

# The Ainu Nation: To the Brink of Extinction and Back

Utilizing Environmental Security Concepts to Explain the Destruction  
and Reconstruction of an Indigenous People's Identity

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1992, the United Nations recognized the Ainu as Japan's aboriginal people and five years later, Japan reluctantly recognized the Ainu as an indigenous minority within their sovereignty. Although they have been subjected to years of domination by means both legal and prejudicial, the Ainu have not staged violent conflict since 1789. For the past 130 years they have suffered forced relocation and have been denied their livelihood. Salmon poaching and timber stealing regulations were enacted, preventing the Ainu from developing their traditional bases of subsistence and economy. Other Japanese laws promoted an agricultural land development agenda for the Ainu that was certain to fail. An assimilation policy was enforced, forbidding their language, manners, and customs, until the Ainu were nearly extinct.

How have the Ainu come to a bloodless reclamation of their identity, and will they continue along this path? How does the story of the Ainu fit within the framework of environmental security? Do the models of this field help to predict non-violence, or do the Ainu add a new wrinkle to our understanding of the environmental security literature? Although the Ainu have been victims of racism, abuse, and stolen resources, they have found alternatives to violence. Bolstered by support from the international community, the Ainu have discovered within the Japanese government an arena to voice their grievances. Political activism, coupled with growing social movements, are setting the Ainu on a course to preserve their native lands, achieve racial and political equality, and regain autonomy over hunting and fishing rights. If ultimately successful, the Ainu may provide a blueprint for defusing the civil strife in other worldwide hotspots involving confrontation over resources.

The environmental security discipline is replete with theories and flow diagrams that attempt to establish the link between environmental degradation and violent

conflict. One such model that may facilitate an explanation of the contemporary Ainu state of affairs is Homer Dixon's recipe for insurgency. In this view, insurgency is likely when an aggrieved group (1) has effective leadership, (2) perceives a widening gap between what they have and what they think they deserve, (3) is able to clearly name another group or the state as the cause of their dissatisfaction (a "blame system"), and (4) believe that they have no peaceable opportunities to express their discontent. (p.142-7) Furthermore, he argues that if "the historical identity of a clearly defined social group is strongly linked to a particular set of natural resources or a pattern of resource use, degradation or depletion of that resource can accentuate a feeling of relative deprivation." (p.147)

This formula is but one piece of Homer-Dixon's larger model that focuses on the nexus of environment, resource scarcity, and violence. Though this paper will field test the insurgency hypothesis for applicability in the case of the Ainu, it will also draw upon other elements in the literature to describe contextual factors. The unequal distribution of resources, typically as a result of the exploitation of a weaker group by another, is a germane and common theme. (Homer-Dixon; Le Billon; Renner) Likewise, concepts of human insecurity – as a function of vulnerability, and especially as related to loss of livelihood – help inform our understanding of the Ainu-Japanese interaction. (Lonergan, et al) The recent construction of the Nibutani Dam in the midst of the Ainu homeland is emblematic and illustrative of centuries of Japanese domination. While salmon fishing by the Ainu had long been banned from all rivers, the region subject to inundation behind the dam was the site of burial grounds, archeological sites, and a literal launching spot for Ainu culture, in the guise of the *chip-sanke*, a ceremony celebrating the first journey of a new salmon fishing canoe. (Kaizawa) Such losses are not

unexpected: “The poor are likely to bear ... the social costs ... of large dam projects without gaining a commensurate share of the economic benefits.” (Maltais, etal: 4.1)

## AINU ENTHOGRAPHY

Because of recent years of assimilation and intermarriage between the Wajin (the dominant, ethnically Japanese) and the Ainu, the physical differences that once separated the two peoples are not nearly as pronounced as in centuries past. The Ainu are characteristically larger, hairier, and paler in skin tone than their Wajin counterparts. It is now generally regarded that the Jomon culture – which spread throughout most of the Japanese archipelago between 20,000 and 2000 years ago – is the progenitor of the Ainu. (Iten; Blank; Arutiunov)

