

2009

## Legacy of *Huci*: Why and how Ainu elderly women maintain their roots

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## LEGACY OF *HUCI*

Why and how Ainu elderly women maintain their roots

by

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Florida International University, 2009

Miami, Florida

### **Abstract**

Ainu means "people" or "humans" in their language and refers to the indigenous people of Japan. Despite the assimilation policies and persistent discrimination, Ainu have maintained their culture. Their continuous efforts finally achieved official recognition by the Japanese government in 2008, recognizing the Ainu as indigenous people of Japan. The purpose of this essay is to examine why and how contemporary Ainu people preserve their culture amid oppression, and to examine Ainu women's role, especially the elder women called *huci*. To find these answers, I conducted a content analysis of 57 interviews of Ainu persons presented as articles in the Hokkaido Newspaper. Specifically, I used the processes of focused and open coding to find factors in the interviews that addressed my questions. Through my findings, first, I observed the core elements of Ainu culture, and second, I examined reasons for maintaining Ainu culture: 1) meeting emotional needs 2) meeting economic needs, and 3) meeting social needs. Third, I examined 1) ethnic tourism, 2) story telling, and 3) local and international indigenous gatherings that are core ways how the Ainu preserve their culture amid oppression. Additionally, I have observed elder women's significant roles that help to preserve and transmit Ainu culture to the next generations. I argue that ethnic tourism and gatherings serve distinct but interconnected functions in preserving and transmitting Ainu culture—whereas ethnic tourism is more oriented to profit, the market, and professionalism, gatherings are more oriented towards community and the daily lives of "average" Ainu.

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## Legacy of *Huci*

### Why and how Ainu elderly women maintain their roots

#### I. Introduction

In 2007, I took a sociology class titled “Native American Issues, Voices and Perspectives.” As the class progressed, I was amazed to learn that Native Americans’ philosophy regarding the earth, nature and its people resembled that of Japanese culture; especially in the rural areas of Ehime prefecture in Japan where I was brought up. The text used in the class, *Recovering the Sacred* by Winona LaDuke,<sup>1</sup> gave me a deeper insight into the struggle regarding their historical and environmental situation. This class inspired me to learn more about Native Americans and their philosophy. Luckily, from January to March of 2008, I had the great opportunity to undertake an internship at the AH-THA-THI-KI Seminole Tribe Museum located on the Big Cypress Indian Reservation in Florida, cataloguing their patchwork creations. As I worked examining the artifacts, I learned that most of the clothes were made at Musa Isle Indian tourist village in Miami, starting in 1915. There, Seminole women used a portable hand-cranked sewing machine in *chickees*<sup>2</sup> while they were working on an exhibition.

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<sup>1</sup> Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred* (Cambridge: South and Press, 2005)

<sup>2</sup> According to the culture section of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, “Chickee is a palmetto thatch over a cypress log frame-was born during the early 1800s when Seminole Indians, pursued by U.S. troops, needed fast, disposable shelter while on the run.” “Culture-who we are,” *The Seminole Tribe of Florida*, (accessed Oct. 30, 2009).

At this tourist attraction, their art of patchwork grew in its quality.<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Downs explains that one of the main reasons that the patchwork designs flourished and were able to be preserved was because of the reciprocal act of exchange between Seminole women. “It is a long-accepted practice for women to exchange design ideas.”<sup>4</sup> Harry A. Kersey used the patchwork as a metaphor to explain the process of evolution that has happened in the role of the Florida Seminole women, he also explains that “Seminole women played an exceptionally important role to conserve the culture.”<sup>5</sup>

This experience at the Seminole museum motivated me to research the role of women in Japan’s indigenous people, the Ainu. Just as most of the Native Americans were dispossessed of their land by the American government, the Ainu in Hokkaidô were also deprived of their lands and resources during the Meiji Restoration. Additionally, *Kyûdojin Hogohô* (The Hokkaidô Ainu Protection Act) was enacted and the resulting assimilation policies and mandatory shift to an education system in the Japanese language undermined the Ainu language and culture. However, as I began to research the Ainu women’s role, I learned that even under oppressive conditions, a small population of about 25,000 Ainu people, especially women, “preserve[d] their heritage and even acquire[d] a new sense of Ainu

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<sup>3</sup> Patsy West, *The Enduring Seminoles: From Alligator Wrestling to Ecotourism* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 53.

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy Downs, *Art of the Florida Seminole and Miccosukee Indians* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 116.

<sup>5</sup> Harry A. Kersey and Helen M. Banna. “Patchwork and Politics: The Evolving Roles of Florida Seminole Women in the 21st Century,” in *Negotiation of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women*, edited by Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, Inc. 1995), 194.

identity by participating in tourism attraction.”<sup>6</sup>

Until recently, there have been few studies that look at the everyday lives and values of contemporary Ainu because the Ainu people “sought to blend into Japanese society rather than accentuate their differences.”<sup>7</sup> In this essay, I explore the stories of the everyday lives of the Ainu people, and address the questions: Why do contemporary Ainu preserve their culture amid centuries of oppression by *wajin* (the mainstream Japanese)?<sup>8</sup> How do they go about preserving their culture? Additionally, given the important role of women in the preservation of Seminole culture, I was inspired to explore the role that Ainu women and the *huci* (or grandmothers and other respected elder women), play in the preservation of Ainu culture.

## **II. Modern history and the current situation of the Ainu**

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the modern history and recent situation of the Ainu. Ainu means “people” or “humans” in their language and refers to the indigenous people of Northern Japan who also formerly inhabited the Kurile Islands, southern Sakhalin, and part of northern Honshū<sup>9</sup>(see appendix: map 1). The image of Ainu as a mysterious people living in the forests persisted throughout the early twentieth century and left the

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<sup>6</sup> Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Tourism, Assimilation, and Ainu Survival Today.” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*. ed. William W. Fitzhugh, & Chisato O. Dubrell (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History 1999), 95.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Siddle, “From Assimilation to Indigenous Rights: Ainu Resistance Since 1869.” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*. ed. William W. Fitzhugh, & Chisato O. Dubrell (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History 1999),108.

