotachi* (Ainu persons) ," "*Utari no hitobito* (Utari people)," and "*Minzoku no hitobito* (Ethnic people)." The Ainu Policy Promotion Act, which was enacted in 2019 and recognized Ainu as an Indigenous People, consistently uses the term "Ainu no hitobito." Further, the term "Wajin" has never been used in Japanese laws or regulations. It is also considered taboo even to recognize the *Uchinanchu* (people native to the Ryukyu Islands) as an ethnic group, despite repeated recommendations from the United Nations that they should be recognized as an Indigenous People. While personal liberties may vary significantly depending on the circumstances, similar to as in the United States, "saying" that inequalities exist is considered to be more problematic than the actual existence of inequalities itself.

For this reason, remarks about Ainu and Wajin are often accompanied by responses like these: "I do not think there are any ethnic differences," "Ainu and Wajin are the same," and "The real racists are those who make a big deal about ethnic differences." These are similar to responses from majority group members in the United States.

The advantageous position of Wajin

Some might ask what privileges Wajin have. Again, there are many commonalities between whites in the U.S. and Wajin. Below are examples of the social environments in which Wajin find themselves (based on 5 and 6 in the bibligraphy):

1. Their parents and grandparents speak the language of their ethnic group (Wajin).
2. They can use their own language in their daily lives and whenever they need to complete various procedures anywhere in Japan. When communication fails, they can assume that the other party lacks the ability or effort to learn the language.
3. They can consider and maintain that their ancestral land is the land of their ethnic group.
4. Their nursery or kindergarten teachers were of the same ethnicity as themselves.
5. All of their homeroom teachers at school were of the same ethnicity as themselves.
6. They learned the language, history, and culture of their ethnic group [Japanese language, history, and culture] at school and in the community.
7. Many characters and mascots found in school textbooks and other learning materials were of the same ethnicity as themselves.
8. They heard at school, in the community, and in the media that their ethnic group was superior to other groups.
9. Their ethnic [Japanese] cuisine was often served at school lunch. School lunch newsletters introduced their ethnic cuisine as traditional local cuisine.
10. Most of their friends are of the same ethnicity as themselves.
11. The majority of their neighbors are of the same ethnicity as themselves. No matter where they are, they are never a minority.
12. Their language is used in newspapers, magazines, TV programs, movies, street signs, maps, and the like.
13. Many people at the top of corporations, such as corporate executives, and many politicians are of the same ethnicity as themselves.
14. Many local bronze statues and other monuments feature people of the same ethnicity as themselves.

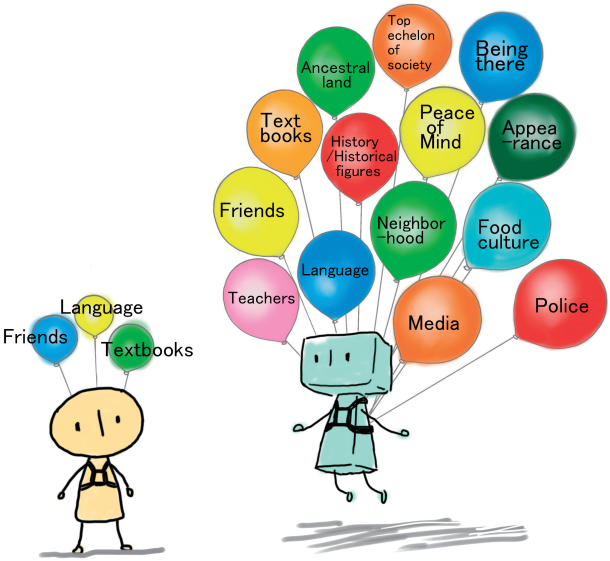


Illustration 6.Things associated with/accepted by one's own ethnic group

15. Most of the people they see in TV programs, movies, commercials, books, magazines, newspapers, and street advertisements are of the same ethnicity as themselves, or are European.
16. They are not asked where they are from or why they are there.
17. They are not asked why they look the way they do.
18. The sight of a police officer never causes them anxiety that their family may be asked questions by the officer.
19. Their family members have never told them to be careful so as to avoid being discriminated against.
20. They have never worried about their family members possibly being subjected to discrimination.

Having lived in the aforementioned social environments, many ethnic Japanese who learned about discussions of coexistence between different ethnic groups in Japan say that they knew nothing about ethnic groups oth-

er than Wajin in Japan or that they were unaware such groups even existed. The aforementioned experiences of the majority group members encourage them to view themselves as the mainstream of society. They grow up feeling that it is natural for them to be there and that they are expected to play active roles there. The social environments surrounding non-European ethnic minorities such as Ainu are the exact opposite of many of the cases noted in examples 1 to 20 above. School textbooks (example 7) have recently come to contain many descriptions of Ainu, but these are limited to times before the Meiji era. Regarding examples 1 to 15, many ethnic Japanese are likely to say they have never thought about these advantages.

Not a matter of "right and wrong"

An examination of ethnic and other majority–minority relations, such as between genders and those related to physical and mental well-being, reveals that healthy, heterosexual ethnic Japanese men are particularly privileged. This claim is not a matter of right and wrong; it is simply a fact. Seeing differences in position as a matter of right and wrong would make it difficult to assess the actual situation. Of course, there are significant differences in individual experiences among the most privileged, and some may face various barriers, including financial problems, which this booklet does not cover in detail, or issues involving relations with their family and others around them. However, the same applies to minorities. As with those born into disadvantaged environments, people do not choose to be born into privileged environments. While it is unjust for the privileged to look down on the disadvantaged or to use their privilege to intimidate the disadvantaged, it is not wrong that some people happen to be born into privileged positions. That said, the privileged are asked whether they hope to maintain social inequality or to redress it. If they fail to recognize the existence of disparities, however, it ultimately normalizes the inequality. People in privileged environments may feel a sense of satisfaction when saying they hope to get along with any kind of person, as they do not care about such disparities. However, such remarks are meaningless to minorities; or worse, they

may appall minorities as an attempt to hide advantage or to dismiss the disparities pointed out by minorities.

[Column 5] The gender gap

The "invisible" predominance of Wajin resembles that of men over women, in that it is usually unnoticeable. Usually, men are not overly associated with maleness, aside from expressions to aggrandize men, such as "*otoko no ikisama* (a men's attitude toward life)." If society is divided into two realms—a public realm (e.g., school, workplace, community) and a private realm (home)—then it is the public realm that involves evaluations and rewards. It is also in the public realm that male-oriented rules are in place. Therefore, those born male have a significant advantage over women. The dismay felt by Wajin about their ethnicity is similar to the feeling men have when their predominance in society is pointed out. This is because both Wajin and men are in a privileged environment unknowingly and not by choice.

Discrimination

In this booklet, discrimination is considered to arise when three factors are present: differentiation, contempt, and social exclusion. Discrimination arises not when one person or group is differentiated from another, but when one person or group is treated differently from another in an unfair way. Discrimination should be considered not based on relations between the perpetrator of discrimination and the victim of that discrimination, but based on relations among three parties, the third being the accomplice. Discrimination and social exclusion occur when the perpetrator of discrimination demands that another person (the accomplice) empathize with and assimilate discriminatory ideas and that person accepts the demand (assimilation) (see 7 and 13 in the bibliography).

Complicity occurs not only when one maliciously agrees with discriminatory ideas. For example, one also becomes complicit when one remains si-

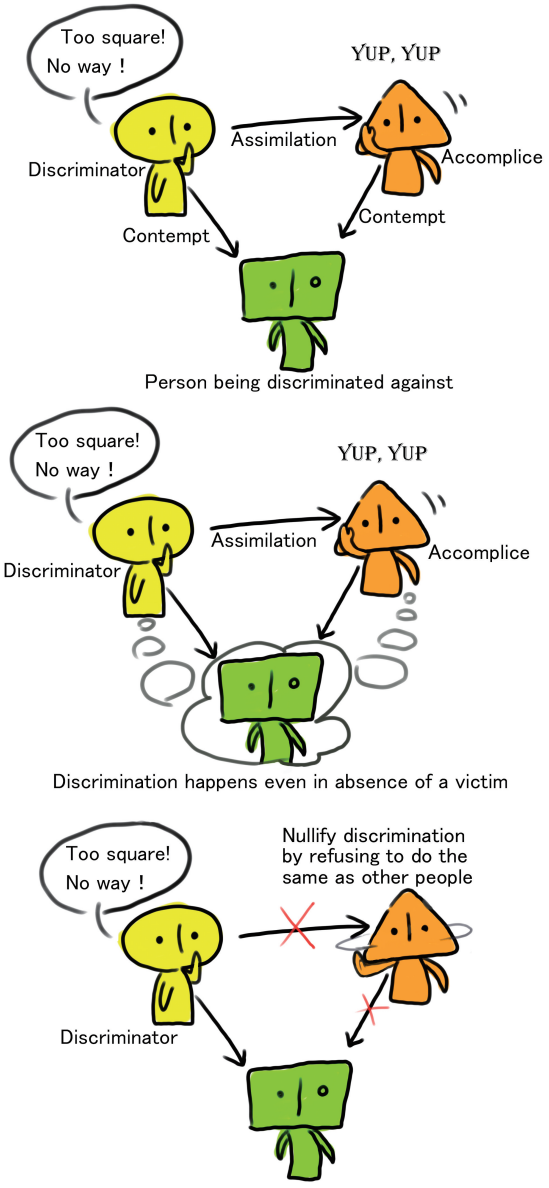


Illustration 7.The tripartite of discrimination

lent about discrimination in order to protect one's own interests or when one laughs it off without speaking out. Discrimination is also practiced to strengthen the ties between the perpetrators of discrimination. In this case, discriminatory remarks carry significance even in the absence of a victim of discrimination. Some forms of discrimination are difficult to characterize as problematic, including jokes, tones of voice, gestures, other expressions of contempt, and slips of the tongue (see the middle image in Illustration 7). Conversely, excessive flattery, which causes a sense of discomfort, is also a kind of discrimination, called "sanctification (i.e. positive stereotyping/overgen-

eralizing)."

Once such discrimination has taken root in society, it creates structural discrimination, a form of institutional discrimination that is entrenched in society, and cannot be controlled be individuals. Structural discrimination is often invisible because it may be unintentional and independent of personal conscience or malicious intent. In a society with structural discrimination, people cannot live their lives without somehow being connected to structural discrimination, but those in the majority (i.e., those not discriminated against) are often unaware of such discrimination.

• Why does discrimination occur?

The underlying cause of discrimination against Ainu is probably the weight placed on economic efficiency. Racial discrimination in the U.S. is also said to have been conceived to explain the control and exploitation of slaves. That is, non-whites, who could clearly be distinguished from whites, were considered inferior in character and ability and therefore ineligible for freedom, equality, or dignity.

Books written by Wajin in and after the mid-Edo period described Ainu as being different from ethnic Japanese and uncivilized, or as facing extinction in the absence of protective measures. These descriptions were used to justify Wajin control and social exclusion of Ainu, intervention in all aspects of their life, and deprivation of their rights and resources. The modern nation-state established in the Meiji era endeavored to become a strong nation whose members would be homogenous in power and qualifications, while other ethnicities, such as Ainu and Ryukyuans (Okinawans), would be viewed as different from ethnic Japanese: as useless and unproductive members of society who were unable to speak Japanese as well as ethnic Japanese could.

Ethnic minorities came to be discriminated against not just in the public realm, but also in the private realm, such as in marriage, due to prejudice

against them in terms of culture, appearance, assumption about intellectual capacity, and the like.

What makes discrimination invisible?

・Separating discrimination from matters of right and wrong

Deeply ingrained in society, structural discrimination is difficult to avoid and often involves everyone, both good people and bad people. As people grow up, they unconsciously acquire the ideas and rules of the society where they are raised. This means they may inadvertently form distorted views of a certain group of people unless they make a conscious effort to avoid those views. If they jump to the conclusion that discrimination and prejudice belong only to bad people, they will never have the chance to recognize and make efforts to eliminate their own prejudice. Or worse, they may end up desperately seeking to deny that prejudice.

・Wajin centralism

"Wajin centralism" refers to the notion that ethnic Japanese views are in the mainstream of society and are acceptable to everyone. Views on history such as "Hokkaido has no history" and "Hokkaido was developed following the entrance into the Meiji era" are prime examples of a mindset that ignores the existence of Ainu. Widespread views among Wajin include the following: "Hokkaido is part of Japan," "The people of Japan are Japanese (Wajin)," "If a person is from Japan, of course they speak Japanese," and "There were no problems with the 'development" of Hokkaido." Many who share these views mean no offense. However, on the other side of that coin is a disregard, as worthless, for the lives and livelihoods of those who were already living in a place where Wajin came to settle. Even if the lives and livelihoods of Ainu were upended, land development could be justified if it were a more worthwhile act. Hokkaido's history of modern development is neither beautiful nor inspiring from a different standpoint. If the aforementioned views are imposed as "normal," and no alternative views presented, Ainu are ultimately undervalued and marginalized. This is why

minority group members are uncomfortable when majority group members accept or spread views that fail to recognize other groups of people, such as the view that emphasizes the pioneer history of Hokkaido. In this way, even in the absence of direct or intentional discrimination by an individual, Japan has a system in place that suppresses Ainu and shuts them out of society. Ainu and other minorities cannot survive without compromising their values to Wajin, albeit unwillingly. This has made Wajin all the more unaware of those with different perspectives.

"Wajin centralism" is a term I coined for this, and has also not been used anywhere elsewhere until this booklet. Nationalistic rule-making, societal management, and school education by Wajin are considered "normal." This makes it a matter of course for Japanese children to study Japanese language and history for more than 100 hours annually, whereas learning about Ainu for only several hours annually is called "Ainu culture study" and its necessity is a matter of debate. Objectively speaking, school education in Japan is ethnic education for Wajin, but it is considered "normal

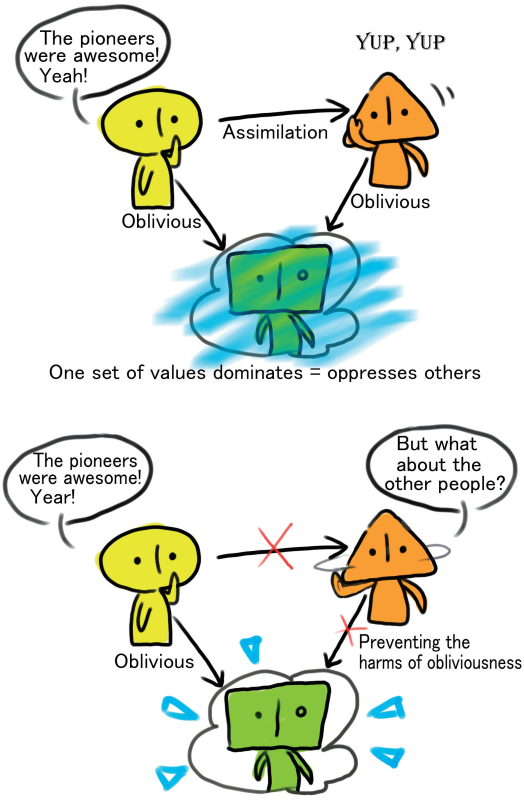


Illustration 8. The attitude of recognizing only one set of values oppresses others

education." The lack of visibility of Wajin nationalism has left such extreme disparities unaddressed. Even those who feel disturbed by exclusionism and hate speech often fail to notice problems caused by Wajin-centric views. Once people recognize them, it is not so difficult for them to think about addressing them.