Before the arrival of the Wajin, the Ainu population lived in self-contained villages (*kotan*) that dotted the landscapes of the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido (the Wajin previously called this land Ezo, their name for the foreign people early traders found there), Sakhalin Island, and the Kurile Islands extending northward toward the Siberian mainland (fig 1). While no formalized state has ever existed, the general term for their homeland is *Ainu Mosir*, or “tranquil land of human beings”. (Sonohara)

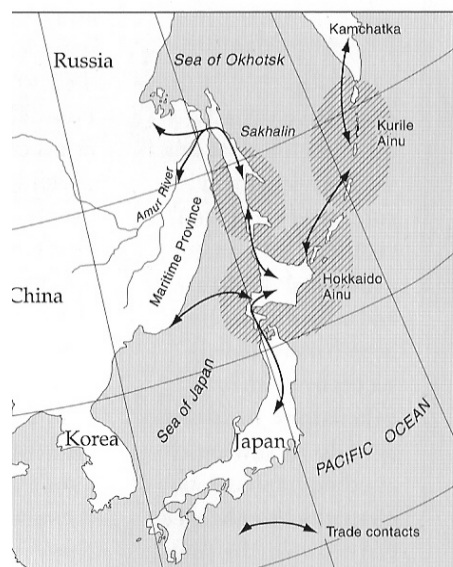


fig 1 (Sasaki, p.86)

Today, the majority of Ainu reside on Hokkaido. Indeed the largest Ainu village, and often the focal point of the modern cultural and political activism, is Nibutani, on the southern side of the Hokkaido prefecture. Sense of place remains strong for the Ainu, however, as Shigeru Kayano explains (Kayano 1994: p.7):

We Saru River Ainu prided ourselves on being from the land where the god Okikurmikamuy was born.... "I am So-and-so, living and working in the village to which Okikurmikamuy descended from the heavens and taught us our folk wisdom."

The resource-rich environment provided generously for the Ainu. Living as hunters, gatherers, and fishers, the Ainu were blessed with forests full of bear and deer, and rivers of salmon. Along the coast they hunted whales, sea lions, and swordfish. The Ainu also relied upon timber for house building, sleds, and boats. (Siddle 2000)

Salmon, however, are the most essential staple of the Ainu and a critical link to the supernatural realm. The Ainu maintain an animist belief that spirits, or *kamuy*, inhabit all objects of *Ainu Mosir*, including both living and non-living things. The spirit world sends precious gifts, in the form of salmon and bear, to the Ainu – gifts that the Ainu wish to return as a sign of gratitude and respect of the symbiotic relationship between the natural and supernatural. Spirit-sending ceremonies are performed seasonally, synchronized with the cycles of the salmon migration upstream to spawn. The "First Salmon" celebration begins with the arrival of the initial *kamuy* messengers in the late summer and fall. They are caught and killed with specially decorated clubs, and thanks are given in anticipation of another year of abundant food. When the spawning ends another ritual is held, during which a salmon mandible bone is thrown into the river to ensure the following fishing year's success. (Akino; Kono; Olschleger; Wanatabe)

Dependency on this fish resource was so strong that the Ainu always located their villages beside protected bays or along rivers just downstream of the salmon

spawning sites. The Ainu utilized salmon for boot and clothing production in addition to their dietary function (Ono), and were careful to “live off the interest” of the salmon, making certain not to eat the fatty fish before they spawned. Thus, they preserved the productivity of the annual fish runs. (Kayano, Shigeru 1998) The people's intimate connection to rivers is shown in the abundance of Ainu place-names for tributaries, banks, and riverside cliffs; even the mountains were named for the rivers that originated there. (Ono) This bond between Ainu and their resources has been all but broken in modern times. By 1878, the Hokkaido Salmon Fishing Act forbade them from taking a single fish. (Kayano, Shiro) Today's legislators are no more enlightened: contemporary Ainu are deprived of their right to fish and are allowed only to catch a few hundred salmon every year for religious ceremonies and “social education”. (CWIS) The 1998 “Surface Water Management Regulation” prohibits Ainu (or any private Japanese citizen) from catching a salmon swimming upstream to spawn. (Kayano, Shiro) Meanwhile, in 2000, the Hokkaido commercial fishing industry netted nearly 1.5 million tons of salmon, mostly from sea. (Japan Ministry of Public Management)