<sup>8</sup> *Nihonjin* (the Japanese) is a broad term inclusive of the Ainu, therefore I use “*wajin*” to distinguish the majority Japanese from Ainu. This is the term that is used by the Japanese also.

<sup>9</sup> William W. Fitzhugh, “Ainu Ethnicity,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubrell (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History, 1999), 9.

impression that the Ainu were a “cultural remnant”<sup>10</sup> that one might meet only in anthropological journals. According to David Howell who wrote the preface of *Harukor*, a classic work on Ainu life, “Beginning with the Chronicle of Japan (*Nihon Shoki*) of 720 C. E., the ancestors of today’s Ainu appeared in Japanese records only as the object of conquest.”<sup>11</sup> They were identified as the *Ebisu*, *Emishi*, or *Ezo* and known as ‘eastern barbarians.’ Even after the Meiji Restoration, Ainu were recognized as ‘*kyūdojin*,’ meaning former aborigines.<sup>12</sup>

### **A. Modern history of the Ainu**

As for the history of Ainu culture, the Ainu Association of Hokkaidō<sup>13</sup> reports that *Satsumon* culture<sup>14</sup> was distributed throughout Hokkaidō and the northern regions of Honshū which formed its basis. By the fifteenth century, Ainu mariners were successful traders linking Japan, Korea, China, Russia and Kamchatka. This trading system had an impact on the development of Ainu culture. After 1689, Chinese trade goods such as silk brocade, glass beads and metal ornaments reached the Ainu by the Sakhalin route.<sup>15</sup> In the nineteenth century, before Ainu territories were absorbed by Russia and Japan,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>11</sup> Katsuichi Honda, *Harukor: An Ainu Woman’s Tale* (Kyoko Selden, Trans.). (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), xvii.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>13</sup> The Ainu Association of Hokkaido, Inc. is an organization made up of Ainu who live in Hokkaido. Their aim is to improve the social status of Ainu and to develop, transmit and preserve Ainu culture in order to establish the dignity of the Ainu people. To examine the history of Ainu, I used their website because it is written by their perspective.

<sup>14</sup> Satsumon is a type of pottery that emerged in Hokkaido and northern Honshu during the eighth to thirteenth centuries.

<sup>15</sup> Shiro Sasaki, “Trading Brokers and Partners with China, Russia, and Japan,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubrell, (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History, 1999), 86.



Ainu lived in a huge territory that stretched from the central Sakhalin Island to the southern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula. Some Ainu territory even spread into the northern part of Japan, currently known as the Tōhoku area. The Ainu people were not a monolithic group, but had different ecological habitats, varied linguistic dialects, and there were three distinct territorial subcultures: the Ainu of Hokkaidō, Sakhalin, and the Kuriles.<sup>16</sup> However, in this essay I focus only on Hokkaidō Ainu who share the same language and culture.

The situation of the Ainu changed radically after 1868, when the Meiji Government of Japan established the Colonization Commission and the island of Ezo was renamed as Hokkaido. In 1871, the Colonization Commission banned the following Ainu customs: the burning of a family house and moving away after the death of a family member, women's tattoos, and men's earrings. In 1872, based on Article 7 of the Land Regulation, land where the Ainu had conducted fishing, hunting, or logging was expropriated and divided into lots possessed by individuals or managed by villages.<sup>17</sup> In 1899, the Hokkaidō Ainu Protection Act, commonly known as *Kyūdojin Hogohō* was put into force. This law was enacted with the nominal intention of saving the Ainu from poverty, however, it involved transforming the Ainu into farmers. "The Ainu who were adapted to hunting and fishing existence were

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<sup>16</sup> Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney "Ainu Sociality," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubrell, (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History, 1999), 240.

<sup>17</sup> Ainu Historical Events, The Ainu Association of Hokkaido.

ill-prepared for the changes in programs.”<sup>18</sup> Though some Ainu successfully made the transition to farming, a majority of “the men preferred to rent their land so received, and take other work as fishermen or day laborers, while the women farmed the small plots of land left over.”<sup>19</sup> The Hokkaidô Ainu Protection Act also enacted assimilation policies, as well as universal education in Japanese, which undermined the Ainu language. Additionally, the Meiji government encouraged thousands of *wajin* (non-Ainu Japanese) to immigrate to Hokkaidô, and as a result “the ecological balance of many areas was upset, and wildlife in many parts of Hokkaidô began to disappear.”<sup>20</sup>

Overall, the modernization that the Meiji Restoration forced onto the Ainu was hard on them. “Their difficulties were compounded by the cultural insensitivity, and persistent discrimination they faced from officials and immigrants.”<sup>21</sup> For example, “*kyûdojin*,” the term they used for the Protection Act means “former aborigines” but “connoting an uncultured, uncivilized foreign race, thus it deprived the Ainu people of basic human rights, not only in educational and cultural spheres, such as restrictions on the use of their own language and customs, but also in terms of social and economic status.”<sup>22</sup> In 1901, Ainu children were assigned to attend special Ainu schools, in the belief that Ainu children could

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<sup>18</sup> Fred C.C. Peng et al, “The Socioeconomic Status of the Ainu: The past in the Present,” *American Ethnologist*, 1, no. 4 (1974): 732.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 733.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 732.