・Belief in a just world

People want to believe that they live in a just world where they will get what they have earned. They live positively on the belief that actions are rewarded with positive outcomes if enough effort is put into achieving their goals. They also tend to believe that people who appear to be suffering are responsible for their own situation. For instance, if someone suffers from livelihood instability despite their efforts, people tend to blame them rather than the society in which they live, wondering if there is something wrong with that person.

As with victims of bullying, gender-related abuse/violence, domestic violence, and workplace harassment, victims of ethnic discrimination tend to be criticized, and perpetrators tend to be considered simply unique. It is also common for victims to blame themselves. In fact, anyone can become a perpetrator or a victim, depending on the circumstances.

・Negating discrimination: denial

Sentiment against oppression and discrimination is commonly valued in society, but there are also systems that make discrimination largely invisible. For this reason, oppression and discrimination against minorities tend to prompt justification ("It does not constitute discrimination"), mitigation ("It is discrimination, but not so serious"), defensiveness ("There is a reason for discrimination"), or outright denial. Patterns of denial include the denial of discriminatory behavior ("I do not discriminate"), of motives ("It was not on purpose"), of intention ("I did not mean it"), and of purpose ("That wasn't my purpose") (see 1 in the bibliography). Denial differs from making

excuses, and it inflicts harm.

Reverse discrimination (majority discrimination)

In the pairs of woman and man, homosexual and heterosexual, and immigrant and local, those in the latter positions are invariably in the mainstream and make societal rules, and there are cases in which active efforts are required to maintain balance with those in the former positions, who are disadvantaged (i.e., women, homosexuals, and immigrants). Although requests are seldom met, majority group members feel challenged at calls for efforts to eliminate imbalances, and those members say things like "The weak and minorities are unfairly rewarded" and "Such efforts constitute reverse discrimination." This has occurred in Japan, South Korea, and the United States. There is also a similar resistance to Ainu policy measures. The following are two examples of such resistance.

1. In 2016, a person involved in art in Sapporo expressed frustration with Ainu people by saying, "These days, the government almost always involves Ainu in art-related activities, like monument installations. Artists feel pressure to associate themselves with Ainu to get work, even if we are unwilling to do so. French culture suits the landscape of Hokkaido much better, and I'd rather not associate with Ainu."

2. In the 2000s, a committee was established in the Hokkaido town of Shiraoi to study what future Ainu policy should be. A town official on the committee spouted this opinion: "Ainu depend too much on the government. Because the government has been doing what it is supposed to do, Ainu should also step up their efforts to solve the remaining problems on their own."

Are these claims factual? Regarding the first claim, the Sapporo City Outdoor Sculpture Management Ledger showed as of February 2022 that none of the 415 works installed by the city were related to Ainu. In fact, the ledger

included about 10 works with titles probably featuring the history of Wajin in and after the Meiji era, including "*Hiraku*" (Land Reclamation), "*Fusetsu-hyakunen*" (100 Years of Enduring Wind and Snow), "*Kaitaku-no-kodo*" (The Heartbeat of Land Development), and "*Tonden-no-Yoake*" (The Dawn of Tonden). The majority of the remaining works were probably oriented toward Wajin. Though not listed in the ledger, Ainu handicrafts such as wood carvings and tapestries have been displayed near Sapporo Station ticket gates and in underground passages. These works were installed in the 2000s. In other words, indigenous Ainu culture has been significantly underrepresented in art-related initiatives in Sapporo and such initiatives were virtually nonexistent until about 20 years ago. Clearly cultural representation is unbalanced, and even today, a high premium is placed on culture from outiside of Japan. The person who made the aforementioned comment feels that even the few Ainu works are eyesores. Although the person making the claim likely did not think they were discriminating against Ainu, it is clear that they rejected the indigenous culture and people as those that they could not coexist with. Majority group members often claim to be victims of reverse discrimination while exercising "the right to dislike others." It is the privilege of the powerful to be able to openly express dislike of other people. The situation has become normalized to the extent that they never have doubts about it.

Regarding the second comment, the town official believes that members of the government are in a different position from Ainu because of the claim that Ainu depend too much on the government. The person believes that the government is an organization consisting mainly of Wajin. That comment suggests that Ainu policies represent "goodwill" or "charity," rather than the responsibility of the government. Ainu policies are intended to enable Ainu to protect their language and culture while sustaining their lives. Such policies have been in place for Wajin as a matter of course. In Shiraoi Town, elementary, junior high, and high schools teach Japanese culture in Japanese, and *Biographies of Great People in Shiraoi*, published by the Shiraoi Town Board of Education, features only Wajin. An ordinance en-

acted by the town in the 2000s includes an article stating that "Ainu" and "our ancestors" toiled to build the town. Clearly, Ainu are not included in the citizenry and their existence and dignity are not recognized. Demanding the amelioration of this situation is only natural. Even in such cases, Wajin government officials have the power to conclude that "claims made by Ainu are unjustified because inequality does not exist."

There are more complicated cases. Among those involved in activities to promote Ainu culture (for example, in cultural preservation organizations, the tourism industry, museums, and educational institutions), ethnic Japanese are often considered by their Ainu colleagues to be in a weak position and are sometimes the objects of sympathy. To consider the reasons for this, this section focuses on "places" and "positions."

Cultural transmission activities take place in a large group of people called society, which includes numerous smaller groups. For example, activities by a local cultural transmission group or an artisans' organization are likely to be launched by a group of interested Ainu people and initially engaged in mainly by Ainu. Non-Ainu people who are interested in Ainu culture may also participate, but if the activities are considered as a campaign by those

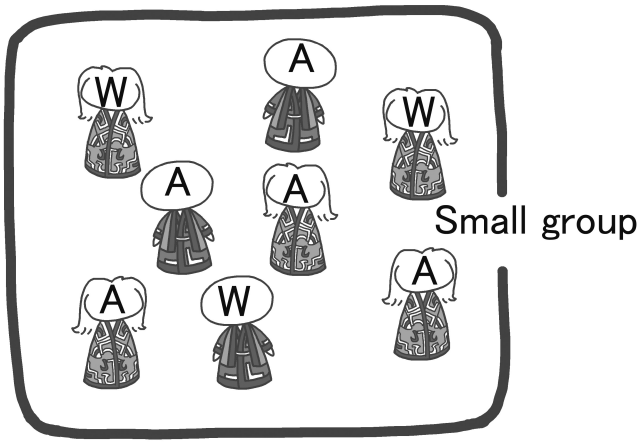


Illustration 9. Ainu predominate in small groups

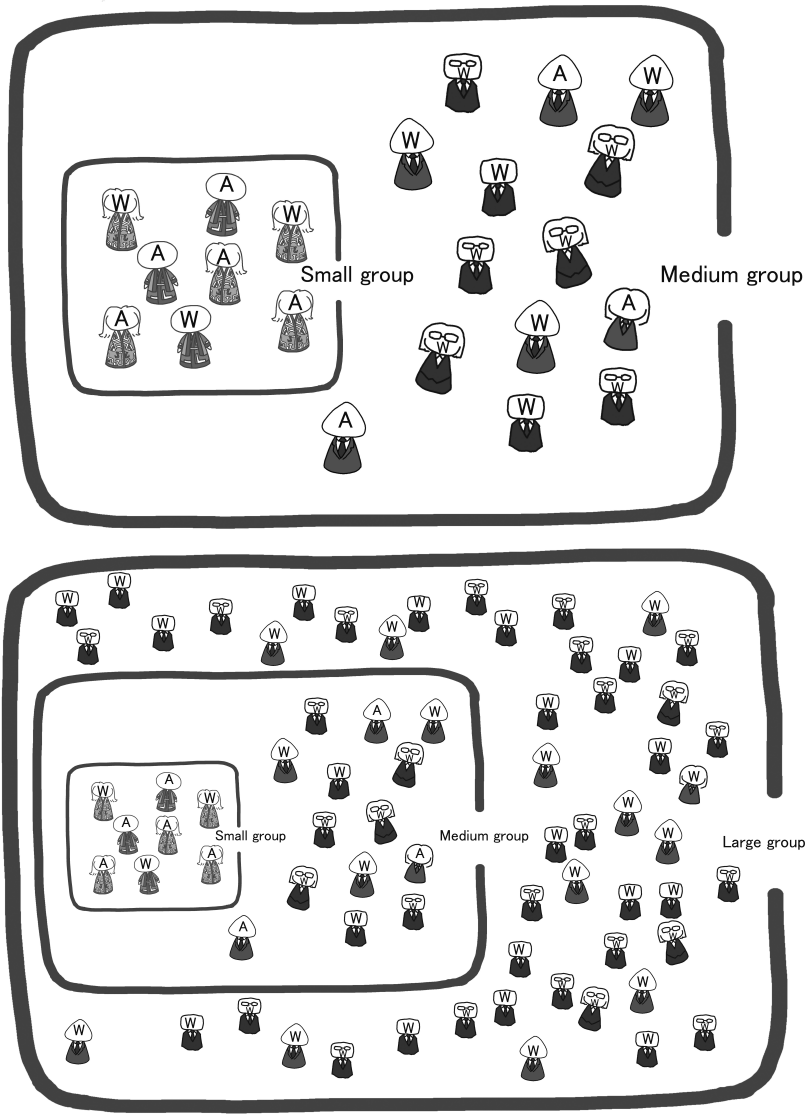


Illustration 10.Wajin predominate in medium and large groups

concerned with Ainu culture, it is natural for the main players to be Ainu. After all, those who have experience and knowledge play a central role in such activities. In such groups, Wajin may feel small if they are few in number (Illustration 9).

On the other hand, data show that Wajin as a whole have higher levels of wealth and education than Ainu do (2017 Hokkaido Ainu Living Conditions Survey). This means that Wajin have an advantage over many Ainu people outside these small groups as highly educated, well-off people. Even within these small Ainu groups, if experienced Ainu members retire over time, Wajin members with experience, high educational attainment, and other authority may gain advantages over Ainu. Additionally, it is important to note that Wajin are free from experiencing the prejudice that is directed towards Ainu people or culture.

Furthermore, it is Wajin who have the authority to institutionalize activities, such as by providing public support to organized activities and incorporating organized activities into public education. By way of example, in projects for the restoration of *ior* (traditional Ainu living spaces) and government-funded projects under the Ainu Policy Promotion Act, government offices and large corporations often take the lead in designing projects and determining budget allocations. Therefore, Wajin may look like a minority in small groups, but as a whole, they belong to the dominant group and are in situations where they move major projects forward.

The same can be said of the National Ainu Museum and Park, known as "Upopoy," and of organizations like universities. There is a higher proportion of Ainu in small groups of people offering programs for tourists and other visitors to tourist facilities, such as artisans, musicians, members of performing art preservation societies. They often have an advantage over their Wajin counterparts in terms of experience. However, the number of Wajin members increases when it comes to midsized management-level groups with a budget, and government offices that determine Ainu policy consist mostly of Wajin.

It can also be noted that many of the managerial positions are assumed by

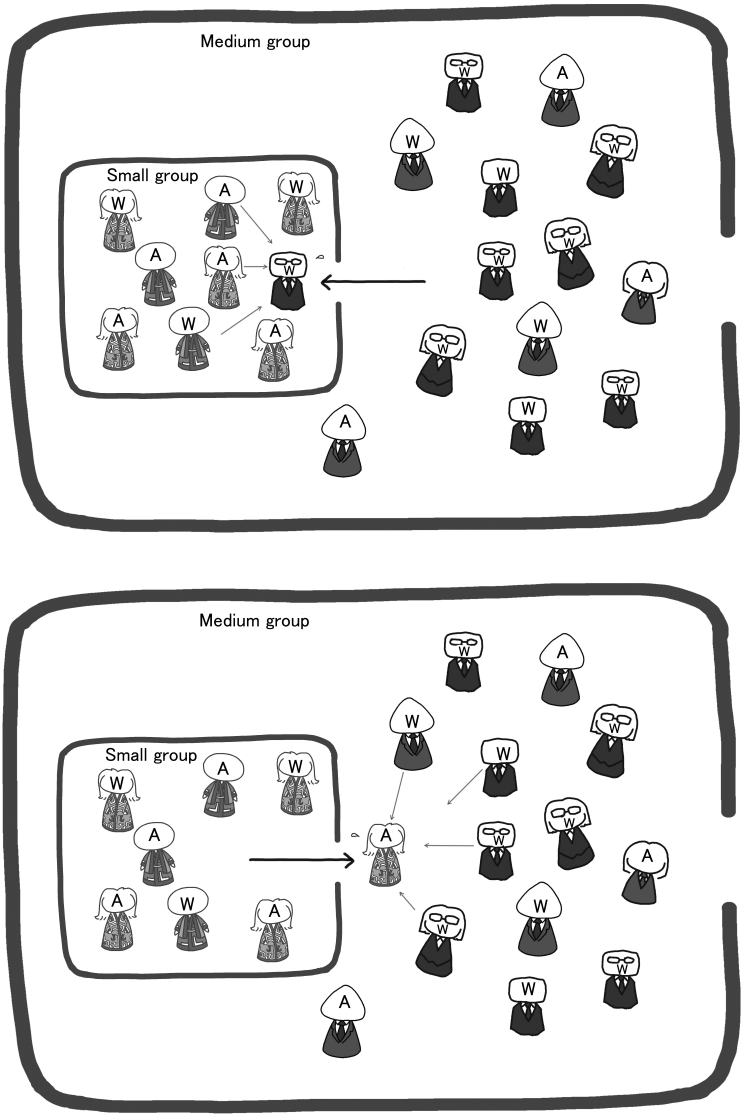


Illustration 11.The power to take initiative shifts by location

men. The people in the small groups often wear traditional Ainu garments or uniforms with Ainu patterns, whereas people in management usually wear suits. This difference in attire also carries meaning. Ainu people hold their traditional garments dear, but if they always wear them even outside of ceremonial occasions, in Japan they are likely viewed as strange or, to put it rudely, as a tourist attraction/a part of the entertainment, or a flamboyant person. Highly positioned Wajin may refuse to put themselves in the same position as Ainu, such as by wearing garments with Ainu patterns.