## **JAPANESE SUPPRESSION OF THE AINU**

As early as the twelfth century, Wajin began migrating northward into Ainu territory (Ezo) from the mainland of Honshu. As the years passed, trade between the Japanese and Ainu thrived, and the parties shared equitable profit. The Japanese desired the animal pelts, eagle feathers, and fish that the Ainu collected; in return the Ainu received iron tools, lacquer ornaments, sake, and swords. The owners of these new items were highly esteemed within the Ainu culture. The material goods of the

Japanese were objects of wealth, but they were also prized for use in ceremonies.

(Sjoberg; Siddle 1996)

More and more immigrants from the south settled in Ezo as the supply of arable land on Honshu decreased. Armed conflict became increasingly widespread as these newcomers took up residence in the countryside and began farming. Throughout this period the physical state of Ezo and its native people were weakened. The Wajin depleted the resources upon which Ainu subsistence had relied, taking large counts of salmon from the rivers before they could swim upstream and spawn. With the Wajin came infectious diseases to which the Ainu had no immunity. (Sjoberg; Siddle 1996)

In 1457 the Ainu waged war upon the Wajin settlements, following the death of one of their own at the hands of a Wajin blacksmith. Resistance continued with occasional skirmishes over the next two centuries. In 1669 an Ainu army attacked Wajin trading posts and miners and later battled the local feudal lords, the Matsumae clan. Later, during peace negotiations, the Ainu war hero Shakushain was poisoned. All Ainu, even those communities in the north and east of Ezo that had remained independent of the war, were obliged to sign a humiliating agreement that severely limited Ainu trading options. Called the "Land Lease" system, this manipulative contract – approved by the central Japanese power – allowed the Wajin to extend their feudal arrangement around the Ainu. (Sjoberg; Siddle 1996, 1999a; Walker)

Wajin land-lease holders were offered beneficial timber rights in addition to fishing rights. The Ainu, their power broken and now separated from the resources so integral to their existence, were coerced into working at Wajin-controlled fisheries and farms. As Le Billon argues (p.568), "with produced resources (e.g. crops), violence usually takes a more structural form, such as coercive forms of labor or controls over

trade." Men were taken from their families and subjected to harsh, slave-like conditions. Exploited, oppressed, and demoralized, the Ainu staged one final act of armed resistance in 1789. On the island of Kunashiri, 72 Wajin were killed, and the Matsumae quickly arrived to suppress the insurgency. Thirty-seven Ainu were executed and the people fell completely under the control of the Wajin. (Siddle 1999a) Within a century, the Ainu would come to be seen as a dying race, offering no opposition to the Wajin who commandeered their homeland. Whereas early encounters between the Ainu and mainland interlopers resulted in skirmishes and localized domination, the future of the Ainu would soon be dictated by the legislation of the centralized Japanese government.

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia had begun to inhabit the arc of the Kurile Islands and attempted to use them as stepping-stones in the creation of northern trade routes to Japan. Uncertain of the Russian intentions (and fearing that they would one day lay claim to Ezo, too), the Japanese central government annexed a portion of the region and introduced the first assimilation policy of the Ainu. The threat of Russian occupation receded by the 1820s, but the desire to incorporate Ezo into statehood culminated with the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Ezo was given the Japanese name Hokkaido and Japan encouraged its aggressive colonization and the further subjugation of the Ainu. (Stephan; Sjoberg; Siddle 1999a) Because of the spread of smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, and cholera the Ainu population had decreased by roughly 40% over a fifty-year period. (Ainu Museum)

The Hokkaido Colonization Commission, established in 1869 to realize these colonization policies, suppressed Ainu customs and traditions. In their effort to create Japanese citizens of the Ainu, tattooing and earrings were banned in 1871, and the Ainu were encouraged to take up rice growing. Then, in 1877, the rights of the Ainu eroded

still more: the Ordinance for Issuing Hokkaido Land placed all Ainu property under Meiji control, while the Hokkaido Salmon Fishing Act criminalized the hooking of a single fish. (Ichikawa) The Ainu were forcibly relocated into the mountains or onto marshy land. Hundreds of thousands of new migrants and laborers, many of them banished convicts, suddenly made the Ainu irrelevant. Whereas previously they had been equal trading partners to the Wajin, and then used as pawns for exploited labor, the Ainu were now unessential to the greater Hokkaido development plan. (Kayano, 1994; Siddle 1996; Historical Museum of Hokkaido)