<sup>21</sup> Honda, *Harukor*, xxii

<sup>22</sup> Jiro Sasamura, “Beyond the Ainu Shinpo: An Ainu View,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubrell, (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History, 1999), 369.

not keep up intellectually with Japanese children. In 1936 when the negative results of the segregation of schools became obvious, this system was abolished and Ainu children were integrated into Japanese schools.<sup>23</sup> In this new school system, many Ainu children experienced severe discrimination from their *wajin* school mates, causing students to dropout of schools. Thus, later access to jobs was often difficult and marriage with other Japanese was a problem.<sup>24</sup>

After WWII, with the Land Reform Laws of 1947, many Ainu qualified as large landowners. However, some of the Ainu that had left the agricultural industry, lost land that was not being utilized for farming. Furthermore, around 1955 the number of Ainu engaged in agriculture slowly declined and many left the Ainu community to urban societies or engaged in seasonal work due to the industrial growth of Japan.<sup>25</sup> In addition to displacement from their land, the cultural marginalization of Ainu continued in the postwar period. In 1986, when former Prime Minister Nakasone remarked that “Japan is a mono-ethnic country,”<sup>26</sup> his comment went unnoticed by the Japanese media but received much criticism in the U.S. and from the Ainu.

In 1989, the construction of the Nibutani Dam, which stands in the Saru district in Hokkaidô, was started despite strong objections from local Ainu. Two Ainu farmers, Tadashi

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 369

<sup>24</sup> Suvendrini Kakuchi, “Ainu discrimination defies the law,” *Asia Times Online*, May 19, 2000,

<sup>25</sup> Peng, “The Socioeconomic,” 740.

<sup>26</sup> Takaaki Mizuno, “Ainu, the invisible Minority,” *Japan Quarterly* (Apr-June 1987), 143-48

Kaizawa and Shigeru Kayano, protested by arguing that the government violated their constitutional property right and damaged their cultural heritage, because the dam was built on top of Ainu remains, thus destroying a sacred site. In spite of strong local Ainu opposition, the Nibutani Dam was completed in March 1997. At the same time, the Sapporo District Court ruled that “the government was at fault for not taking Ainu concerns over ancestral sites into consideration. It was a landmark decision that the Ainu were recognized for the first time by the judiciary as *senjyû minzoku* (indigenous people).”<sup>27</sup> This incident drew strong attention not only from Ainu people but also from many non-Ainu people of Japan as well as overseas indigenous people. In 1994, Shigeru Kayano entered Japan’s parliament after the death of a sitting member. He was the first Ainu politician who served from 1994 to 1998 for the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Meanwhile, continuous movements of activists that attempted to improve the social status of the Ainu were recognized in 1997. At this time the government responded by replacing the Hokkaidô Ainu Protection Law and officially acknowledged the existence of the Ainu as an ethnic minority and guaranteed support for Ainu cultural activities.

From July 1st to 4th, 2008, in advance of the G8 Summit in Hokkaidô, “The 2008 Indigenous Peoples Summit in Ainu *Mosir* (peaceful land)” was held at Tôyako, Hokkaidô. More than 600 participants gathered from all over the world at the Indigenous Peoples

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<sup>27</sup> Siddle, “Assimilation to Indigenous Rights,” 115.

Summit. They gathered to celebrate the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) on September 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly. It is significant to note that a month before this summit, on June 8, 2008, the Ainu were officially recognized as indigenous peoples who have their own language, religion and culture by the Prime Minister's office. Their lengthy struggle for recognition as indigenous people was finally vindicated by the Japanese government.

### **B. Current situation of the Ainu**

A survey conducted by the Hokkaidô Prefectural Office "*Hokkaidô Utari*<sup>28</sup>*Seikatsu Jittai Chôsa* (Hokkaidô Utari actual conditions survey in 2006)"<sup>29</sup> stated that the Ainu population in Hokkaidô includes 23,782 people and an additional approximately 2,700 in the Tokyo area. The total population of Hokkaidô is 5,692,321, thus the Ainu make up 0.42 percent of the Hokkaidô population. However, these are only the people who identify themselves as Ainu, and the actual total population could be much larger. The discrepancy reflects the feeling of many Ainu that they must conceal their ethnic identity to avoid discrimination. As a result, some do not reveal their ethnic identity even to their children to escape social stigma.<sup>30</sup> In the survey, 16.8 percent of respondents indicated they had experienced discrimination that they could remember, while 13.8 percent indicated that they

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<sup>28</sup> Since the word Ainu was used pejoratively by *wajin*, between Ainu people they used *Utari* to refer to themselves, which means fellow human being in Ainu language. However, lately Ainu started to call themselves "Ainu" with pride, and The Hokkaido Utari Organization was renamed as The Ainu Association of Hokkaido in April, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Hokkaidô Chô, "Hokkaidô Utari Jittai Chôsa," 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Fitzhugh, "Ainu Ethnicity," 9.

had not experienced discrimination themselves but knew someone who had. As for the situation of discrimination, in the past 6 to 7 years, the top categories were: at work (39.1 percent), at school (21.7 percent), regarding friends (17.4 percent), the job market (13.9 percent), regarding marriage (13.0 percent), by government (9.5 percent), and other (17.4 percent). These numbers do not total 100 percent because multiple responses were allowed.

More recently, a survey was conducted by the Hokkaidô University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies and the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô in October 2008. It included individual Ainu people aged 18 to 84 living in Hokkaidô and responses were received from 2,903 households and 5,703 individuals. It reports that many Ainu people still have “underprivileged lives, with their annual household income stands at 3.56 million yen, around 60 percent of the national average, and the college advancement rate among Ainu below 30 years of age comes to 20.2 percent, compared with the national average of 42.2 percent.”<sup>31</sup>

More directly related to my interest in cultural identity and transmission, the survey demonstrates a low level of Ainu cultural activity and preservation. The survey data shows that “more than sixty percent of the respondents have no experiences of working to preserve and hand down the Ainu language, storytelling, as well as songs and dances.”<sup>32</sup>

Another significant survey of minority women in Japan was conducted during from 2004 to 2005. The Sapporo section of the Hokkaidô Utari Association explains that “241

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<sup>31</sup> Keiji Hirano, “Ainu still lead underprivileged lives, survey finds,” *The Japan Times*, June 10, 2009, (accessed June 18, 2009), 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

respondents were all members of the Hokkaidô Utari Association and 77 percent were aged over 40, because we failed to ask them [Association] to involve a variety of age groups.... The lack of preparation by the organizer was also attributable to the narrow age stratum.”<sup>33</sup>

As for educational background, 60 percent had either completed elementary or junior high school, but only 4 percent had graduated from college (including junior college). On the contrary, 24 percent of respondents aged under forty, completed schooling at or above high school. According to *Kyôdô Press*, the survey conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2005 shows 42.5 percent of Japanese women had graduated from college (including junior college).<sup>34</sup> Based on this available data, the percentage of Ainu women who graduated from college appears to be much lower than that of Japanese women.