That said, the mindsets of Wajin and Ainu are affected by where they interact with each other. Generally, government officials and people in managerial positions have strong decision-making authority, but when they go and observe small-group activities or participate in cultural events, they are expected to follow onsite instructions, which sometimes involves wearing traditional Ainu garments while smiling.

In the aforementioned situations, the small-group members find themselves in a position to lead. They may not feel very nervous, but usually when they infringe on the territory of suit-wearing managers, they may feel pressure without realizing it. Even if small-group members have to negotiate for something with those in managerial positions, they may not be able to feel free to make demands. Further, they have no opportunities even to talk in person with government officials further up the hierarchy (Illustration 11).

Within small groups, nasty words and deeds are sometimes directed at Wajin in the weak position. Further, there are great disparities in position within Ainu and Wajin groups, which are compounded by ethnicity-related disparities. Therefore, it is important to compromise to eliminate disparities by understanding that the unreasonable experiences one side faces can also occur to the other side. In Ainu policies, Ainu taking the initiative and Ainu and Wajin avoiding unreasonable discrimination are mutually achievable.

The recruitment of members of a minority group gives the appearance of a fair workplace, and the organization publicizes such recruitment. This

is called tokenism. The word "token" means evidence, and recruitment of Ainu is sometimes used as evidence of fairness. Even organizations as shown in Illustration 10 may give the impression that they have recruited more minority group members than they actually have. An emphasis on the recruitment of minority group members also causes majority group members to entertain antipathy against minority group members, based on the idea of reverse discrimination.

Chapter 2. Who are Ainu and Wajin?

Let's take a look at generally perceived ethnic boundaries and the importance of self-determination in such boundaries.

Who decides whether a person is Ainu or Wajin?

As described from pages 17 to 24, racial and ethnic distinctions have no clear basis. Significant differences between Ainu and Japanese languages might have made it possible to define Ainu speakers as Ainu. However, there were also Wajin who acquired Ainu language skills and worked as interpreters and those who happened to be able to speak Ainu. In fact, it was impossible to distinguish between Ainu and Wajin by lineage, because there have been many children born to Ainu and Wajin parents and because Ainu and Wajin have been deeply involved with each other over the course of history. The point here is not that the difficulty of distinguishing between Ainu and Wajin means a lack of differences between them. What is important is that despite that difficulty, whether one is considered Ainu or Wajin is socially significant.

Moreover, it is Wajin who have decided who is Ainu and who is Wajin. By way of example, the Hokkaido Government and municipalities have limited Ainu eligibility for public assistance to those who can prove their Ainu lineage from their family registers, which is much stricter than membership requirements of various Ainu-related organizations (according to the summary of discussions at the 7th meeting of the Working Group for the Re-

search on Living Conditions of Ainu People outside Hokkaido). Regardless of such proof, people who are considered Ainu are often subject to social exclusion or insult in private settings. Who is considered Ainu varies depending on the circumstances and lacks consistency. However, it has always been Wajin who make the rules, for example, by narrowing Ainu eligibility or excluding Ainu from being considered Wajin.

[Column 6] How to become a Japanese citizen

Article 10 of the Constitution of Japan stipulates that "The conditions necessary for being a Japanese national shall be determined by law." The Nationality Act (Act No. 147 of 1950), which was enacted in 1950 and amended in 2018, defines a Japanese citizen as any person with Japanese nationality. Article 2, paragraph 3 of the law stipulates that a child is a Japanese citizen "if born in Japan and both of the parents are unknown or are without nationality." This means that a child is a Japanese citizen if born in Japan and their lineage is unknown. Article 4 of the law stipulates that "A person who is not a Japanese citizen (hereinafter referred to as 'foreign national') may acquire Japanese nationality through naturalization," allowing foreign nationals who have lived outside Japan to acquire Japanese nationality and become Japanese citizens. In this way, Japanese nationals include people of various racial and ethnic origins. Hence, both under the legal system and in reality, Japan is not an ethnically homogeneous nation, but a multi-ethnic nation.

What makes people think of themselves or others as Ainu or Wajin?

What makes people think of themselves or others as Ainu or Wajin (or as members of another ethnic group)? Many people would point to physical characteristics (appearance), culture, and origins. Before delving into the topic any further, it is important to note that physical characteristics and

culture are matters of perception. It is not that they either contain or do not contain certain elements, but that they are not clear-cut and they have slight differences, as shown in Illustration 12. Clarifying this may reinforce perceptions, but it is better to know that the lives of people are often bound by what are nothing more than perceptions. As later discussed, lineage is not absolute, either. The important thing to note is that in all cases, people themselves should be the ones who decide which of their various conditions they value. They should never allow others to intervene and make decisions about their origins (like "Mr. So-and-So is, or is not, of such-and-such descent").

1. Physical characteristics

Both Wajin and Ainu vary in physical characteristics. As discussed earlier, the idea that different racial and ethnic groups have different physical characteristics is an assumption (see p. 17).

Even among Wajin, physical characteristics differ from person to person, such as people's faces (flat vs. chiseled), hair (straight vs. curly), and build. There is an expression "a Japanese-looking face," but it does not mean that people with "an un-Japanese-looking face" are not Wajin.

In the 19th century, many pictures of Ainu painted by Wajin were sold, which later gave way to photos and picture postcards. To sell those commercial products, people with clear-cut facial features were chosen as models, and their features were exaggerated to make them look different from Wajin. This subsequently also caused the perception of an "Ainu-looking face" to be biased and stereotyped.

The perceptions that were formed in this way affect reality. Unlike inner qualities, physical characteristics are visible and therefore have a lot to do with perceptions people have about a person. The following expressions are examples often used by Wajin when they talk about Ainu physical characteristics and appearance.

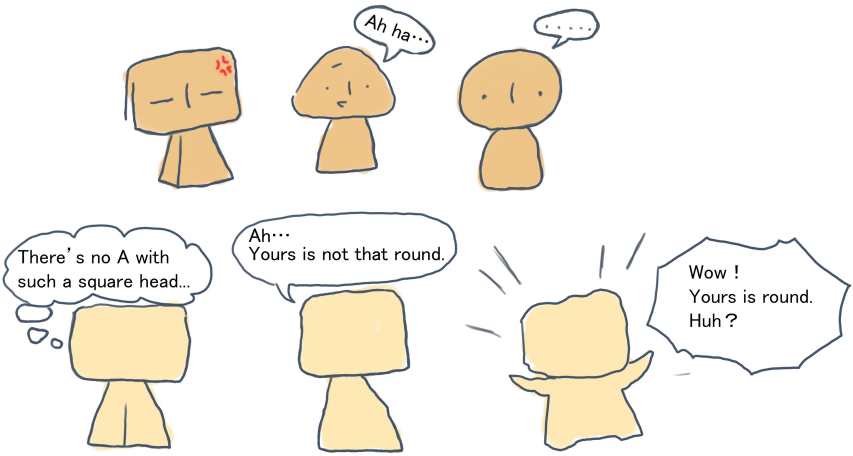


Illustration 12. Ethnicity is imagined based on physical characteristics

1. Ainu have hair on their [insert body part].
2. Because Ainu have a strong body odor, the wild vegetable *gyōja-ninniku* (victory onion) is also called the "Ainu onion" because it stinks.
3. Ainu schoolmates were not discriminated against; they just couldn't study and smelled bad.
4. [From a former Wajin teacher] I can tell which students are Ainu by looking at their faces. They are cute as children, but their Ainu features emerge as they grow up.

All these expressions convey negative impressions about Ainu. In today's Japanese society, having body hair in unusual places or being hairy or sparsely haired is viewed negatively. Advertisements and business practices that enhance negative perceptions about body hair and body odor have become a social issue, affecting Ainu more seriously because of the aforementioned assumptions. While Ainu facial features may be seen positively as in example 4 above, that does not change their social status. Because body odor is often tied to standards of hygiene and culture, those with a strong body odor are subject to contempt.

There are Ainu who have been teased about their hairiness by those who are unaware of their ethnicity. They often share their experience of discrimination with the preliminary remark "It wasn't because I'm Ainu, but..." However, the association of hairiness with Ainu experiences of discrimination indicates that hairiness is closely tied to perceptions of Ainu physical characteristics.

There are also Wajin who have been laughed at for their hairiness, been teased for looking different, and who are concerned about their strong body odor. The experiences of those Ainu and Wajin people may be similar, but they are not identical, because they involve specific circumstances. In such cases, simply thinking "I don't mind, so neither should you" would overlook actual differences in experience and actual seriousness for the other person. Ainu and Wajin can empathize with each other if they face their barriers while understanding the differences between them as well as the similarities about their respective barriers (see 8 in the bibliography). In other words, people who are subject to social exclusion or contempt for their physical characteristics that are different from "normal" can cooperate with each other even if their circumstances are different.

2. Culture

What are the answers to the question of what constitutes Wajin-ness? Work-wise, those answers may include fishing and rice farming. They may also include speaking Japanese, visiting shrines and temples, eating Japanese cuisine, playing traditional Japanese games, enjoying traditional performing arts, and valuing the Japanese spirit of harmony. While the Japanese language is used also today, it keeps evolving. Fishing and farming face a shortage of successors. Japanese culture also includes aspects introduced from abroad, such as rice farming and Buddhism, and the time periods in which they took root in society vary. There are also aspects that have gained attention or have been revived only recently.

Elements that constitute Ainu-ness may include engagement in hunting, fishing, and gathering; religious culture; and oral literature. That being

said, because the time periods and regions in which these practices took root differ, it is not that "a set of authentic elements of Ainu culture" exists. Further, many Ainu are unfamiliar with these elements. Experiences of coming in contact with Ainu language, narratives, songs, dances, musical instruments, handicrafts, traditional dishes, and the like often influence the development of ethnic identity among Ainu. However, such experiences are not indispensable. Today, there are probably many Wajin who have grown up with little experience of coming in contact with traditional Japanese performing arts, handicrafts, festivals, and the like. However, a lack of exposure to Japanese traditions never threatens their position as Wajin. They may feel a sense of loss about bygone days, but they will never be told they are no longer Wajin, nor will their existence and sovereignty be questioned. Further, it is important to provide an opportunity for children to learn about their culture to some extent at school and in the community. Ainu are not provided with any opportunities to come into contact with their own culture through public education, and a lack of explicit cultural experience often elicits remarks that judge Ainu people as having lost their cultural identity and died out as an ethnic group.

Such responses may not necessarily come from malicious intent, but from naive expectations for something tangible that shows Ainu ethnicity. However, such expectations are one-sided and careless. What is worse, Ainu people trying hard to be accepted by others often misconstrue the acquisition of their culture as "Ainu-ness." It is natural for people to learn and form an attachment to their culture, but the problem is that people without any opportunity or motivation to learn their culture are denied even their ethnicity.

Ainu people who make conscious efforts to preserve their traditional culture may criticize those with little or no experience or knowledge of that culture by saying something like "You're Ainu, but you do not even know such or such a thing." The accumulation of such experiences has led to many Ainu feeling that they do not know anything about the ethnic group despite being of Ainu descent. Compared with Wajin, Ainu have a much higher hur-

dle for developing their ethnic identity.

3. Lineage

To feel that one is a member of an ethnic group, it is essential for one to be a relative or descendent of a member of that group, because no one feels that they are a member of an ethnic group with which they have no connection. Given that one can have blood ties with anyone else in human history, it is significant to take a look at how Ainu and Wajin of today have descended from ancestors who became aware of the other ethnic group and have come to be called Ainu and Wajin.

When people who claim to be Wajin are asked why they think that, the most common answer is "Because my parents are Wajin." A follow-up about the basis for claiming to have Wajin parents elicits the response, "Because their parents were also Wajin." But some respondents may not be sure. Further, there is no knowing how many generations back their ancestors became aware that they were Wajin. If they could meet their ancestors from 2000 years ago and ask them if they were ethnic Japanese, they might say no.

Public perceptions about relatives have evolved over time. In Ainu culture until about the Meiji era, the maternal and paternal lines carried significance in marriage, inheritance, funerals, and ancestor worship. Ainu women traced their kinship through the maternal line, which includes one's mother, one's maternal grandmother, her mother before her, and so on, and men traced their kinship down the paternal line, which includes one's father, one's paternal father, his father before him, and so on. Ainu people tried to keep family lines alive, but these lines were not solely based on blood ties. Some Ainu joined another family's line through adoption, while others married Wajin or someone of a different ethnicity or adopted children of a different ethnicity. Such children were raised as Ainu and entered the family line, taking part in family events.

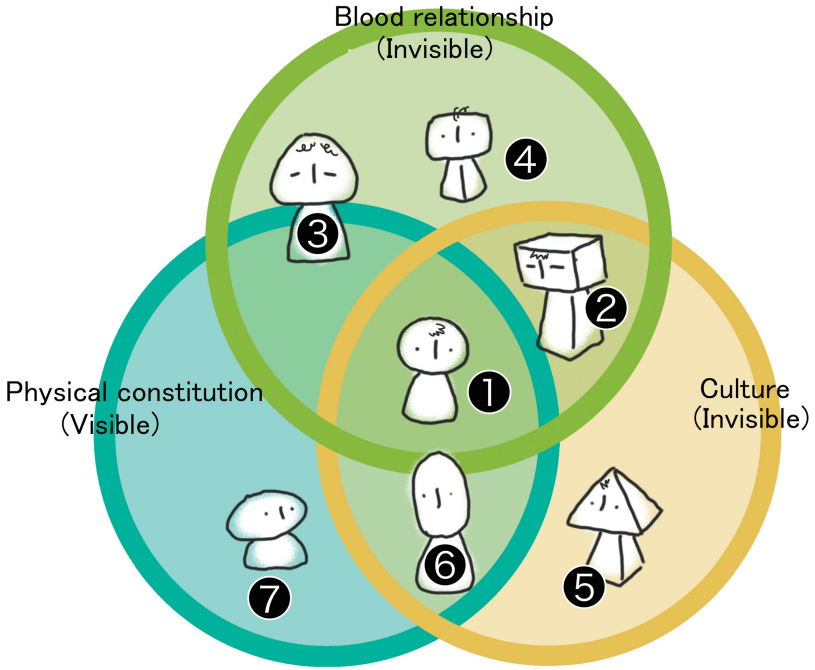
Knowing one's roots is not necessarily a matter of course. Some circumstances may prevent one from knowing about one's birth or relatives. For

ethnic minorities like Ainu, the risk of being discriminated against makes them reluctant to come out about their roots or makes them try not to think about them. To mitigate possible discrimination risks for posterity, some told their children only about risk-free members in the family tree. People who have lost track of their roots in this way may accidentally learn about them, looking for their relatives or people with roots in the same region or taking interest in their culture. While a lot has been said both for and against such a later-acquired ethnic identity, it is strange that other people meddle in other people's affairs in the first place.