The 1899 Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act, another unilateral policy of assimilation, forced more changes and restrictions upon the Ainu. Ostensibly designed to enable the Ainu to become productive Japanese citizens through agriculturalization and welfare assistance, the Act really codified the ongoing process of expropriating the most valuable land from the Ainu. Under this new law, every Ainu family was granted approximately twelve acres of land from which to cultivate rice and grow crops. This project, however, was doomed from the outset, as far as the Ainu were concerned: much of the best Hokkaido land had already been apportioned to the Wajin settlers; many Ainu were ignorant of farming skills and techniques; and finally, the law's third article stipulated that the ownership of any land left fallow after fifteen years would return to the government. (Sjoberg; Sonohara; CWIS)

Furthermore, the Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act forbade the Ainu to speak their language, banned deer hunting and criminalized the harvest of timber. (Cheung) Now completely robbed of their salmon and forestry livelihood the Ainu, predictably, plummeted into poverty, their traditional society in shambles. Shigeru

Kayano, the first Ainu elected to the Japanese national congress, or Diet, is quoted in a 1997 Newsweek article:

Salmon was our *shi-e-pe*, which in the Ainu language means, "true eating thing." It was our staple food. ... I have visited foreign countries and met their indigenous people. But I must say that there was not a single group deprived of its staple food.

Such insidious psychological trauma and indirect violence is well delineated in the work of Garb and Komarova, who describe state-sponsored policies of victimization that do not hinge upon armed conflict. The Ainu ceased to fight for a number of reasons. The foundation of their culture and economy, salmon and the forest, was taken from them. Not only did the Wajin vastly outnumber the Ainu, the possession of their very identity gradually eroded as their children were given compulsory education in Japanese language and history at the expense of Ainu customs. Certainly civil unrest and human insecurity is related to poor environmental conditions and insufficient access to natural resources (Loneragan), but violent conflict seemed unrealistic when many of the Ainu suffered from poverty, starvation, and addiction to sake. Additionally, the Ainu suffered from a lack of "cognitive liberation", a key ingredient needed to induce insurgency within the environmental security framework of resource depletion. (Homer-Dixon) Without leadership – from which they would benefit in the later half of the century – the Ainu had little hope of finding their voice and redevelop their national identity. In a recent anthology commissioned by the Smithsonian Institute Richard Siddle writes, "The Ainu did not appear to have the energy to resist their extinction." (Siddle 1999b: p.108)

## **ENGAGING THE JAPANESE ON NONVIOLENT TERMS**

Indeed, during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many Ainu wanted nothing more than to blend into the larger Japanese culture. Assertion of their unique identity

only brought personal ridicule, widespread discrimination, and legal edicts aimed at their conversion. Little wonder then that the work of Christian missionaries, like the Reverend John Batchelor, was met with positive response from the Ainu. Batchelor, sympathetic to what he termed “a departing race”, encouraged self-improvement among the Ainu, notably in the education and temperance movements. He saw hope and equality for the Ainu in their eventual incorporation into the Japanese society. (Siddle 1996, 1999)

One obstacle to progress was the native education system founded by the Protection Act under which segregated “native schools” were built for Ainu children beginning in 1901. The children were required to learn the Japanese language and taught of Wajin glory while their own people were cast negatively. They received fewer years of instruction, but the Wajin blamed any failings of the system on the innate backwardness of the Ainu. (Siddle 1996; Sjoberg) In response to this educational inequality, and other concerns of social prejudice, 130 Ainu delegates founded the Hokkaido Ainu Association in July 1930. This important moment in Ainu history represents their first organized, political reaction to the policies of the Japanese government, but their civil infancy was reflected in their goals. Led by Batchelor, this institute called for a revision of the Protection Act – not to emphasize a distinct Ainu identity, but rather to ensure equity of educational access. After seven years the native schools were abolished, but the country was soon engaged in war and further social movement by the Ainu was placed on hold. (Siddle 1996, 1999b)