Views of Ainu women regarding cultural preservation can be seen from the answers of ten women who were interviewed in association with the survey on minority women. When they were asked about Ainu culture, many comments included feelings of pride and importance of preserving it and a desire for non-Ainu people to gain some knowledge of Ainu culture. There are, however, voices that indicate the difficulties of preserving and transmitting Ainu culture, such as, “In our daily lives, it is virtually impossible to find spare time to

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<sup>33</sup> “Minority Women-Standing Up and Linking Together: Observation from the Survey-Ainu Women” *Buraku Liberation News* 1, no.146 (2008), 8.

<sup>34</sup> “OECD complains to Japanese women: higher education rate but lower employment rate” *Kyôdô Press*, July 2, 2008.

preserve and transmit Ainu culture.”<sup>35</sup> Comments regarding Ainu identity indicated that to some it was a “double edged sword.” That is because while they are proud of being Ainu, they also feel shame for being Ainu and want to stay away from other Ainu.<sup>36</sup>

### **III. Literature Review**

In this section, I examine how existing social, scientific, historical, and other literature explain why and how it was possible for Ainu people to maintain their roots even though they were victimized for centuries by *wajin* hostility and control. Given my interest in whether Ainu women play a similarly central role in cultural preservation as Florida Seminole women do, I will focus on how this literature describes the importance of the role of women, especially elder women, in the preservation of Ainu culture.

Before I describe how the literature explains why and how Ainu maintain their culture, I will describe some core elements of Ainu culture as described by the literature.

#### **A. Core elements of Ainu culture**

##### **1. Religion and oral traditions**

The word *kamuy* (god) in the Ainu language is “a generic term for both physical and immaterial entities on the earth who possess abilities superior to those of man.”<sup>37</sup> The Ainu believe that everything that surrounds them, such as nature, animal, plants, and tools are

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<sup>35</sup> “Minority Women-Standing Up and Linking Together,” 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Hisakazu, Fujimura, “Kamuy: gods you can argue with,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubrell, (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History, 1999), 193.



spiritual beings, or gods. Among them, the god of fire who provides light and energy is the most respected god and is worshipped every day. As for animals, the gods of the bear, owl and whale are highly ranked. They believe not only in the nature gods of the sun, moon, thunder, wind, water, snow, rivers, lakes, trees and forest but also in household gods such as pots, mortars, hearth, windows and boats. They believe that these numerous gods guard Ainu and provide food and safety.<sup>38</sup> These gods, however, were not absolutely benevolent beings, and as a result, it was believed that Ainu who failed to respect gods were punished. "The Ainu thus always strove to maintain a balance with nature."<sup>39</sup> This type of religion has been called "primitive, primal, basic or archaic religion; it has been referred to as animism and shamanism."<sup>40</sup>

As for language, according to Tamara Green, who divided languages into various families, Ainu and Basque (the language of the inhabitants of the Pyrenees of Spain and France) are categorized as "the orphans, meaning single languages that seem to bear no connection with any other."<sup>41</sup> Since they did not have letters, orally transmission has been the main method of transmitting literature such as tales, legends, experiences, and morals for everyday life from generation to generation.

Human *yukar* (rhymed epic poetry with melodies) usually refer to heroic poems and

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<sup>38</sup> Ainu Museum in Poroto Kotan.

<sup>39</sup> Honda, *Harukor*, xv.

<sup>40</sup> Robert S. Ellwood and Barbara A. McGraw, *Many Peoples, many Faith: Women and Men in the World Religions* (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 31

<sup>41</sup> Tamara M. Green, "language Families," in *Language and Linguistics in Context* ed. Harriet Luria and others (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2006), 137.

are mainly chanted by men, while divine *yukar*, another name for *kamuy* (spirit, gods) *yukar*, is a sacred epic of the gods, and traditionally chanted by women. *Yukar* were performed with rhymed verse and melodies, but *uwepeker* or *tuitak* (folktales in stylized prose) tales were transmitted in spoken form.<sup>42</sup> The following chart describes the different ways of telling stories in the Ainu language and its content. Honda explains that the chart is based on Haginaka Mie’s chart, and he presents it as “an example of the least complicated classification of the types of oral transmission, excluding songs and incantation.”<sup>43</sup>

**Epic poems and Prose tales (Chart 1)<sup>44</sup>**

<b>Verse Tales</b>
● <b>Divine <i>Yukar</i></b> (divine characters appearing in this type of <i>yukar</i> .)
<b>Natural deities</b>
Deities like fire and wind
Animal deities like the giant striped owl and mud snail
Plant deities like the wild lily and katsura
<b>Patriarchal deity</b>
The human patriarch called Oina-kamuy, Kotan-kar-kamuy or Okikurnmy
● <b>Human <i>Yukar</i></b> (Human characters appearing in this type of <i>yukar</i> )
Male: a youth called Poiyaunpe, Poiotasutunkur, etc.
Female: a young woman called Shinutapkaunmat, etc.
<b>Prose Tales</b>
● <b>Legends (<i>Upashkuma</i>)</b>
Oral transmissions related to rituals, place-names, ancestors, etc.
● <b>Old Tales</b>
Yukar told in prose form

<sup>42</sup> Shigeru, Kayano, *Our land was a Forest: An Ainu Memoir* (Kyoko Selden, and Lili Selden, Trans.). (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 25.