Furthermore. Ainu people who were unaware of their origins until reaching adulthood may never have experienced discrimination. In this sense, not all Ainu experiences overlap so it is good to be aware that the experience and perception of one person might differ from those of others.

Elements of ethnic identity overlap and evolve

Illustration 13 shows three circles representing the elements of blood ties, cultural experience, and physical characteristics. The three circles overlap for people in position (1), signifying that they experience all these elements. In the past, the term *minzoku* (ethnic group) was used to refer to a group of people distinguishable from others in terms of these three elements. Those who are called *denshō-sha* (people who have inherited a certain culture) may be perceived to be people with these three elements, but the truth is that the experience of these people varies from person to person. People in position (2) have Ainu lineage and have experience in Ainu culture, but are considered to "not look Ainu." People in position (3) are perceived by others as "looking Ainu," but have no Ainu cultural experience. Those in position (4) have Ainu lineage, but tend to be perceived as Wajin in the other aspects. Today, people in positions (3) and (4) are considered to vastly outnumber those in (1) and (2). Cultural experience is an element of ethnic identity formation, but it is not a must. These days, the notion that Ainu people are those who practice Ainu culture has gone too far, causing people in positions (3) and (4) to feel inferior. It is important to distinguish be-



1. Ainu as imagined in general
2. Has a blood relationship and cultural experience, but does not have an “Ainu appearance”
3. Acknowledged as Ainu by blood relationship and appearance, but has no cultural experience
4. Is related by blood but does not “look Ainu” and has no cultural experiences
5. Has experience in Ainu culture (Ex: Ainu culture enthusiast)
6. Has experience in Ainu culture, has an “Ainu appearance,” but is not related by blood

   (Ex: Is an Ainu culture enthusiast and is seen as “looking Ainu”)
7. Appearance is similar to Ainu by chance

Illustration 13.Blood relations, physical appearance, culture and position

tween respecting the need to preserve a culture and imposing that culture.

Anything can trigger the formation or change of a person's identity. People in positions (5) and (6) are those who like Ainu culture, and people in (7) are those who happen to look like Ainu. That said, they move into positions (1), (2), or (3) if they later find out that they are related by blood to Ainu. Even people who fit into none of these three circles may move into (4) if they later discover a blood relationship with Ainu. Adoption and marriage may bring people close to position (4). You never know about ethnic background until you ask.

[Column 7] *Konketsu* (mixed blood), *hāfu* (half), and mixed roots

In Japan today, people with parents of different ethnicity are sometimes referred to as *konketsu* (of mixed blood) or *hāfu* (half). Ainu people are occasionally called *Ainu no matsuei* (descendants of Ainu). This may sound trivial to those who have not experienced being called these names, but it is not pleasant to be called a *hāfu* or "a descendant of (certain ethnic group)," because those terms make a person sound like they come from impure lineage or are inauthentic. It would be ridiculous to call a man named Kitahara "a descendant of the Kitaharas" or "half Kitahara and half Oda," which connotes that he is "partially Kitahara."

The term *konketsu* presupposes the existence of *junketsu* (pure blood). However, both Ainu and Wajin arose through the migrations of groups of many people over long periods of time, and like the Kitaharas, not all of their members share the same characteristics. Hence, just as there is no "pure-blooded Kitahara," there is no "pure-blooded" Ainu or Wajin or any other ethnic group. That said, differences from other ethnic groups, such as languages and customs, may make differences within ethnic groups feel insignificant. "Pure-bloodedness" is a product of such an assumption, and an obsession with it is a symptom of pure-blood syndrome.

Konketsu and *hāfu* seem to have resulted from recent globalization, but all human beings have mixed roots because groups of people have had repeated contacts with one another. Given such circumstances, which roots to identify with may be determined culturally or individually. Some people may not know all their roots. If someone saying "I'm Wajin" or "I'm Kitahara," that means that person has chosen to value or know those specific roots. We should respect the roots that people value, rather than calling some of them *konketsu* or *hāfu*.

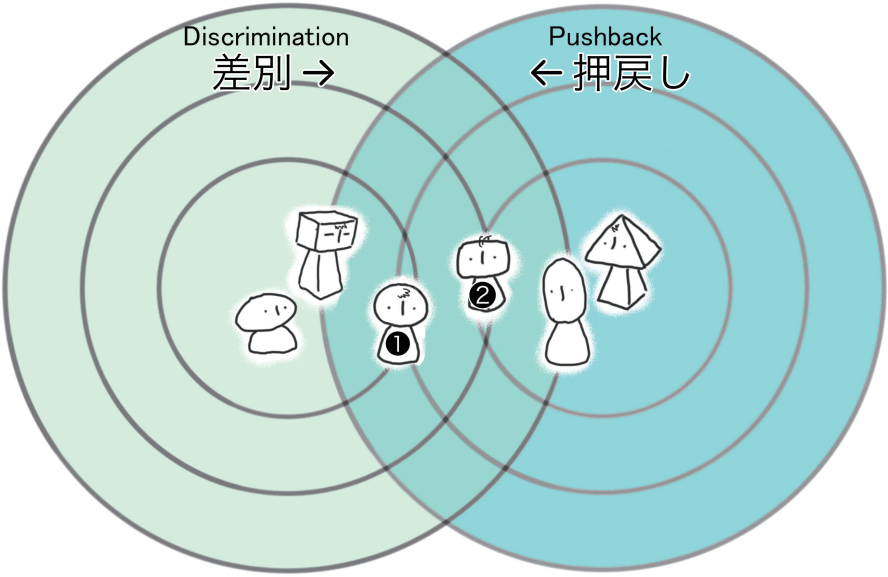
The risk of discrimination and the risk of pushback

In Japan, people with Ainu features, such as those with certain physical characteristics, cultural experience, and blood ties, are perceived as atypical and at a great risk of being discriminated against. However, not all Ainu people share these features, and the risk of discrimination differs from person to person. While Ainu are often said to look different from Wajin, the differences are not binary. There are various looks: for example, a face with plain features, a face with chiseled features, and a face in between these. Where many people have a face with plain features, the more chiseled a person's features, the greater their risk of being discriminated against.

Ainu people who look different from Wajin are at risk of being discriminated against. On the other hand, those who do not look so different from Wajin are freer from the risk of discrimination based on physical characteristics and may not feel such risk. People of Ainu lineage who have neither Ainu physical characteristics nor Ainu cultural experience have totally different experiences of discrimination from those who are readily identified as Ainu by others (because of their lineage or physical characteristics) and those who are participating in activities to revitalize and promote Ainu culture. Therefore, those who are at low risk of discrimination do not experience the same reality of discrimination and some may take the existence of discrimination and the pain it causes lightly. Further, those at high risk of discrimination often feel frustrated when they are considered to be in the same boat as those who are actually at low risk. For example, when a person

who has recently found out about his Ainu ancestry but is at little risk of discrimination based on physical characteristics tries to connect with other Ainu people, they may or may not face pushback, being told that they are "different." Ainu at low risk of discrimination are often at a risk of pushback from other Ainu people (see Illustration 14). However, their risk of discrimination is low only in comparison with those at great risk; it is just a matter of relativity.

Neither those who have suffered a great risk of discrimination since childhood nor those who have been at low risk can choose their upbringing, so it is not right that anyone be rejected on the basis of birth. However, it



(1) Close to the majority/Far from the minority
→ Low risk of discrimination/High risk of pushback
(2) Close to the minority and far from the majority
→ High risk of discrimination and low risk of pushback

Illustration 14: Discrimination Risk · Pushback Risk

is important to know that nobody knows the reality of another's risk of discrimination or pushback, because such risks are invisible. It often happens that something truly important to others escapes the notice of others.

Wajin and people in other ethnic groups are also at risk of discrimination based on physical characteristics, but such characteristics of Wajin [in Japan] are often seen as a part of their individuality, whereas those of members of a minority group are often used as a reason for the social exclusion of the entire group. Even among Ainu, conversations on physical characteristics may differ by sex, such as those focusing on the masculinity of men and the lack of femininity of women. It is not that men face less serious discrimination but it is important to understand that women are at additional risk of discrimination that concerns things like a perceived lack of femininity or poor appearance [In Japan, it is often said that it is bad manners for women not to maintain their appearance by always doing their make-up etc].

In this way, several of the attributes of people in minority groups may combine, thus increasing the risk of condescension, rejection, and more. There are also the risks that a person's ethnicity or physical characteristics become a catalyst for others to point out another feature, and that discrimination is passed on to the next generation. Experiences of Wajin and Ainu may partially overlap, but they are not identical, so even sincere words of encouragement and comfort, such as "The same is true with me (Do not let them get to you)," may make the other person feel that the discrimination they have experienced was not taken seriously. Cooperation based on an understanding of differences will truly help victims of discrimination.

Family and community ties

Ainu folktales include stories about non-Ainu individuals who became members of Ainu communities through adoption or marriage and stories about Ainu individuals who were adopted by Wajin and lived as them. Today, the Ainu term *utari* is used to mean "of the same ethnic group, i.e. Ainu," but it is said to have originally referred to relatives and family members. According to records left by Wajin, *utari* was also used to mean work-

ers /servants and lodgers with a family (written as "*utare*").

Adoption and marriage create strong ties and a shared sense of destiny, including the risk of discrimination. Not only might a Wajin individual who marries an Ainu take on the risk of discrimination, but so might a child from that Wajin's previous marriage. There are also cases in which children of Wajin individuals whose work involves the research or promotion of Ainu culture are identified with Ainu and discriminated against. In such cases, if those at risk of discrimination behave to avoid being looked down on as Ainu are, they become complicit in discrimination. Discrimination persists in society partly because some people become complicit to protect their own interests.

What would happen if people were willing to address the risk of discrimination against Ainu as a risk of their own? Those who proactively take on the risk of discrimination against their new family members or colleagues, for example, are collaborators in eliminating discrimination. They can be called *utari* in the broad sense, and also can be considered allies.

Can DNA tests tell whether a person is Ainu or Wajin?

Some Ainu people, particularly those who learned about their ethnicity after reaching adulthood, say that DNA tests confirmed them to be Ainu. In Europe and the United States, the DNA testing business is thriving, with services that feature estimates of ethnicity even broken down by percentages.

DNA testing can reveal the regions of the world where a person's ancestors may have lived. Because humans have migrated and intermarried with people from different racial and ethnic groups over the years, someone may find out that their ancestors were from a region, or even several regions different from the place they live currently. Separately from genes, there is another interpersonal tie known as "ethnic consciousness," which runs deeper than genes. For example, downtown Tokyoites feel special bonds among themselves, as do people from the Kansai region, as do people from the

Kanto region. They are thought to share large portions of DNA with other Wajin groups, but they have their own ethnic consciousness. For example, a commonality in DNA would never allow a person from Akita Prefecture to consider themselves a downtown Tokyoite.

Some emigrants from Japan may have Ainu ancestry. Even in such cases, it is advisable to be aware that these emigrants may not readily share the various experiences of Ainu in Japan, including the risk of being discriminated against in Japanese society.

In addition, some hate speech has included verbal attacks pressuring people who identify as Ainu to take DNA tests to show proof. This problem also arises from misunderstandings and distorted interpretations of DNA testing.

Can people become Ainu?

"Ainu" means "human" in the Ainu language. Based on this definition, some Ainu say, "There is no such thing as Wajin or any [other ethnicity]. Everyone is human. That is, everyone is Ainu." Such remarks are probably derived from an altruistic feeling or the idea that ethnic classification likely results in discrimination. There are also cases in which a Wajin aspiring to turn completely into a member of an indigenous community stresses that they have been accepted into the community and have taken an indigenous name.

It is a fact that society consists of members in various positions, such as men, women, people from the Kansai region, and people from the Kanto region, etc., and that they all have their own needs. Many Wajin want to teach their children Japanese, whereas many Ainu want to teach their children the Ainu language. Such differences do not constitute discrimination and should not be considered negatively. Rather, to say that there should be no distinction between men and women or between Ainu and Wajin obscures differences in their needs, and only the needs of the privileged are met as a result. No matter how altruistic Ainu become towards Wajin, a society in which Ainu needs are left unattended is not expected to change. The society

may change for the better if those who claim to have been accepted into an Ainu community act to eliminate the risk of discrimination against Ainu and address other issues of inequality. Otherwise, the expression "everyone is Ainu" is a recipe for confusion, especially when Ainu want their differences to be acknowledged and respected. On the contrary, the expression may be used in hate speech.

As discussed earlier, ethnic groups are often classified subjectively (intuitively by ethnic group members themselves), and things that are obvious to group members may defy easy explanation to others. Ethnic groups are not defined so strictly in the first place. This explains why some people say "Everyone can become Ainu" and "You are Ainu as long as Ainu recognize you as such." Some even say, "The real Ainu have already become extinct or only a few remain. Today's Ainu activities are controlled by Ainu impersonators."

Being eligible for governmental and other programs for Ainu to rectify economic disparities differs from acknowledging oneself to be Ainu or speaking out as an Ainu. Different programs have different eligibility requirements, and everyone is free to inwardly consider themselves as Ainu. However, when people speak out as Ainu in a manner that will affect other Ainu and society as a whole, they will be asked about their basis for claiming to be Ainu and about how representative their voice is.

As with the examples of marriage and adoption, non-Ainu individuals may be accepted by Ainu communities. Even those who make hateful remarks about Ainu may become related to Ainu through marriage or adoption. However, because the experience of discrimination varies from person to person, one Ainu person's comment that the damage of discrimination is less than serious and requires no initiatives to eliminate discrimination is not representative of the opinions of all Ainu. Likewise, it is doubtful that people who have become members of Ainu families but have never been discriminated against or who have a strong prejudice against Ainu can make a persuasive case about discrimination.

Are Ainu and Wajin the same since they share Jōmon ancestry?