In the post-war years the Ainu neither benefited from the blossoming liberalism and democratization nor from the nation’s economic growth. Quite to the contrary, they continued to be stigmatized and disrespectfully ignored, such as by a 1950s university team that, with the help of local police, excavated an Ainu cemetery over Ainu

objections. (Siddle 1999b) Also, the Ainu continued to be clearly separate from the Wajin despite years of assimilation. During the 1950s and 1960s increased railroad construction brought mainland tourists to Hokkaido to see the country's "Wild North" and the primitive, exotic Ainu. The Hokkaido government had long endorsed these ventures – spectacles of dancing, woodcarving, and other sanitized rituals performed in traditional costumes for public delight – but this new boom in tourism polarized the Ainu community. While some felt humiliated, degraded, and tainted by the commercialism of their traditions, others saw it as an opportunity to educate the Wajin about their way of life and historical connection to the land. Regardless of varying opinion over its value, decades' worth of tourism probably helped preserve a large portion of Ainu identity and practices, as Ainu traditions were discouraged in other legal and social arenas.

(Ohtsuka; Sjoberg)

The polarization of the Ainu community was manifested in the radicalism of the late 1960s and early 1970s, as activists began to reconnect with their roots and emphasize the rights of their people. They denounced scholars and broadcasters who made racist, disparaging comments about the Ainu forced them to apologize. They demanded the return of ancestral remains. They condemned the Hokkaido prefecture for staging a centennial festival in 1968 that commemorated Hokkaido as the natural extension of Japanese territorial expansion and progress, and that ignored the destruction of Ainu culture in the process. During the 1960s, twenty-eight states, many of them African nations that shook off colonial shackles, entered the United Nations.

(United Nations Department of Public Information) No doubt spurred and encouraged by this wave of independence, Ainu rally-goers hoisted their first national flag on May Day

1973. No longer interested in blending into the supposed Japanese ethnic homogeneity, the Ainu were beginning to reclaim their individuality. (Siddle 1999b)

This tightened focus was reflected in the Ainu New Law, or *Ainu Shinpo*, drafted in 1984 by the Hokkaido Ainu Association. The New Law, designed to supplant – not revise – the 1899 Protection Act, included the following provisions:

- Declaration and protection of basic human rights
- Promotion of Ainu culture
- Creation of a Fund for Ainu self-reliance
- Guaranteed political participation
- Establishment of consultative bodies on Ainu policies at national and local levels

The concept of indigenous rights, such as self-determination and rights to the usage of land and resources, was a guiding force in the development of the New Law, but was not explicitly defined in the law's code. However, the fact that the Protection Act and its assimilation policies even existed acknowledged that the Ainu comprised a separate ethnic group. (Tsunemoto)

While continuing to work for change within the framework of the domestic government, as evinced by Shigeru Kayano's position on the National Diet and the Ainu's willingness to amend existing laws, the Ainu also looked for support and solidarity beyond the Japanese borders. Over the last two decades the Ainu have become keenly involved in the worldwide conversation regarding the rights of native people. Their first connection was made in their attendance of the third meeting of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples in 1981. Since then, delegations and envoys have been sent around the globe to learn from the struggles of other native populations in Canada, Alaska, and Australia.

As the interaction between the Ainu and the global community increases, Ainu identity has strengthened as they witness the commonality of their situation with other

groups. This was especially important in 1986 as Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone proclaimed that Japanese superiority was a direct result of his country's ethnic homogeneity. The following year the Ainu sent a delegation to a session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) and in 1989 attended the International Labor Organization Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. (Dietz; Siddle 1999b) The ILO identified that natural resources are a vital source of livelihood, social, spiritual, and cultural unity, and that indigenous peoples should be guaranteed the right to participate in the use, management, and conservation of these resources. (International Labor Organization) Attendance and participation in worldwide conferences and assemblies has provided the Ainu with the vocabulary necessary to engage the Japanese in dialogue, the encouragement of similar populations at risk, and the legal documentation of rights the Ainu can draw upon when affirming their claim on traditional resources, like salmon.