<sup>43</sup> Honda, *Harukor*, 85.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

Stories of <i>kotan</i> (village) heads and residents ( <i>Uwepeker</i> or <i>Tuitak</i> )
● <b>Other stories</b>
Tales of Pananpe, tales of mainland Japanese, brief tales, etc.

### ***Ukocharanke* (Settling differences by argument)**

Shigeru Kayano (1926-2006) was one of the few native speakers of the Ainu language and also the first Ainu politician who served in the upper house for the Social Democratic Party. He wrote approximately 100 books about the Ainu language and culture. In his book, *Our Land Was a Forest*, he explains the meaning of the term *ukocharanke*:

Uko means "mutually," and charanke means "to let words fall"; the compound word *ukocharanke* thus refer to the Ainu custom of settling difference by arguing exhaustively. It also implies that the Ainu do not solve disputes by violence. *Charanke* requires the talent to argue with logic and the physical strength to sit in debate for days.<sup>45</sup>

I assume that in spite of lengthy discrimination, their resilience and inner strength could be cultivated with Ainu philosophy like *ukocharanke*.

## **2. Harmony of nature**

According to David Howell, who wrote the forward of *Harukor*, Ainu gods had “Human characters, with all of humanity’s nobility and capriciousness.”<sup>46</sup> As a result, the Ainu always tried hard to maintain a balance with nature. They only took what they needed from nature without “[j]eopardizing its ability to sustain them in the future.”<sup>47</sup> Howell described a good example of a balance with nature in their method of fishing. The Ainu

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<sup>45</sup> Kayano, *Our land*, 25.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

waited each autumn until most of the salmon had a chance to spawn before catching them.

This Ainu way of preserving nature resembles the philosophy of the Iroquois people, Native Americans who live in North America and Canada. They like to say, “Think seven generations ahead.”<sup>48</sup>

### 3. Reciprocity

Before describing a ceremony called *Iyomante* (the bear sending ceremony), I want to briefly explain what reciprocal exchange is because it is an important concept underlying the Ainu philosophy, and also a main theme of *Iyomante*. Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), a French sociologist, worked in numerous fields, including economic anthropology, cultural ecology, the history of religion, and the fundamentals of social organization.<sup>49</sup> In his classic book *The Gift*, Mauss argues, “A gift that does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction.”<sup>50</sup> Then he explains of the North American “potlatch”<sup>51</sup> “The potlatch is an example of a total system of giving....it means that each gift is part of a system of reciprocity in which the honor of giver and recipient are engaged.”<sup>52</sup> Mauss also describes this relationship of mutual help as having “three obligations,”<sup>53</sup> to give, to receive, and to return. This theory indicates that engaging in reciprocity makes social groups come together as the commodities exchanged are

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<sup>48</sup> Reuben Snake, *Your Humble Serpent: Indian Visionary and Activist* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publisher, 1996), 249.

<sup>49</sup> Jerry D. Moore, *Visions of Culture* (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2004), 122.

<sup>50</sup> Marcel Mauss. *The Gift*. (London & New York: Routledge Classics, 1990), x.

<sup>51</sup> The potlatch is a festival practiced among indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast. The main purpose of the potlatch is the re-distribution and reciprocity of wealth.

<sup>52</sup> Mauss, *The Gift*, xi.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

not only goods and services but also courtesies, various forms of entertainment, ritual, military assistance, women, children, dances, and feast.<sup>54</sup>

### ***Iyomante (the bear sending ceremony)***

Iyomante is the most elaborate ceremony in Ainu society. The ceremony involves not only immediate relatives but also those from other communities as well. Like the North American potlatch, it provides an important opportunity for male elders to display their wealth. It shows political power and also economic power to the communities. The Iyomante is the most significant form of gift exchange “at a cosmic scale-between humans and deities (gods), in this case a bear.”<sup>55</sup> The joyful ceremony is religious, political, social, and economic and involves eating, drinking, singing and dancing. In the ceremony, a bear is ritually killed and its soul is sent back to the mountains. As Mauss states, to “...make a gift of something is to make a present of some part of oneself....One must give back to another person what is really part and parcel of his nature and substance, because to accept something from somebody is to accept some part of his spiritual essence.”<sup>56</sup> The belief in this ceremony is that the bear *kamuy* (god) is pleased and thus visits the Ainu with gifts of meat and furs, resulting in reciprocity between cosmic and community levels.

At the ceremony, *huci* plays an important role as the fire goddess and the deity of the hearth and home. As demonstrated on Iyomante ceremony, “Generosity is a moral value that

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>55</sup> Ohnuki, “Ainu Sociality,” 244.

<sup>56</sup> Mauss, *The Gift*, 12.

links an individual to his/her society. Also, it is the most important human value among Ainu.”<sup>57</sup> From the perspective of the Ainu, “the bear sending ceremony is a 'ritual of rebirth' to the bear.”<sup>58</sup> In *Harukor*, people gathered from nearby villages to help conduct the Iyomante ceremony. As Mauss suggests, they exchange not only goods and service but also aspects of culture such as songs, dances and ways of cooking.<sup>59</sup> This reciprocal exchange binds neighbors and teaches young people how to conduct the ceremony through helping elders and their community. These values, such as love of deity and nature, as well as reciprocity acts as a strong backbone that helps Ainu people have pride in their identity and also gives them strength to maintain their culture.