Some research suggests that within the Ainu population many genetic traits from the Jōmon period population still exist. Such genetic traits have also been inherited by Wajin. This may make some people feel fascinated and talk in a way that shows their "philanthropic mentality" towards Ainu. There is an instance that is important to highlight, where a tourist from Japan's main island of Honshu left an Ainu woman speechless by telling her, "I'm like you because I'm also of Jōmon descent."

This is wrong on several levels. Jōmon culture is generally thought to have spread through what is considered to be Japanese territory today. In reality, however, similar cultures thrived in areas around what is considered modern Japan today, and excluding these areas from the bigger picture has reinforced the notion that Jōmon culture is "Japanese culture" (see 15 in the bibliography). Further, it has been known that even Jōmon culture on Honshu had regional variations, but denoting these sub-cultures all as "Jōmon culture" gives the impression that it was a single culture. In other words, people believe what people want to believe. Of course, everyone is free to believe as they will, but it is rather problematic to influence what others want to believe.

Some people may aspire to be like the so-called "Ainu who live in harmony with nature," but such thinking ignores thousands of years of Ainu's footsteps until today. Even if the way of thinking about Ainu is positive, it is inappropriate to impose a particular image or societal role on a people. This way of thinking can also be related to thinking based on the common ancestry theory, the idea that people descend from the same group of ancestors and are therefore the same. It also has something in common with the view that everyone should connect on equal footing, a way of thinking that ignores gender gaps and income disparities that actually exist. It is always people in privileged groups that voice these types of opinions. Insisting that "We're the same" turns attention away from differences in situations and

needs, as well as away from various disparities.

If a member of a group argues that they should be united as one with those of another group because they descend from the same ancestry, the proponent could conform to the other group. However, when Wajin individuals claim that their ancestries are the same as those of the Ryukyuans (Okinawans), the Koreans, and Ainu, they have never conformed (to the other peoples). The aforementioned tourist who told an Ainu woman that they were like her because they are also of Jōmon descent would never think about becoming like Ainu at the expense of their current position, livelihood, and rights. Regardless of the tourist's intention, such a remark could lead to the acceptance of a status quo in which Ainu have accepted compromised with Wajin, saying there is nothing wrong with the status quo. The statement that "We're the same" is illusory empathy felt without actually seeing the other party, and contrary to its loving ring, it negates the difficulties in which the disadvantaged find themselves and their appeals to address disparities.

Chapter 3. *Pon-itak* (Curses) That Shackle You

The term *pon-itak* refers to a curse placed on someone. It is believed that the cursed person will suffer a calamity and that the person who says the curse will also encounter misfortune.

Today, there are also statements and expressions like *pon-itak* that make those on both the giving and receiving ends unhappy. Such expressions may hurt or frustrate people. They may make meaningless the courage with which people have come out about their ethnicity or spoken out about discrimination, or worse, they may discourage them from doing just that. They may leave a person speechless. If they find them too much to bear, they may stop the conversation. However, they may linger on a person's mind unless they understand what they mean or what is intended.

This chapter is a collection of examples of such expressions, discussing their intended meanings and impacts, as well as ways of breaking the curse.

Each example includes a brief explanation and related pages in Chapters 1 and 2 and are intended to be read as necessary.

"You are not a real Ainu." (p. 78 – p. 92)

This expression is used by both Wajin and Ainu in various situations, including when the person lacks knowledge or experience of traditional Ainu culture, the person has never been discriminated against, and the person has a non-Ainu parent or ancestors.

The problem with this expression is that there are no standards for judging the realness of ethnicity. The experiences of culture and discrimination vary from region to region and from person to person, and no one has knowledge and experience about each and every aspect of a culture. Regarding blood ties, the idea of pure blood has caught on only recently and lacks any scientific basis. In fact, those who say this are not, themselves, pure-blooded.

This expression changes nothing on the receiving end because it neither removes nor diminishes what is made this person embrace an Ainu identity. The person who says the expression is also well aware of that.

So, what purpose does this expression serve and what impact does it have? The person who says it may want to insult another person or make them flinch. It may be that the person does not want Ainu to speak out or rock the boat in society. The person may intend to condescend or to strengthen their position in the conversation. This expression causes fewer Ainu to speak out, thereby perpetuating their minority status. Ainu and their *utari* should resist this expression and avoid using it themselves.

"There is no longer discrimination against Ainu." (p. 54, p. 59, p. 63)

This expression is used by both Wajin and Ainu. Wajin may use it to protect their own interests, whereas Ainu who use it may not consider discrimination problematic now or may be under social pressure to avoid making waves. In any case, this expression discourages further consideration and

conversation even if there are people who feel discriminated against.

What comes to mind when the word "discrimination" is heard are extreme examples such as direct verbal abuse and physical violence. People often say "There is no discrimination against Ainu" or "I never discriminate against Ainu" in order to mean "I could not care less about Ainu," and their assertion lacks a basis in reality. Those unprepared to interact with Ainu tend to reject them when they have an increased likelihood of associating with Ainu, for example, through work, romantic relationships, or marriage. There are also cases in which insulting jokes and a veneer of aloofness are routinely used to make Ainu feel awkward by conveying contempt and derision. Behaviors with similar impacts include avoiding eye contact with Ainu, keeping distance from Ainu, not striking up a conversation with Ainu, and behaving overly kind to Ainu. The degree to which Ainu are affected by these behaviors depends largely on their age, gender, physique, social status, and surroundings. The frequency of discriminatory experiences and their impacts differ significantly for a well-built, well-off man who heads some organization and an ordinary woman. When a person says there is no discrimination, it is just the person's personal opinion, because no one can represent everyone's position or experience. It is important to listen to the voices of others before denying their experience. Without the attitude of respecting others, even listening to their experience is difficult.

In addition to such discrimination between individuals, other discrimination and Wajin centralism that are deeply ingrained in society have become a matter of course Wajin centralism are deeply ingrained in society and have become a matter of course. Their invisibility makes it difficult for people to understand their complexity and recocognize how they perpetuate inequality (see Illustrations 4 and 6).

"They are good people, so they cannot be discriminatory." (p. 51, p. 58)

People who use this expression appear to assume that because discrimination is wrong, only bad people engage in it. Few people think they are

bad, so if they are told they are a party to discrimination, they may feel vilified and deny it.

In fact, prejudice, which is a source of discrimination, exists in everyone. People grow up absorbing societal values, both good and bad. It is truly difficult to consciously avoid bad values, and if a person mistakes a certain prejudice for a fact, they will not feel guilty about talking about it. A person's unconscious prejudices may unexpectedly offend other people. The assumption that only bad people discriminate discourages further consideration and conversation about discrimination.

"I never discriminate. No discrimination exists in this organization."

While this expression sounds like a sensible thing to say, it may discourage further consideration and conversation about discrimination, because the message can be understood as "Discrimination is not my problem because I never discriminate" and not necessarily "I also oppose discrimination." That results in the status quo being left unaddressed. It means a lot if the person says "I never tolerate discrimination," rather than "I never discriminate," because it shows a willingness to act.

It makes no sense for a person to speak subjectively about their relationships with others by saying "I never discriminate." Discrimination is not always conscious or intentional, and remarks that one might thinks are legitimate may sound unreasonable to another. Even if a person thinks they have a great relationship, the other person may be feeling harassed. This also applies to organizational settings. Those in high positions should not say that no discrimination exists in their organizations, because such remarks silence the victims of discrimination.

"I hail from Japan's main island of Honshu." (p. 154)

This expression means "Because I'm from Honshu, I have nothing to do with discrimination," and it seems to assume that discrimination is a conscious act involving individuals in Hokkaido, where Ainu live.

I hear there is a strong preconception in the United States that racism is particularly endemic to Southerners, who are laden with prejudices. This means that well-educated Northerners, who are aware of the significance of human rights, have nothing to do with discrimination. Similarly, there may be prejudice among Wajin against those whose ancestors had to leave their hometowns to settle in Hokkaido to extricate themselves from their financial woes. However, it was Wajin on the main island of Honshu who adopted and benefited from the policies of colonization of regions including Hokkaido, Okinawa, Korea, and Taiwan. Those who hail from Honshu must not forget history as if it were in the past or had never happened, shifting the blame for trouble onto Wajin in Hokkaido. Of course, many Wajin today were not directly involved in the occupation of those regions, but they are not unrelated given that they live in a society built on profits made from the occupation and domination of local peoples and that this domination has partially continued to date. Those who believe they are in the mainstream of Japanese society are inexorably linked to the nation's oppression of other ethnic groups. To consider oneself independently of Wajin in Hokkaido by maintaining that "Because I'm from Honshu, I have nothing to do with discrimination" is to turn a blind eye to the responsibility of the mainstream. People cannot change their majority and minority group memberships even if those memberships are against their wishes. What they can do is to act to change how society works. For this, they must act to heal the emotional scars of the ruled and restore their rights, rather than allowing, supporting, or remaining indifferent to the history in which the occupation was justified.

"Why should we be held accountable for what our ancestors did?" (p. 9, p. 10, p. 47)

This expression means "We have nothing to do with discrimination because it is a thing of the past and we were born after it was over." Of course, many Wajin today were not directly involved in the occupation committed by Japan in prewar days in and after the Meiji era (the late 19th century).

However, it is a fact that today's Japanese society was built on profits made from the occupation and domination of local peoples, and that domination over Ainu and Okinawans continues. Therefore, those living in Japanese society are related to the occupation in one way or another, with the exception of recently arrived immigrants. The problem is not just that minority groups are criticized by name, but also that a Wajin-oriented society that fails to embrace diversity indirectly hurts the dignity of minority groups (refer to the previous section).

"I have Ainu friends."

This expression means "I do not discriminate because I have Ainu friends." It often discourages further conversation about discrimination. In a ridiculous leap of logic, the person who uses this expression may assert that Wajin can be friends with Ainu, so the former do not discriminate against the latter. Discrimination and harassment can happen between co-workers, friends, even family members. When men say they are understanding towards their female co-workers and never oppress them in any way, the extent to which their remarks are taken seriously depends on the circumstances of those who hear them. If their remarks were true, there would not be any sexual harassment or domestic violence in this world.

"I wish I were Ainu too."

This expression sounds either empathetic or violent, depending on who says it and where.

Ainu people who are engaged in reviving their culture have a strong attachment to their language, customs, and local characteristics, hoping to hand down that culture to their local community and family members if possible. They might think differently if there were many successors to their culture and no worries about the preservation of that culture. In reality, however, handing down Ainu culture to one's local community and family members is not easy due to discrimination against Ainu and to limited opportunities, time, and places. This makes their desire to pass it on to fellow

Ainu all the stronger.

Wajin learners of Ainu culture understand such Ainu desires, but at the same time they feel disheartened to find that they are not the ones expected to carry on the culture. It is natural for Ainu and Wajin to feel this way, and it is understandable that Wajin learners of Ainu culture feel that "If I were Ainu, I'd be able to learn the culture while feeling Ainu expectations for me to carry on that culture."

What if a Wajin were to spit out the same sentence, "I wish I were Ainu too," at an Ainu when their opinions clashed? Here, it would mean that Wajin wanted to have a say as an Ainu and to silence the other Ainu. It would imply that Ainu have the privilege of saying what they want to, and it also would have something in common with the view that "It is Wajin who are discriminated against." This expression shows a lack of understanding of Ainu, who are still struggling against discrimination and socioeconomic disparities. In reality, faced with the torment of discrimination, Ainu sometimes say, "If only I *were not* Ainu." Hearing such a sentence is a harrowing experience. It is doubtful that even a person did experience life as an Ainu, as they wished, they would really feel and say they are glad to be Ainu. The expression probably contains the nuance that "it is wrong to be defeated by discrimination," reflecting both individualism (the idea that one does not care about the personal connections and influence that arise from belonging to a group) and the belief that those who are defeated by discrimination are weak and wrong.

"Another Ainu said they were fine with this."

The most common counter-argument to protests against statements that lack the understanding and consideration of Ainu is this: "Another Ainu said they were fine with this." It means "Because another Ainu said they were fine with this, you should also accept it." Similar arguments include "Another Ainu said there is no discrimination."

The problems with this argument are that only one Ainu said that this was fine and that the person does not represent the opinions of all Ainu. Even

if tens or hundreds of people said this was fine, other people may find it offensive. It is important to discuss with the people in front of them whether they are fine with "this," whatever "this" might be.

The socially well-placed, the wealthy, and celebrities have a lower risk of being discriminated against. Even if they say discrimination does not bother them, other people may disagree.

"Discrimination is the result of emphasizing differences."

This expression sounds correct if one believes that differences beget discrimination. However, differences do not always lead to discrimination. Evaluating differences as good or bad creates hatred, fear, and contempt. For example, a myth holds that black cats bring or indicate misfortune. However, until the Meiji era, Wajin considered black felines to bring good luck. Cats are cats regardless of color; it is only people who sense good or bad luck from them.

Illustration 15. The image in a person's mind changes perception

Which of the following needs improvement: the diversity of individuals, or the mindset of those who arbitrarily assign value to different people and discriminate against those who are different? The answer is of course the latter. Saying differences should not be stressed is like saying "everything will be fine even if a black cat is born, as long as you keep its color to yourself."

"Those discriminated against are also to blame." (p. 33)

This expression is often used to criticize victims of discrimination. It means that victims are mistaking "fair criticism" and "caution" for discrimination. Appearance, personality, and customs are individual freedoms which can only be regulated if they cause trouble to others, and the expression of one's dislike of them, for example, is a truly selfish and one-sided argument. It is the perpetrators of discrimination who evaluate others, looking down on and despising them, and the victims have no reason to be discriminated against. The perpetrators base their behavior not on whether the victims are right, but on whether the victims may pose some threat to them (refer to the previous section). On another note, negative views of minorities are sometimes related to the societal value of pursuing only productivity.

"Let sleeping dogs lie."

This expression considers as problematic not the existence of discrimination, but an acknowledgement of the existence of discrimination because such acknowledgement could cause an even more difficult situation.

Discrimination may seldom come to the fore in places where ethnicity is not conspicuous. Asserting ethnicity in such environments may draw critical comments like "There is no reason for you to make a fuss and cause discrimination." However, there are differences among ethnic groups, both large and small, and minorities often have to endure discrimination by suppressing their ethnicity. They work hard for some semblance of normalcy.

Whether it is okay for majority group members to disregard ethnic differences and silence minority group members by taking advantage of the latter's fear of discrimination needs to be questioned. The use of this expression by Wajin leads to Wajin continuing to oppress Ainu and forcing problems onto Ainu so that they do not have to work to eliminate discrimination.