As Ainu connections are made to the international community, the central Japanese government increasingly finds itself responsible to a wider forum. They have been under pressure to conform to contemporary ideas regarding the rights to identity and culture by native populations. In December of 1991 Japan acknowledged to the United Nations that the Ainu constituted a minority group as defined in Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Japan in 1979. This article states that minority members should not be denied the ability "to enjoy their own culture ... or to use their own language." (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) On the heels such progress Shigeru Kayano, the longtime defender of Ainu heritage, opened the Nibutani Ainu Cultural Museum in 1992. The United Nations then invited the Ainu to launch the opening ceremony for their

declared Year of Indigenous Peoples. On December 10, 1992 Giichi Nomura, then director of the Hokkaido Ainu Association, passionately addressed the UN:

Up until 1986, a mere six years ago, the Japanese government denied even our existence in its proud claim that Japan, alone in the world, is a “monoethnic nation.” Here today, however, our existence is being recognized by the United Nations itself. In the eyes of the government, we were a people whose existence must not be admitted. You need not worry, however. I am most definitely not a ghost. I am standing here firmly before you. (UN 182264, cited in Dietz)

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE PATHS**

Within the context of these events sits the disputed, symbolic, Nibutani Dam. Japan has a long history of dam construction resulting in the location of 2,734 structures on its 113 major rivers and smaller watercourses. (Frederick) Oft accused of pork barreling dam projects, Japan looked to build a dam on the Saru River in Nibutani to supply water for a planned industrial park 38 miles away. Nibutani is the heart of the Ainu community and culture and eight tenths of the village population is Ainu. (Kaizawa)

While an initial feasibility study was sponsored, the impact of the dam on the Ainu was not included, and construction was approved. In 1990, the Ainu went to court in Sapporo (the capital of Hokkaido) in an attempt to halt the forced sale of their land. Owners of farmland slated for inundation were offered compensation for their property, but large taxes would also be levied if they did not accept payment within three years. As such, only two landowners were still resisting the sale when the court ruled in 1994 against the Ainu and their claim that they had any special relationship to the land. By this time the industrial park plan had been abandoned, but the dam was still built, the government citing flood control as the dam's new *raison d'etre*. (Creighton; Kaizawa)

In a 1997 landmark ruling, the Sapporo District Court reversed its decision and found the Japanese government guilty of illegally expropriating the land of the Ainu in

the construction of the Nibutani Dam. Furthermore, it classified the Ainu as an indigenous minority within Japan, and acknowledged that the dam simultaneously destroyed archeological sites and interrupted the preservation of their cultural traditions, including the "First Salmon" ritual and the *chip-sanke*. (Dietz; Levin 2000a; Siddle 1997) Global networking with nongovernmental organizations and utilization of international covenants assisted the Ainu in winning this recognition. Because the dam was already constructed, however, the court did not recommend restoring lost land to the Ainu. (Creighton; Levin 2000a) On one hand, the Ainu scored a moral victory in earning the ethnic distinction within Japan that the UN had bestowed upon them in 1992. Conversely, though, they were still the de facto victims of discriminatory governmental practices, and sacred sites were submerged under the new lake. (United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 2001)

Perhaps as a concession, the National Diet repealed the Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act and replaced it three months later with the Ainu Cultural Law. This new legislation, based on the 1984 suggestions of the Hokkaido Ainu Association, calls for the promotion of Ainu culture and traditions and the realization of a "society in which the ethnic pride of the Ainu people is respected." (Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture) The central government is fiscally supporting these objectives and has granted an Ainu foundation authority in carrying out the services extended by the New Law.