#### **4. Gender roles among the Ainu**

According to Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, an anthropologist who conducted field work from 1965 to 1973 with the Sakhalin Ainu resettled in Hokkaidô, “Among the Ainu, women are generally assigned a lower social status than men.”<sup>60</sup> Traditionally, Ainu men's primary tasks were hunting, fishing, the production of tools, and the preparation and execution of religious ceremonies. However, it is significant that the main roles onstage for the Iyomante ceremony are performed by men, while the backstage preparation demands more from the women. Reflecting this difference, Ainu women hold the responsibility of gathering food,

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<sup>57</sup> Ohnuki, “Ainu Sociality,” 245.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>59</sup> Mauss, *The Gift*, 7.

<sup>60</sup> Ohnuki, “Ainu Sociality,” 244.

gardening, making clothes, producing utensils needed for daily life, bearing children, and caring for their families. In Ainu society, women are considered of a lower status during their reproductive years, but after they reach menopause, they are called *huci* (respected elder woman) and they gain power and a higher status, and their wisdom is the most precious resource in society. It is interesting to note that Ainu culture values individuals not based on “a utilitarian criterion”<sup>61</sup> but their lifelong experience. For instance, elders who are no longer the major food providers are assigned more powerful tasks than younger members of society. Ainu believe that both aged men and women become closer to deities as they grow older.

### ***Ainu women in Harukor***

Harukor is a name of an Ainu woman who Honda Katsuyoshi picks as the protagonist of his story. He states, “In general it was women rather than men who truly sustained Ainu daily life, preserving and handing down traditional culture, particularly language.”<sup>62</sup> The setting of the story is eastern Hokkaidô, the region around Kushiro and Kitami (see appendix: map 3): several hundred years ago. However, Harukor's attitude towards her family and community, the natural world, and the world of the gods can be shared by much of Ainu society today.

Honda, one of Japan's leading journalists, a prominent documentary writer, and author

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 93.

of *Harukor* states, “I borrowed *uwepeker* (old Ainu tales in stylized prose), one important form of oral tradition, to convey something akin to an Ainu perspective on culture and society.”<sup>63</sup> He uses three types of references: oral traditions such as *uwepeker*, the knowledge held by present-day Ainu elders which was handed down to them as the traditional roots of Ainu culture, and insight gained from his visit to Inuit in the Arctic and the Moni in New Guinea; two other hunting and gathering societies.<sup>64</sup> Then he explains that with the support of many *huci* and *ekasi* (respected male elder), he could convey the atmosphere of Ainu society from a long time ago.<sup>65</sup>

In this story, Harukor speaks of her cheerful childhood, uncertain adolescence, and her motherhood. Along the way, she introduces songs and dances. She also describes festivals, weddings, childbirth, and impressive scenes of the funerals of *huci*. The traditional ceremony known as *Iyomante* is one of the very important events where children learn social rules, how to entertain neighbors, and most importantly, reciprocal values.

## **B. Why do contemporary Ainu preserve their culture amid oppression?**

In this section I examine two main reasons existing literature gives for maintaining Ainu culture amid oppression: 1) meeting emotional needs, and 2) meeting economic needs. First, I will examine the activists’ views that meet emotional needs. Second, I will observe the ethnic tourism that meets economic needs and analyze why they have encouraged the Ainu to

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<sup>63</sup> Honda, *Harukor*, xxxiv.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, xxxiv

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.



maintain their culture under oppressed conditions.

### **1. Meeting emotional needs: discrimination triggers pride as resistance**

David Suzuki, an internationally renowned environmental activist and a third generation Japanese Canadian, traveled with Keibo Oiwa, a cultural anthropologist, and environmentalist in Japan. Together they traveled throughout Japan, interviewing oppressed minority people such as Ainu, Okinawans, *burakumin* (descendants of a feudal underclass), and resident-Koreans. Oiwa explains that “None of the people in this book is merely a dreamer or a thinker....They are practical, yet sensitive to spiritually. They are humble, yet proud of who they are.”<sup>66</sup> In the process of interviewing they realized that minorities often stand at the “crossroads where the crisis of humanity meets with the crisis of animals, plants, oceans, rivers, and mountains.”<sup>67</sup> The two authors visited Hokkaidô and interviewed Miekko Chikkup, Koichi Kaizawa, and Shigeru Kayano, Ainu leaders determined to maintain their Ainu identity in spite of the government assimilation project.

Miekko Chikkup, a human-rights activist, and also an embroidery artist, explains that her childhood in Hokkaidô was full of prejudices: “In primary school the children taunted the Ainu calling them 'dirty,' 'hairy,' and 'smelly.' And all four of my brothers quit school early and I barely made it through junior high.”<sup>68</sup> After she married a non-Ainu Japanese, she

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<sup>66</sup> David T. Suzuki and Keibo Oiwa, *The Other Japan: Voices Beyond the Mainstream* (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1999), 306

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

moved to Tokyo and left the Ainu culture behind. There she felt empty and came to involve herself in Ainu matters through a group of Ainu women by teaching embroidery. At the meetings they danced and sang and spoke of traditional Ainu art.

When *The Ethnography of Ainu*<sup>69</sup> was published as part of the one hundredth anniversary of the colonization of Hokkaidô, Chikkup's life changed. To the Ainu, those hundred years marked a “devastating period of invasion, humiliation, and oppression, hardly a time to celebrate.”<sup>70</sup> Chikkup sued the publisher because of the one-sided attitude in the manuscript portraying Ainu culture as an object. She told Suzuki and Oiwa, “It was the way 'experts' could dig up the bones of our ancestors, take them to the university and measure them, all without any respect for what we felt.”<sup>71</sup> She won the case and received a settlement that included both a sum of money and a written apology, both of which changed her life drastically. As a result of this case, Chikkup was invited to the women's conference in Nairobi and eventually got a divorce from her husband and returned to Sapporo, Hokkaidô.

Koichi Kaizawa, another Ainu leader, was born in Niburani. His father Tadashi faced discrimination as an Ainu in the Japanese military in WWII, and as a result, became an activist, playing a central role in the movement to push for The Ainu New Law.<sup>72</sup> Having been strongly influenced by his father's activism, Kaizawa, along with Shigeru Kayano,

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<sup>69</sup> Shinichiro Takakura et al., eds., *The Ethnography of Ainu (Ainu Minzokushi)* (Tokyo: Daiichi Hoki Shuppan, 1969).