"We should give consideration to everyone, not just Ainu." (p. 31, p. 47 – p. 50)

Behind this expression is the argument that everyone has difficulties. In this sense, it is like saying "All lives matter" to counter the statement "Black lives matter." As indicated in Illustrations 4 and 6, people are not all the same. Further, considering what the indigenous Ainu people went through, the expression is not appropriate.

While it may be true that everyone experience difficulties and barriers, experiences of majority group members differ from those of minority group members. Majority members can act as individuals, but minority members tend to be lumped together based on their group's features and suffer disadvantages as a result. Even if there are multiple features that cause difficulties, each individual case has unique circumstances and should be considered separately. If other topics are brought into the conversation when having discussions about Ainu people, (in this case, "consideration to everyone"), the conversation will likely go off on a tangent.

The basic liberties of the indigenous Ainu people are restricted. For example, the experience of a minority group among Wajin differs from someone who has the same minority attributes and is also Ainu in that the former can participate in society while maintaining their ethnic identity, language, and culture (see Illustration 6). Taking initiatives for both Indigenous Peoples and other minorities will help them both overcome their difficulties.

Chapter 4. A Collection of Conversations: Learning about the Experiences of Various People

The generalized explanations in the previous chapters may escape the understanding of people who have no real-life experience of the subject matter. To help them understand the reality based on actual experience, this chapter features conversations with Ainu and Wajin in four different positions: an Ainu who learned about their ethnicity after reaching adulthood, a person who may have Ainu roots but is not sure, a Wajin participating in Ainu cultural activities, and a person who grew up as an Ainu.

1. Person A: Ainu roots

Mokottunas: Did you experience anything unique to Ainu while you were growing up on Japan's main island of Honshu?
Person A: No, I didn't, because my parents didn't tell me about my roots and my friends didn't know about them, either. However, regarding my physical characteristics that tend to be associated with Ainu, I was nicknamed "telescope-eyed goldfish" for my "well-defined" facial features and I was called "the Abominable Snowman" for my hairiness. In those days, I considered these in the same light as jokes or bullying among Wajin children.

Mokottunas: How did you learn about your roots?
Person A: I thought I was probably Ainu based on where my relatives and I were from and on our facial features. Before I became an adult, my non-Ainu parent told me I might be Ainu. But I wasn't able to confirm it until recently, because I failed to pluck up the courage to ask my other parent, who I now know is Ainu, and the situation did not allow me to talk about it with my relatives, either. Only recently could I afford to send for copies of family registers and learn the names and other information about my ancestors.

Mokottunas: Do you talk about your roots to other people?
Person A: I don't go around trumpeting my roots. I like handicrafts, and I was incorporating Ainu designs into my work even before I was sure of my ethnicity. Sometimes I disclose my roots through social media, albeit anonymously, and I sell my work. I vaguely hint in my online profile that I'm Ainu, because I wasn't sure about it when I prepared that profile.

Mokottunas: Did you get any reaction to it?
Person A: I was asked several times if I'm a real Ainu. I also received a message from a person who had their Ainu ethnicity verified through DNA testing. I didn't know you could confirm your roots that way. I haven't taken this kind of test yet myself.

Mokottunas: DNA testing can't really verify it, can it? Did you talk about your handicrafts to your friends and acquaintances?
Person A: Not so much, although I talked about them to certain people at work, telling them my social media account. I also contacted my friends from college before I created my social media account. So, only those who've taken a look at my social media pages know. My family also know because they help me out.

Mokottunas: In addition to creating Ainu artwork, do you also talk about your being Ainu?
Person A: Not really. I only talk about it when I'm asked by those who are interested in my work.

Mokottunas: How did your friends and acquaintances react when you told them you're Ainu?
Person A: It was just like, "Really? Come to think of it, you *do* have clear-cut facial features." I felt no prejudice from this remark. And it wasn't like they were hiding mixed feelings about my ethnicity to avoid hurting me. Some of the people interested in my profile contacted me, asking if I'm really Ainu

or telling me that they want to know about Ainu roots because they also have them.

Mokottunas: How do you respond?
Person A: Before, I'd say, "I think so," but now that I've confirmed my roots, I clearly say, "Yes, I am." Today, I'm more or less leaning toward proactively disclosing my roots online rather than sharing them only if asked.

Mokottunas: Do you ever want to use your real name?
Person A: It's a delicate matter. If I use my real name, I might cause inconvenience to my relatives. Someone in my family doesn't want to revisit the subject of Ainu roots. Living peacefully without discrimination away from my hometown, I have to wonder what hardships those living in my hometown would go through if I decided to use my real name. And if my comments sparked controversy, I wonder what would happen to them and whether I'd end up seeing their situation from afar like someone else's problem.

Mokottunas: You have to think about those who'll be directly affected.
Person A: Yes, I do, because now I'm living away from my hometown.

Mokottunas: Can you talk about your Ainu roots with your relatives now?
Person A: Yes, I can. I hear that when my cousins living in my hometown asked an elderly local resident about Ainu, they were encouraged to learn about their ancestors because they come from a reputable Ainu family. In my hometown, there are still people who know about our ancestors.

Mokottunas: Do you want to disclose your Ainu roots in the future?
Person A: I don't want to go out of my way to disclose them, but I hope to become able to talk about them normally if asked. I don't want to go around trumpeting my roots.

Mokottunas: I see. Things would go smoothly if you could talk about your roots openly when you wanted to, just as you'd tell your name when asked. Have you ever had any problem in your creative activities?
Person A: I haven't received much criticism, because most people who contact me about the work I sell online are well-intentioned. But because I didn't inherit any Ainu customs in my family, I feel that it's wrong for me to copy traditional Ainu designs. So I try to come up with new creations based on traditional ones. Although this is out of a consideration for copyright protection, I sometimes feel that my work appears similar to traditional Ainu art, but is in fact quite different. This worries me because I may be criticized for creating fakes.

Mokottunas: When do you feel that way?
Person A: I feel small when I see people who carry on Ainu traditions promoting their inheritance of skills and when I see texts or feel negative vibes from people criticizing Ainu art as fake. So, I carefully check others' work to avoid making similar work or encroaching on what's been handed down to them. Descriptions of work crafted by those artisans who are carrying on Ainu traditions say that they use skills that have been handed down from generation to generation. This makes me wonder if people without such skills are just mimics and aren't genuine.

Mokottunas: I think it's unusual today for Ainu artisans to use skills that have been handed down in their families. People in the past also didn't necessarily always learn from their family. They sometimes asked someone who was good at designing to design for them, so designs weren't necessarily handed down from parent to child. People imitate great designs. In the past they learned from their family because that was the easiest way, but that doesn't mean you have to learn within the family. Today there are various ways to inherit and preserve culture, such as learning it from neighbors, at workshops, from books and photos, and at museums.
Person A: Come to think of it, I once received an offensive comment on

social media. It was like "Screw you. You're not Ainu." It seemed like the person wasn't Ainu either. I didn't respond to the comment, as I was scared and there was no way for me to argue back, because this was before I'd confirmed my Ainu roots. The sharp tone of that comment shocked me because I never knew there were people who'd write comments like that. I'd thought that my work might look fake and that I might be in no position to assert that I'm Ainu, but I was truly depressed at that time, thinking I'd received only a Japanese education and had known nothing about Ainu, and that I wouldn't be able to answer any questions about Ainu.

Mokottunas: That sounds awful. I can understand why people make criticisms, because of numerous instances of cultural appropriation, but politeness is important, as you never know who you're communicating with online. When you post comments about ethnicity, you have to be cautious, on the assumption that you never know another person's ethnicity no matter how carefully you might check it.

Person A: It took time to reach where I am right now, but I've become able to be conscious of my Ainu ethnicity. I have a feeling of comfort and relief about my ethnicity, compared with when I denied it deep down thinking, "I'm in no position to call myself Ainu because I've been assimilated and have lived as a Japanese." This may be because I've never directly experienced discrimination, but it is still a huge fact for me.

Japan's lack of public education and systems for Ainu and my family's lack of communication about Ainu ethnicity is neither the responsibility of Ainu ancestors nor something I personally have to feel responsible about. I've finally realized that these are not things we should feel ashamed of or inferior about.

2. Person B: probably Ainu roots (not sure)

Mokottunas: Who participates in the activities you're involved in now?

Person B: Both Ainu and Wajin do.

Mokottunas: What made you interested in Ainu?
Person B: I got interested when I was in elementary school and I thought I might be Ainu. Since then, I've been conscious of my ethnicity from time to time. My family had heard from their older generation that their ancestors might have included Ainu. However, when I asked my relatives about it, they seemed uncomfortable about the topic and I couldn't ask for details.

Mokottunas: Do you talk about your ethnicity with those around you?
Person B: Yes, sometimes. I'd say I may also be Ainu. Some people, especially those living outside Hokkaido, seem to believe that Ainu cultural activities today are conducted by non-Ainu wearing traditional Ainu clothes, and they are surprised to know that Ainu are still alive.

Mokottunas: Does the Jōmon period come up in conversation?
Person B: I'm sometimes asked if Ainu have carried on traditions that originated in the Jōmon period. People ask the question in anticipation of a positive answer, but I can only say I don't know because I do not have a precise answer. I feel that those who entwine Ainu with people of the Jōmon period have prejudiced expectations. I'm sometimes bothered by innocent, unintentional comments of those interested in Ainu. For example, it bothered me when I heard someone say "Ainu are also making progress" when they learned that modern Ainu lifestyles are the same as those elsewhere in Japan. I have to wonder how people with a strong Ainu identity would feel about hearing such comments. I don't want them to get hurt.

Mokottunas: I see. Do you want to be able to find out about your roots and talk about them anywhere you like?
Person B: No. I don't feel the need to find out about them now.

Mokottunas: Why not?
Person B: When I joined my Ainu acquaintances in conversation, I was told, "Come on. It's none of your business [because you're a Wajin]." What I

was told might have been correct, but it weighed on me. It wasn't that I wanted to get involved as an Ainu, but I just wanted to know what was going on. They may have reasons for talking that way given that they've been oppressed and excluded from society. Still, I've never told them I'm *not* Ainu, so it's wrong to label me as non-Ainu by appearance. Nobody can deny the possibility that anyone could be Ainu.

Mokottunas: Exactly.
Person B: That experience made me curious of my ethnicity once again, but I don't think such people's attitudes will ever change even if I find out about it. And I haven't come to think that I'd feel "triumphant" if I found myself to be an Ainu.

Mokottunas: Do you mean you've become fed up?
Person B: No. I mean that I don't like the idea of finding myself pleased to have Ainu ancestors or disappointed not to have them.

Mokottunas: I see.
Person B: I don't want to clarify my roots, and I don't want people to think I'm eager to become Ainu. I just want a situation where nobody cares whether I'm Ainu.

Mokottunas: I see. I think policy-makers tend to think that anyone can transmit culture. What do you make of this?
Person B: Well, I believe that it matters who transmits culture. When I hear an Ainu saying to a Wajin, "You're Wajin, not Ainu," I have to wonder whether Ainu people think that way also about me, even if that comment isn't directed at me. Depending on the circumstances, it may be easier to engage in activities if the goals and messages are clear. In activities to convey the importance of diversity, for example, it'd be easier if Ainu and Wajin could frankly discuss how to convey messages and get involved from their respective standpoints.

Mokottunas: Do you mean it's easier for Ainu and Wajin to discuss how to get involved based on their respective standpoints than to avoid discussing ethnic identity?
Person B: Yes. It'd be ideal for Ainu and Wajin to share backgrounds and ways of thinking and to discuss what they want to achieve down the road. Otherwise, we'd never think about our ethnic identity.

Mokottunas: How do you think people perceive the word "Wajin"?
Person B: From what I've heard, when the word "Wajin" came up during a conversation, one of the people who was there was taken aback and reacted negatively. It seems that the person didn't know there was a name for ethnic Japanese and didn't like the word.

Mokottunas: I see. Majority group members do not have the experience of being seen by minorities and view themselves as individuals, not as members of a group. Because they are the stanard of "normal," they never think there might be a name for their group.
Person B: Maybe it's frightening for them to know that not only are they looking at minorities, but they're also being looked at by them.

3. Person C: Wajin roots

Mokottunas: Did you know about Ainu?
Person C: I got interested in cultures abroad and I began to study history. Then I started to learn about Ainu, because I realized that I'd known nothing about the Indigenous People of Japan and that I'd need to learn about them before learning about things abroad.

Mokottunas: Did local residents and your friends at school know about Ainu?
Person C: No, they knew very little. People outside Japan know more.

Mokottunas: Why was that?
Person C: I think there's been a serious shortage of opportunities to learn about Ainu. School textbooks include only limited descriptions about Ainu, with too much stress placed on their traditional culture. Particularly on Japan's main island of Honshu, the shortage of opportunities is acute. The expression "Indigenous Peoples" may have given the impression that Ainu are a people of the past.

Mokottunas: Indeed. Did you know the word "Wajin"?
Person C: No, I did not. Surrounded by people who looked and spoke like me, I'd never thought about my roots. On reflection, my classmates included a foreign resident, but I never thought of that classmate as a foreigner. I did not even realize that the classmate was a foreigner until after I began to learn about Indigenous Peoples.

Mokottunas: What's your impression of Hokkaido?
Person C: I thought people in Hokkaido would know more about Ainu, but I found that some museum staff have no knowledge or interest in Ainu. I thought it was what it was.

Mokottunas: Tell me about your current activities.
Person C: They are cultural. I wanted to learn about Ainu culture learn side by side Ainu people, but I never intended to engage in cultural activities myself.

Mokottunas: Why was that?
Person C: Just as kabuki and classical Japanese dance are performed by Japanese, I thought cultural activities were supposed to be performed by people of the same ethnic descent. So, I was hoping to assist Ainu people rather than carry out the task of improving awareness about their culture myself.

Mokottunas: Is that so?
Person C: After a while I came to realize that I actually was spreading knowledge about Ainu culture myself. While working, I was shocked at being told that Ainu didn't want to involve Wajin in certain aspects of their culture. Such comments once made me wish I were Ainu, but I concluded that such thinking was wrong. If I were an Ainu, I wouldn't be able to say something like that lightly.

Mokottunas: Is there anyone you can turn to for advice on such matters?
Person C: No. I had my thoughts on why Wajin could not get involved and I figured it out myself, but it would have been much easier if someone had told me.

Mokottunas: How do you feel about being called a Wajin? Some people seem to feel uncomfortable about it.
Person C: No matter what name is used, I do not like it if it is used with discriminatory meaning or antipathy. That said, I have no problem with being called a Wajin because using the word highlights the ethnic diversity of Japan.