While initially heralded as a turning point in Japanese-Ainu relations, the legislation falls far short in the eyes of many activists. No mention is made of indigenous rights to governmental representation or self-determination. (Creighton; Tsunemoto) Ainu representatives to the UN WGIP in 1999 noted their dissatisfaction

with the New Law, despite the government's belief that it had resolved all ethnicity issues by enforcing it. (United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations) Even the cultural museum, erected by the Japanese and sited a stone's throw from the Nibutani Dam, is an object of scorn: "The Japanese have put up a memorial to themselves," complains one Ainu, noting the glass and steel framing that hardly reflects the geometric patterns found in traditional Ainu artwork and clothing. (Iten)

Of greatest importance is the Ainu's frustration with denied access to natural resources, specifically salmon. The demand for special fishing rights remains one of their fundamental concerns and no progress has been made to bring equity to the Ainu. Hokkaido fishery production accounts for one-quarter of Japan's total fish count (Hokkaido Regional Development Bureau), but Ainu may still only catch a few hundred salmon for ceremonial purposes, as reinforced by the 1998 "Surface Water Management Regulation". (Kayano, Shiro) The enormous Wajin population of Hokkaido of nearly 6 million notwithstanding (Encyclopedia.com), certainly there is enough salmon for the 24,000 Ainu upon which to subsist in a traditional manner. Thus, the Ainu are embroiled not in a demand-induced scarcity of resources, but rather in structural scarcity (Homer-Dixon), whereby the Wajin have allocated the salmon for themselves.

Dalby outlines a metaphor of "biosphere" and "ecosystem" people that expresses the conflict between the Japanese and Ainu. Biosphere consumers devour the resources of sundry, remote regions, while the ecosystem people maintain a relatively sustainable subsistence existence as cultivators of local knowledge and best practices. These latter populations may become "ecological refugees" if displaced by commercial processes "that invade traditional societies' spaces." (Dalby: p.135) Although Dalby's metaphor is meant to articulate the worldwide North-South struggle, it plainly manifests itself in this

domestic Japanese issue of insecurity. This clash may ultimately lead to violent conflict, but democracy is often seen as a mitigating, intermediary factor. (Gleditsch; Homer-Dixon; Lonergan, et al) Those countries that engage all citizens in the domestic dialogue are much less likely to experience civil war (Gleditsch) because they increase the legitimacy of the state and offer challenger groups nonviolent ways of communicating their perceptions of injustice. (Homer-Dixon)

This democratic setting may be the reason why the Ainu have not erupted in armed hostility. Homer-Dixon's model for insurgency does test positively: although three contributing factors (cognitive liberation, relative deprivation, and a blame system) pave the way for violence, the ameliorating presence of multilateral political discourse provides for an alternative action. Ainu reliance on the international community, however, has endowed them with the tools and leverage required to propel the Japanese government from their historically discriminatory legislation. The Homer-Dixon literature does not identify the effects of worldwide collaborative efforts in preventing conflict, but for the Ainu it has been the most salient ingredient to their success of identity reclamation. It is hardly surprising that the Ainu have achieved their strongest support during the decades that witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall, the events of Tiananmen Square, and the Year and Decade of Indigenous Peoples – times when global awareness and appreciation for issues of human security have reached a zenith, and times during which Japan finds itself increasingly responsible to a wider forum and critical audience.

Still, the Ainu yearn for more. Calls for remuneration for traditional homelands – or their outright return – have increased as anticipated funding from the passage of the Ainu Cultural Law have failed to materialize. “560 million yen has been budgeted but it

can only be used for Japanese teachers to study the Ainu language, not for the Ainu themselves," claims the director of the Kawamura Ainu Museum in Hokkaido. (Kadri) In response, the Ainu are requesting a compensatory sum of 1.5 billion yen (\$12.3 million dollars) for land taken from them under the 1899 Protection Act. (Kadri) Others eagerly await the resolution of Japan's territory dispute with Russia over the Kurile Islands. Some have called for the creation of an Ainu sovereignty from this archipelago as a means to diffusing the centuries' old quarrel. (Ludwig) Perhaps the work of artist Mikako Tomotari best conveys the hope of the Ainu for a future free of Japanese subjugation. "Reminiscence", a black marble sculpture of a pensive Ainu, stands overlooking the Nibutani Dam, but Tomotari's original intent was to cast it into the lake. The sculpture would be revealed again only when the dam was breached and the Saru River restored to its original glory. On that uncertain new day the Ainu, too, will regain that which is rightfully theirs.



<http://www.kyushu-id.ac.jp/~tomotari/image/Reminiscence.jpg>

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