<sup>70</sup> Suzuki, *The Other Japan*, 120.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 101-102. The New law was replaced the Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act.

protested the construction of the Nibutani Dam when it was started in 1989. In 1993, Kaizawa was the main organizer of the Nibutani Forum, which received wide coverage and attracted indigenous people from fifteen different countries who joined the Ainu's fight against the dam.<sup>73</sup> Kaizawa also stated that when his son, Taichi, wore an Ainu outfit to his college graduation, it attracted media attention. He hopes for the day that such acts will not be seen as newsworthy, but instead commonplace. When the author asks Kaizawa the most important challenge facing the Ainu, he replies:

I guess it's pride. The Japanese state has to recognize us. Then they have to write a true history of what happened....It may take three generations, so if we don't start now, the Ainu will disappear...every indigenous group is in the same situation. They have been pushed to the limit. But once they recover their pride, they'll take everything back.<sup>74</sup>

Suzuki concludes, "After fourteen hundred years of oppression and racism, the Ainu people and culture still exist, and now there is a growing pride in being Ainu among the young people."<sup>75</sup> Then Oiwa states, "For Japan, change is ongoing. After so many years, the myth of a monolithic Japan is crumbling. Signs of change may still look small and feeble, yet they are everywhere. Diversity is surely a better future for Japan."<sup>76</sup>

## **2. Meeting economic needs: ethnic tourism**

In 1872, The Hokkaidô Ainu Protection Act was enacted. Even though this law was put into force with the nominal intention of saving the Ainu from poverty, its was really

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 309.

meant to turn the Ainu into farmers. Though some Ainu successfully made the transition, the majority of Ainu preferred to take other work such as being fishermen or day laborers.

Meanwhile after the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-05, the Hokkaidô tourist industry started to develop quickly. "Railroad Companies from Osaka and Nagoya sent tourists to Hokkaidô to view the 'primitive' manners and customs of various Ainu groups in their natural "wild and untamed' settings."<sup>77</sup> In spite of these derogatory conditions, many Ainu began to work at the tourist sites as a means of survival. Additionally, even though bears were called "gods of the mountain" and the creation of animal images was traditionally prohibited by the Ainu, the tourist industry conducted by *wajin* produced bear carvings, a very popular as souvenirs for tourists. In fact, bear carvings would later become a steady source of income for Ainu wood carvers.<sup>78</sup>

A prominent craftsman himself, the Ainu leader Shigeru Kayano started creating Ainu woodcarvings in the late 1940s, and by the late 1950s was earning more money than a wage laborer in the mountains.<sup>79</sup> "The craftsmen became very prosperous by producing and distributing Ainu crafts for the tourist trade."<sup>80</sup> In Ainu society craftsmen constitute a social group and have an important voice in community affairs,<sup>81</sup> and their skills have been

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<sup>77</sup> Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, "Tourism, Assimilation, and Ainu Survival Today," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubrell (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History, 1999), 92.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>79</sup> Lisa Hiwasaki, "Ethnic Tourism in Hokkaido and the shaping of Ainu Identity" (*Pacific Affairs*, 73, no.3. Autumn, 2000), 402.

<sup>80</sup> Peng, "The Socioeconomic," 745.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, 745.

perfected as a result of tourism.<sup>82</sup> Lisa Hiwasaki explained that many tourist centers were controlled by *wajin* and they produced stereotypical images of the Ainu. As a result, tourism was generally perceived negatively by the Ainu population,<sup>83</sup> however despite the strong attitude that some Ainu had against ethnic tourism, it was a crucial means by which the Ainu could survive.

In recent years, “the Ainu have become more active participants in tourism....They are increasingly taking the initiative in the staging of their performances, in order to benefit more from their involvement with tourism.”<sup>84</sup> As for souvenirs such as woodcarvings sold at the tourist village shops, “they are symbols of the Ainu,”<sup>85</sup> and “have helped many Ainu reestablish their own identity.”<sup>86</sup>

### **C. How do they go about preserving Ainu culture?**

In this section I examine two main methods by which Ainu maintain their culture: 1) ethnic tourism in Hokkaidô that benefited the Ainu socially, culturally, and politically, and 2) “story telling” that tells the Ainu history and philosophy and also “wisdom for carrying out daily activities and lessons for Ainu life.”<sup>87</sup> Then I will focus on women, especially *huci*, who play a special role in the preservation of Ainu culture.

#### **1. Ethnic tourism**

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<sup>82</sup> Hiwasaki, “Ethnic Tourism,” 406.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 405.

<sup>87</sup> Kayano, *Our Land*, 5.

In this section I examine conditions of ethnic tourism in Ainu villages in Hokkaidō to find out how this ethnic tourism serves to promote maintaining their roots and culture.

According to Hiwasaki who conducted fieldwork in Hokkaidō in 1995, ethnic tourism consists of three main roles: (1) the tourist, who travels to seek an experience that cannot be copied in ordinary life; (2) the host, the performer who modifies his or her behavior to suit the tastes of the tourists for gain; and (3) the middleman, who intervenes between the two groups and profits by their interaction.<sup>88</sup>

In ethnic tourism, “a culture is commoditized for tourism.”<sup>89</sup> Kayano explains how this can result in an uncomfortable experience, “It is beyond words for me to explain to others how miserable it made us feel to sing and dance—albeit for money—in front of curious tourists from throughout Japan.”<sup>90</sup> He did not like to perform as a “display Ainu.”<sup>91</sup>

However, Hiwasaki indicates that there were the beneficial economic and cultural aspects of tourism. She argues that tourism can stimulate local economic growth and also enlighten the tourists as well as the natives. Patsy West, who is an author of *The Enduring Seminoles: from Alligator Wrestling to Ecotourism*, has the same point of view. West interviewed Seminoles who had lived in Musa Isle Indian Village in Miami. Even though the Indian families who lived there were on constant display for visitors, they lived there freely, and the lifestyle was

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<sup>88</sup> Hiwasaki, “Ethnic tourism,” 395.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 395.