4. Ms. Yuka Sakai: Ainu roots

Note: This section is an excerpt of a conversation included in a previously published treastise (see 4 in the bibliography). The phrase "the paper" refers to that treatise. The whole treatise is available in print and online. The numbers below are the same as those in the treatise.

(2) *Ainu no tōjisha-sei* (Degree of ownership of Ainu identity)

Ms. Sakai: What came to mind when I read the paper was that we should use the term *Ainu-sei* (Ainu identity, Ainu features, Ainu-ness, etc.) carefully to prevent the conversation from being drawn toward the fantastical narratives that Wajin often harbor about *Ainu-sei* or to prevent those with a weird longing to become Ainu from interpreting the term to suit their

convenience.

Mokottunas: I thought so, too, when I wrote it. I used the term "situational determination (*Seinsverbundenheit*)" in the paper. What one thinks of oneself is partly determined by the environment into which one is born, an environment that forms the foundation of one's consciousness. In other words, one's willpower cannot change one's self-perception. Neither Ainu nor Wajin can become someone else by changing their origins through sheer force of will. For example, no matter how much I, a Saitama native, might want to become an Osaka native, I'd never be anything more than a Saitama native longing to become an Osaka native, and differences in consciousness between me and Osaka natives cannot be erased. While we can decide whether or not to disclose our roots and attributes, we *cannot* change our consciousness or experience. Willpower has its limits, like when you can't stop thinking about something that you know you shouldn't be dwelling on. So, I thought it important to consider whether you're in control or not. You can't control who your parents are, nor can you control how you're treated by others.

[…]

Ms. Sakai: Many Wajin say, "Ainu people no longer follow their traditional lifestyles." But the same can be said of ethnic Japanese people. They no longer follow their traditional lifestyles, either.

Mokottunas: Agreed. If their argument is taken to its logical conclusion, people who do not wear a topknot wouldn't be able to have a self-awareness of themselves as Wajin. Yet, Wajin think that Ainu people are self-centered and don't make an effort to control what they can.

Ms. Sakai: Exactly. They are wrong.

Mokottunas: I wrote about wannabes (non-Ainu people trying very hard to be like Ainu) near the end of the paper. The things one is born with are beyond one's control. They fix minorities at a disadvantaged position, but they allow majority group members to act like minority group members and behave as they please. Rather than exercising their right to freedom, wannabes are in fact exercising their majoritarian power to not allow Ainu to complain, despite the fact that the wannabes are doing weird things. Whenever I see a wannabe, this makes me feel that they are selfish.

[Latter part omitted]

(3) *Wajin no tōjisha-sei* (Degree of Wajin identity ownership and sense of responsibility)

Ms. Sakai: The section focusing on Wajin identification in the paper describes Wajin responses to discussions on the damage caused by their government's policy on Ainu, such as Wajin saying, "We were called perpetrators all of a sudden" or "I've never discriminated against Ainu people." I think these responses are quite common. Even those who say that they feel discrimination against Ainu to be truly problematic sound insincere, because they often comment on relations between Ainu and Wajin as if they were not a party to those relations.

Mokottunas: There are lots of people like that.

Ms. Sakai: I have an acquaintance who is like that. Several years ago, he annoyed me every time he posted comments about Ainu on social media.

[···]

Ms. Sakai: He hailed from Honshu and probably believed he had nothing to do with the history of discrimination against Ainu. When I used slightly strong words while talking with him, he told me, "You're doing yourself

a disservice by talking that way." He said he understood, though, when I countered his reply by pointing out that his attitude was tantamount to that of men focusing not on feminist arguments but on feminist language or that of majority group members failing to take opinions of minority group members seriously.

Mokottunas: It sounds like he was saying that if you'd spoken more politely, more people would've agreed with you.

Ms. Sakai: Exactly. I had no idea why Ainu should have to think about things like that. It was event organizers like him who should've given their thoughts. I could not help but be upset.

Mokottunas: Anything fun falls within the purview of the event organizers; anything problematic falls under the purview of Ainu.

Ms. Sakai: Exactly. When I conveyed my research findings on Ainu history to the organizers, they irresponsibly told me, "This is so important that you should take necessary steps in line with those findings." Such investigations should've been carried out by the event organizers. I investigate what is important to me, but event organizers should fulfill their business obligations by investigating historical evidence and giving due consideration wherever necessary. They should do so because they also work with Ainu cultural advisors.

Mokottunas: When Ainu cultural advisors are enlisted to help, the advisors who are Ainu sometimes have a hard time because they're usually expected to work in accordance with the project foundations established by Wajin.
Some Ainu people who are engaged in tourism say "It's just work" in a business-like manner or as an excuse, but if it is work, they have to consider how their work affects society.
If Ainu people let a bad experience pass by telling themselves that "It's just

work," those who treat Ainu poorly will remember that they got away with it. On another note, some Ainu people, including those who make exaggerated claims in order to sell goods, turn defiant and say something like "I'm doing this for a living." They also have to consider how their work affects other Ainu people.

Ms. Sakai: Information and messages should not be sent out haphazardly, but in consideration of both positive and negative impacts.

Mokottunas: There is a person I know who has been in tourism for a long time. They are cheerful and playful and know how to please customers. Even in front of nasty customers, this person remains playful and waits until they leave the shop, because his manager wouldn't protect him if he got angry or responded seriously to such customers. Besides, he doesn't want nasty customers to stay too long, so remaining playful and trying not to keep them from leaving leads to protecting himself and his fellow merchandisers. This is one way to conduct customer relations, but people in management positions shouldn't leave such matters unaddressed, because if managers content themselves with the status quo without recognizing problems, it will ultimately hurt those working onsite.

Ms. Sakai: When Ainu people are involved in business, it's advisable to put measures in place to deal with various situations smoothly.

[···]

Let me make another point. An Ainu person who was working for an event as a staff member posted a comment about the prejudices Wajin have against Ainu on the event's official blog, calling on Wajin to stop forming fixed ideas about Ainu. I didn't know what had happened, but I assumed from the fact that the comment was posted near the end of the event that Ainu person experienced some microaggression during the event and thought it'd be better

to post the comment on the official blog.
I may be wrong, but I was troubled to hear that an event organizer allowed an Ainu person to post a comment about prejudice against Ainu after the event.
Countermeasures against such situations should've been taken in advance and also already have been systemitized.

Mokottunas: I see.

Ms. Sakai: An acquaintance who is on the management side told me that it's not their problem, because the management did not ask the Ainu person to post the comment and the post was just that person's opinion.

Mokottunas: Somehow that person's statement about the post doesn't mesh.

Ms. Sakai: Exactly. I pointed out the problem of the person helping to organize the event being subjected to such an experience. I mean that Wajin organizers should've taken measures in advance to prevent Ainu people involved from feeling offended, rather than allowing them to speak out after the fact. This is the least consideration that the majority should give when requesting the participation of minority group members.

Mokottunas: Agreed. The majority should've acted to preempt any such problem, and whether or not the person wrote the comment at their own initiative was irrelevant.

Ms. Sakai: Indeed. But my acquaintance seemed to see the problem as someone else's and was one of those who say, "We want to learn about the culture," "We want to forge a new relationship with Ainu," and "We want to get involved in a neutral position." My acquaintance's reaction resembled that of the aforementioned Wajin individual who felt offended and spat out,

"We were called perpetrators all of a sudden." They think they have nothing to do with problems involving Wajin and Ainu. They should never say they are "neutral."

Mokottunas: Indeed. Phrases like "new relationship," "neutral position," and "future-oriented" are taboo. People who use these phrases sound like they're saying that they're special and free from the position they were born into, even though no one can never emancipate themselves from such a position, for better or worse. This is the same as saying "I'm not involved in discrimination" or "I ignore nuisances. Don't talk about the past."

Ms. Sakai: I don't think it's a new relationship; it's a new form of exploitation. I understand that they could not notice before the event, but I didn't want them to downplay the problem after the fact.

Mokottunas: I think such attitudes are common to cultural events involving Ainu. Ainu participants are asked to provide only the enjoyable aspects of their culture, but as they interact with Wajin staff and other event participants, they often have unpleasant experiences. Some Ainu are even traumatized by sexual harassment. Nevertheless, the organizers are unconcerned about such experiences.

Ms. Sakai: Yes. Those Ainu who participate in such events may respond calmly to unpleasant experiences out of the hope that more people will learn about Ainu and their culture, but it's not right for Wajin staff to expect such a response also from other Ainu. Event organizers should assume that microaggressions may occur during the event and should take preventive measures.

[Latter part omitted]

(5) Stereotypes
Mokottunas: This topic may overlap with an earlier one, but do you have anything to say about stereotypes?

Ms. Sakai: I want to avoid being expected to fit the stereotype of Ainu as much as possible. I don't want to do anything that'll please Wajin. I want to disappoint Wajin and make them say that there's nothing Ainu about me.

Mokottunas: Have you ever faced unwelcome expectations?

Ms. Sakai: I'm not sure if they were expectations, but a long time ago, a music-loving friend of mine told me there was someone who wanted to meet me as soon as she learned I was Ainu.

Mokottunas: Oh no.

Ms. Sakai: I haven't had such an experience lately, because I make conscious efforts to avoid such people. A good friend of mine at school, one with whom I'd shared similar tastes, got hooked on spirituality and suddenly started talking weird to me, saying things like "Ainu are native to Japan, aren't they?" The friend would talk a lot about people in the Jōmon period and would say things like, "You love this kind of music because you're Ainu," despite the fact that my musical tastes have nothing to do with my being Ainu. Ainu have a broad range of tastes in music.

[Latter part omitted]

(7) Physical characteristics and health hazards

[Previous part omitted]

Ms. Sakai: I can't really understand what constitutes Ainu-ness. I don't think I have distinct physical features, but people around me often talk about them.

Mokottunas: In section 2-1 of the paper, I quoted the researcher Robin DiAngelo, who maintains that gender is noticed if she's the only woman in a room filled with men and that if there's only one person of African or Asian descent in a room filled with those of European descent, differences in physical characteristics stand out. Likewise, you were called a person from India by your Wajin classmates, but Ainu people sometimes tell you that "It's nice that you have less distinct physical features." (More on this later.) Do you have anything else to say about physical characteristics?

Ms. Sakai: I have a feeling that for Ainu, having thick body hair is has more significance than what the hair that is seen on the surface level. I have different feelings when considering the think body hair of children of my relatives and those of my non-Ainu relatives. I'm more concerned about the children of my Ainu relatives. Wajin children are also teased if they're hairy, but for Ainu children, there's more to it than that, I think. I have a hunch that those children will have unpleasant experiences like I did. I was teased by my classmates in junior high school, although my Ainu acquaintances told me I wasn't that hairy.
As for my Ainu relatives who have children with thick body hair, their parents tell them that being hairy is cool, but I worry they might be teased at school.

Mokottunas: What they're told at school is more like the way the world sees them.

Ms. Sakai: Indeed. It's more impactful, because it's the way they're seen by a large number of random people.

Mokottunas: My kid told me how awful the hair removal ads were on a video sharing website.

Ms. Sakai: There are beautiful foreign artists who don't have their hair removed, and even if some people say positive things about having a lot of body hair. we worry about negative language, not positive language. Some people may prefer to have hair removed, but I hope people will come to not care whether others have their hair removed.

Mokottunas: Just as cigarette advertisements recently started to have health warnings, beauty treatment ads have started to contain the caveat that hair removal is a choice, and not a given. It's imprudent to say that being hairy or bald is embarrassing. Obsessive ads based on the bubble of fixed beauty standards should be replaced by ads with a caveat that says something like "An obsession with an idealized sense of beauty will only hurt you."

(9) Pure-bloodedness and double social exclusion
Ms. Sakai: I agree with you in that those who don't have close blood ties with Ainu are subject to double social exclusion.

[…]

Mokottunas: Many people are double-tongued. They argue that Ainu aren't pure-blooded only when such an argument suits them. Sometimes they'll say "No matter how distant your Ainu blood ties are, you're Ainu because you look Ainu"; other times, they'll say "Claims of Ainu-ness don't hold because Ainu aren't pure-blooded." […] My parents and I have often been told that we don't look Ainu because we have undistinctive facial features. When I was a student, I joined an event and sang a song in Ainu at a banquet and was told, "You're a *shamo* (a disparaging Ainu term for Wajin) who's good at the Ainu language." A man from Akan asked me straight out, "There's something I've been wanting to ask you. Are you Ainu?" He said he'd been

wanting to ask me, but he'd asked me the same question twice earlier and didn't remember my answer. [···] That said, Wajin view us as non-Wajin and different from them. These experiences, even if they're not negative ones, and comments like "You're not Ainu because you have undistinctive facial features" negate our ethnic identity and our sense of connectedness with our parents and ancestors. So, I believe we should make a distinction between thinking of oneself as Ainu and judging others to be Ainu or not. We have to respect the will of others so that others will respect our will.

Ms. Sakai: I have a similar experience. When I visited Nibutani [where many Ainu live] with my Ainu language teacher and others less than 20 years ago and told a local woman that I was also Ainu, she said to me, "You look nice. Ainu have looks like yours [i.e. have undistinctive features] when they're a mix of *shamo* and Ainu blood, don't they?" At that time, I was also told that I was "white" because I had a fairer complexion.

Mokottunas: Indeed, skin color also comes up in conversation.

Ms. Sakai: Yeah. I think skin color varies from person to person, be it Wajin or Ainu, but the woman I met in Nibutani apparently believed that she had a dark complexion because she's Ainu. Actually, her comment took me aback. [···] I was once spoken to in English by a foreign student. When I replied in Japanese, the student said in Japanese that they'd made a mistake [laughter]. A while ago, when my brother was on a Shinkansen train during a business trip, he was spoken to in English by someone pushing a cart of goods. It appears that we don't look Japanese. I just remembered that I was called a person from India by my classmates in junior high school, so it's not that I have undistinctive facial features, I think. As you wrote in the paper, even if other minority group members think you have undistinctive facial features, majority group members think you actually do have fairly distinctive facial features.

Mokottunas: An acquaintance of mine in Sapporo told me that once, when he was entering a building at Hokkaido University, a security guard asked if he was a foreigner. The guard didn't say it in an offensive tone, and I don't think he meant any offense. However, the person who was asked the question couldn't understand the intention. The guard was asking the question only of those who appeared to be foreign nationals, so those who were asked the question felt scrutinized and unwelcome. They felt as if they needed permission to be there. In Japan, those who are considered outside the mainstream of society feel uncomfortable with virtually everything, whether they're foreign nationals, Ainu, or other minorities.

Ms. Sakai: When I heard that story before, I dreaded going to university-and getting treated the same way. An acquaintance of mine told me that people would never know I wasn't a Wajin unless I told them. She meant that I wouldn't be discriminated against, and she might have said this because she'd had a truly hard time due to her looks. But it's not right that you should have to hide your minority status in order to avoid discrimination. We should create a society where everyone can feel comfortable with ethnic differences.

Mokottunas: The argument has something in common with the argument that pure-blooded Ainu no longer exist. A lack of awareness of the Ainu's existence means a lack of recognition of different positions and needs. But even if we shout out our existence, we're told that we're no longer relevant because we don't have distinctive facial features.

Ms. Sakai: I once heard a person telling another in front of me, "Even though she doesn't have distinctive physical features, she wants to take part in Ainu-related activities." Those who tell me it's good that I don't have distinctive facial features should know that their children or grandchildren may be told the exact same thing.

Mokottunas: Some of those who say such things don't have distinctive facial features themselves.

Ms. Sakai: We sometimes joke about our own looks and physical characteristics, but we feel offended when Wajin tell us about them.

[Latter part omitted]

(10) Disregard for the risk of discrimination
Ms. Sakai: What do you mean by "triggering discrimination by imagining the situation for the potential target of condemnation" which is the next topic of today's conversation?

Mokottunas: It's about the meeting before an invited guest lecture that you spoke with me about before. Could you please talk about it again?

Ms. Sakai: Okay. We once invited an Ainu person to speak at a lecture meeting we were organizing. At such events, speakers often talk about their experience of being discriminated against and point a finger at the majority group, and audience members may include those who are eager to rebut the speakers. Such audience members often make discriminatory remarks while arguing that they never discriminate.

Mokottunas: It's a common occurrence.

Ms. Sakai: So, I suggested during a meeting that we take measures to protect the speaker and other participants, for example, by collecting questions prior to the Q&A session instead of allowing audience members to ask questions on the spot, so that we could remove malicious questions. Someone also suggested that we not allow any photography, lest the photos be misused.

Mokottunas: I see.

Ms. Sakai: The organizers included several Ainu and their families, besides myself; they understood the need for countermeasures and they agreed to take them, but there were also those who said something like, "We don't need to go that far" or "We'll be fine without them." Ultimately, my proposal of collecting questions in advance was approved, but in retrospect, those members who objected to my proposal were Wajin, whereas those who tried to take precautions were Ainu and their families. It was Ainu who were able to imagine the risks involved.
Regarding gathering questions in advance, some Wajin members objected because it would hinder free discussion. Another Wajin member even said that the invited Ainu speaker would be able to refute any argument even if abusive language was used. All of them missed the point.

Mokottunas: That's exactly what a disregard for the risk of discrimination is all about. They thought everything would be fine if the speaker argued back. I think it was from a lack of imagination on their part. In fact, everyone feels annoyed when someone directs abusive language at them. There are many who can't quickly argue back, and even when they can, bad feelings linger. They can't forget what was said to them, even if they do argue back. I think Wajin members had never had that kind of experience.

Ms. Sakai: I think so, too. Not only would a speaker who might be asked malicious questions feel the unpleasantness, but so would the rest of the audience. Not only would those who identify themselves as Ainu have to listen to such malicious remarks, but so would those who were just interested in the subject matter. Some Wajin members even said, "Discriminatory comments will be fine because they indicate to the audience that discrimination against Ainu actually exists." When we talk about "invisible discrimination," it's only "invisible" to Wajin. Ainu recognize it all the time. Even if there are Ainu audience members who feel upset about malicious

comments and want to leave the venue, they may choose to stay put to avoid catching the attention of other audience members.

Mokottunas: It sounds like Ainu are sacrificial victims.

Ms. Sakai: I do not understand why Ainu have to be sacrificed in order for Wajin members to understand the risk.

Mokottunas: We have to refine our arguments and language so that we can communicate problems without triggering discrimination.

Ms. Sakai: Yes, we do.

Mokottunas: For the next topic, "Using pressure to silence Ainu," I would like to take into a consideration a case in which an anonymous Ainu designer of Ainu patterns was wrongly criticized. The designer releases work online without revealing their ethnicity, but they were regarded as non-Ainu and are attacked for creating fakes.

Ms. Sakai: I see.

Mokottunas: To deny that the artisan is Ainu, the critic advocates the unfounded theory that designers who, for example, fail to follow the rules about Ainu patterns aren't Ainu. Such a theory can't be proven academically, but in such situations, those who are criticized often find it difficult to refute the argument no matter how unfair they feel it is. For example, the artisan is anonymous on the Internet, but may have told someone close to them about designing without publically revealing their their ethnicity. To tell the artisan that they're not Ainu and demand that they reveal their name if they *are* Ainu is tantamount to "outing" the artisan, namely, urging them to reveal their ethnicity against their will. A stranger declares online that you're not Ainu and have no right to speak up as an Ainu. To refute

the argument, you'd have to reveal your identity at a venue where your acquaintances who don't know about your being Ainu might be watching the exchanges. It seems that such a risk and the pressure you may find yourself under are beyond the understanding of non-Ainu people and are beyond the imagination of those Ainu who've already publicly come out about their ethnicity or who've been effortlessly accepted as Ainu by people around them.

Ms. Sakai: I've seen such exchanges. The critic who argued that the designer wasn't Ainu later deleted their own posts. The deletion could probably negate the exchanges, but the designer would have lingering ill feelings and those who watched the exchanges might remain under the misconception that the designer isn't Ainu or that you can tell whether artisans are Ainu by looking at the designs they create.

Mokottunas: It would've been a stretch for the critic to imagine that the designer had to consider the impact on family and relatives of refuting the argument and acknowledging that they're Ainu.

Ms. Sakai: This is like pressing a person who claims to be a woman to get naked and show their body. Even if they're of the same sex, the person isn't about to show their body readily to the other. Even if the critic sees the person's body, they can't see the inside. The sex of a person's body doesn't necessarily match their gender identity, and a person who was born as a man may identify as a woman. Likewise, ethnicity is not something to be judged by others, so I don't understand how the critic could unilaterally impose risk on the designer on the Internet, where anyone can see their exchanges.

Mokottunas: It's similar to the arrogance of people whose gender identity matches their biological sex. Those who are recognized as Ainu both by themselves and others often say to others who aren't easily recognized as Ainu, "Show me the proof. Then I'll know whether you're Ainu." My point is that one's ethnic identity is no one else's business. Identifying oneself as

Ainu involves individual freedom. That being said, when you tell someone, "My experience is the same as yours" or "You and I are in the same boat," you'll need the person's consent, instead of thinking that way subjectively, and that person may challenge your assertion.

(11) Identification as Ainu on the Internet

Mokottunas: Recently, the comments section of an online news site sometimes includes comments like "I'm Ainu, but I've never seen Ainu being discriminated against" and "Although I'm Ainu, I'm against policies to promote Ainu culture. They're unnecessary."

Ms. Sakai: Yes, I know. There are also people who identify as Ainu and speak up on social media and other platforms. If their opinions are conservative or different from those of the majority of the Ainu community, the question arises of whether they're really Ainu. However, because there's no way to find out on the internet whether they're Ainu, I don't think it's right for others to say they're definitely not Ainu. Some people say, "You have a say" or "You don't have a say," based not on what you say, but on whether you're Ainu.

Mokottunas: It's scary because they decide from the outset that Ainu ought to think in a such-and-such way. Ainu people like us who have no local Ainu contacts or relatives other than close family are effectively excluded from the Ainu community if they're told that "You can't be Ainu unless you're recognized as such by the Ainu community."

Ms. Sakai: Exactly. I heard about my ethnicity only from my father. I don't have any relatives on his side who belong to an Ainu organization, nor are there local Ainu organizations in the first place. Because none of my relatives identify as Ainu, there's no one I can ask about this. So, I have nobody to get recognition from, but others have no right to tell me I have no say because of this lack of recognition. I understand that such remarks are well-

intentioned, motivated by a desire to argue against people who hold conservative views towards Ainu, but what if spreading such remarks causes those Ainu people who are wondering whether they're Ainu to mistakenly think they won't be recognized as Ainu?

Mokottunas: Agreed. Even those who consider themselves to be Ainu would feel that their positions are under attack if they saw such posts.

Ms. Sakai: Yes. A person visiting someone to learn about their culture might talk about their own ancestry, and that someone might say, "I see." This is different from "recognition by the Ainu community," which is more like a procedure. An extreme argument goes that "If you're Ainu, you're connected with Ainu somewhere through acquaintances. So, if you can't show any connections with Ainu, you must be a fake." We wouldn't say to anyone from a family we don't know, "We don't recognize people we don't know," because we can't know everyone in the world. In fact, there are next-door neighbors we're not acquainted with, but we can't say they don't belong to the same community.

Mokottunas: Exactly. That's why the term "recognition" is wrong. There are people who say they don't recognize people whom they don't know, but that's not normal. It's like someone who's established themselves as an Ainu and is therefore in a safe place making too general an argument to criticize other Ainu people.

Ms. Sakai: This may deprive people who are uncertain of their Ainu ethnicity of opportunities to explore their Ainu roots. Because we feel somewhat disconnected even from what's taught at school about Ainu people and culture, if someone asserts on the Internet that "Ainu people belong to the Ainu community," those Ainu who don't belong to that community may take the assertion to mean they're not Ainu. In my case, I only heard from one of my parents that my great-grandmother was an Ainu.

[…]

Ms. Sakai: Those Ainu people who argue "I can tell who is Ainu based on one's connections with family and acquaintances" are just saying that they recognize only those who have connections to family and acquaintances. There are people who don't have any of these connections. They don't know us, and we don't know them. Such arguments must stop.

Mokottunas: They may be under the illusion that they represent all Ainu people.

Ms. Sakai: On a different occasion, I was upset when I saw a Wajin who loves Ainu culture saying, "There are no Ainu who couldn't find a place to learn their traditional culture." It's no different from saying that they recognize as Ainu only those who fit their own definition of "real Ainu." People who have no such opportunities and those who can't be involved due to conflicting emotions must've slipped their minds. They care less about those Ainu and are unaware that they give priority to satisfying their desire to be involved in Ainu culture as a Wajin. They should be careful, because their argument may incidentally embroil someone else.

Mokottunas: Whether or not one is Ainu is not something to be decided on the Internet. However, a self-identified Ainu can't use the phrase "we Ainu" without the consent of other Ainu. This must be known far and wide. This "generalized subject" is found in arguments both positive and negative about Ainu, but everyone must understand that even if someone says, for example, "I'm Ainu, but I don't need the Ainu language," that argument doesn't erase the opinions of those Ainu who *do* need the language.

(12) The contributions of Wajin individuals, and reverse discrimination
Ms. Sakai: What specifically do you mean when you say "the contributions of Wajin individuals should not be unfairly undervalued"? It seems that dif-

ferent people see unfairness differently.

Mokottunas: For example, based on what I've witnessed, Ainu say to Wajin who are working hard to learn handicrafts or the Ainu language, "It looks superficial when Wajin do it." Another example is Ainu saying to Wajin who are working to memorize a long Ainu story, "It doesn't sound like Ainu." Other examples include brushing off the conflicting opinions as the views of *shamo* and saying something like, "You'll never understand the hearts of Ainu."

Ms. Sakai: I did not know that.
Mokottunas: Using Ainu designs and carving techniques is a matter of skill, so it has nothing to do with blood ties. Oral literature is often considered to be unsophisticated because of the absence of a writing system, but that's based on the preconceived notion that it's impossible to memorize long, complex stories without a single written note. So, I believe you can experience and fairly evaluate oral culture by actually learning a long story by heart and narrating it. If you can demonstrate your storytelling ability with solid skills, instead of just explaining the story, you'll sound more persuasive and come to know more people, stimulating and empowering one another. Another issue would be the lack of appreciation for handy and popular online Ainu language resources and other resources developed by the staff of a certain research institute. We should duly appreciate the contributions of those who are interested and involved in researching and practicing Ainu culture.

[Latter part omitted]

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This is a list of the books used in preparing this booklet. The book numbers are indicated in the relevant sections of the main text of the booklet. I hope the list will be useful for those wishing to take a deep dive into each theme.

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Conclusion: Connecting and Disentangling Ainu and Wajin

This booklet began by taking a look at how Ainu and Wajin came to be regarded as ethnic groups. Here, defining factors that differentiated the ethnic groups were culture, physical characteristics, and lineage. While these factors remain alive and well in our times, a close look at them indicates that none of them are absolute.

This ambiguous, intuitive differentiation has a great deal of influence. There are many people who are struggling, thinking they might not be Ainu because of their lack of cultural experience, physical characteristics, and close blood ties to Ainu. However, since the original defining factors are vague, it is best not to be too rigid in our thinking. If a person can feel comfortable or empowered by coming in contact with or finding similarities with other Ainu, that should be acceptable.

That being said, even if a person thinks they are Ainu, other Ainu people may not have the same way of seeing the world. Saying "Other Ainu are like me" sometimes can be hurtful. As the scope of experience differs from person to person, respecting the differences leads to protecting your own freedom. Speaking casually, Ainu do not want to be dismissed with expressions like "You're not Ainu," but it also troubles Ainu when they are generalized like "All Ainu are the same" or that Ainu are urged to do certain things like "If you're Ainu, do this or think this way." It is important not to represent and not to be represented, but rather to empathize and create relationships where the autonomy of other Ainu to make their own decisions is respected.

For individuals to live as they please, values and institutions of society may have to be changed. For instance, a personal desire use and revitalize the Ainu language comes down to the question of whether society—namely, schools, companies, and government offices—will allow that. In this case, those who share the desire to use Ainu language can cooperate with each other even if they differ on other matters. If the focus is solely on the fact

that society is diverse, or that everyone is different, the only result will be a state of disunity. While we have differences, we should always keep in mind that our personal efforts may help others and lead to cooperation with others.

Wajin also have similar situations and behaviors that usually escape their awareness. They are sometimes fettered by their being Wajin, and they feel uncomfortable, for example, by unwillingly getting involved in the oppression of others and effortlessly standing at an advantage. If you find something you do not like, instead of turning a blind eye or deaf ears to it, you may want to cast aside your stereotypes of Wajin and distance yourselves from those stereotypes. To do so, you need to understand the actual state of the group to which you belong.

Stereotypical relations are found not only among ethnic groups, but also among other groups, including those based on age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and lookism (prejudice or discrimination based on physical appearance). We can cooperate by recognizing the commonality of what has put us in shackles, which I believe will lead to empathy and coexistence.

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