<sup>90</sup> Kayano, *Our Land*, 118.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 119.

compatible with what they knew in the Everglades; the only exception being that they were getting paid to let tourists watch them perform everyday tasks. At the village, women made patchwork clothes with hand–cranking sewing machines and developed the original designs that became one of the major products of Seminole women. Most importantly these villages provided a transitional environment, according to West. Some of the major administrators, who run the Hard Rock Cafe at Seminole reservation today, were raised in the Indian Village. West suggests, “These culturally familiar enclaves in an urban setting gave the Indians control over the extent of their contact with the outside world.”<sup>92</sup> Hiwasaki expresses the same opinion. Despite the strong feelings some people have against ethnic tourism, “it has had and continue to have a profound impact on the Ainu.”<sup>93</sup> She argues that ethnic tourism involves Ainu cultural expressions, thus playing a vital role in the preservation. Also, it helped in the revival of dances, songs and certain aspects of Ainu culture.

## **2. Storytelling**

As I noted in the section of religion and oral literacy, Ainu language does not have letters, thus they have orally transmitted literature such as tales, legends, experiences, and morals for everyday life from generation to generation. Story telling is the most important method that Ainu people use to preserve their culture. In particular, huci play a significant role in teaching Ainu values through story telling. In *Harukor*, Honda depicts vividly huci’s

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<sup>92</sup> West, *The Enduring Seminoles*, 32.

<sup>93</sup> Hiwasaki, “Ethnic tourism,”402.

important role as story tellers.

Honda writes that every day before and after dinner, Harukor and her sister asked huci to tell them new stories. Without resting her hands from spinning thread, huci told them an “endless supply of stories.”<sup>94</sup> Harukor even thought of huci as a “*kamui* (god) of storytelling.”<sup>95</sup> Some stories are about divine yukar, the god of bear or the god of a pot, and other stories are of the endless journeys of young Ainu. As huci chant the stories with melodies, she teaches children lessons about the balance between nature and humans, reciprocity between animals and humans, and other values and morals that would be needed to live peacefully in Ainu *Mosir* (peaceful land).

In the story when Harukor received the sad news of huci's critical condition, she prayed to the gods for one last chance to see her huci alive:

She was always so gentle, gentler than *hapo* (mother). She was strict but kind. Huci, who had always told us *uwepeker* and *kamui yukar* as we fell asleep, and who had raised me through maidenhood, had seemed like some kind of kamui sent from heaven to care for me. I couldn't imagine a day without huci, and she in turn poured into me all of her stories and knowledge of living.<sup>96</sup>

Then she remembered the day when she had memorized entire stories. Huci replied with joy and said, “Well, I guess that all the stories your grandma knows have been transmitted to you.”<sup>97</sup> As a matter of fact, the number of stories that huci transmitted to Harukor easily surpassed three hundred, and she retained them all. Honda points out, “Most people have lost

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 244.



significant things in the process of the ability to write. One of the most valuable of these was a folk culture based on memory—the world of oral transmission.”<sup>98</sup> Huci play an important role in limiting this loss via their storytelling.

### 3. Significant role of huci

In his personal account, *Our Land Was a Forest*, Shigeru Kayano wrote about the importance of storytelling and the huci’s role in transmitting Ainu culture. He said that his huci sat at the fire place, never stopped her work at the spindle, and told her grandchildren Ainu folktales (uwpekere) in the Ainu language. Those stories were interwoven with “practical bits of wisdom for carrying out daily activities and lessons for life.”<sup>99</sup> In addition to the uwepekere, huci told many tales of the great earth and gods. For example, “one must not arbitrarily cut down trees, one must not pollute running water, even birds and beasts will remember kindness and return favors, and so on.”<sup>100</sup> Kayano looked back at his youth and said, “She [huci] had been a superb personal tutor when I was growing up,”<sup>101</sup> then he thanked her for teaching him the Ainu language so that he could speak fluent Ainu and have pride in his ancestry.

To summarize huci's role, she is an expert oral transmitter, who maintains her role by telling stories to her offspring. In *Harukor*, Ainu women preserve their heritage and identity

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<sup>98</sup> Honda, *Harukor*, 85.

<sup>99</sup> Kayano, *Our Land*, 4-5.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

in daily activities. As Harukor experienced with her huci, “everyday life is the arena in which culture is produced.”<sup>102</sup> Women in *Harukor* contribute in diverse ways to preserve and transmit Ainu culture by teaching songs, dances, embroidery, as well as their traditional cooking to their children. In Harukor's family, huci is the key person who teaches these skills and values of the Ainu to her descendants.

#### **D. Summary**

In my review of the literature, I observed core elements of Ainu culture, such as religion, oral literature, and gender roles among the Ainu. I also examined core values and practices such as a harmony of nature, reciprocity and “ukocharanke,” because they are important parts of the underlying Ainu philosophy. These core values and practices are demonstrated in the Iyomante ceremony which focuses on reciprocity, and in the portrayal of Ainu women in *Harukor* and other works which demonstrate Ainu gender roles in their daily lives.

The literature primarily focuses on two reasons why Ainu have maintained their culture amid *wajin* pressure to assimilate: 1) to meet emotional needs given emptiness resulting from discrimination, and 2) to meet economic needs given their disadvantage in Japanese society. Activists have described turning to cultural preservation and activism as a response to emotional damage and a void incurred by early and subsequent experiences of

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., xxvii.

discrimination. In terms of economic needs, at the beginning, many tourist villages were controlled by *wajin* and they produced negative images of the Ainu, however, economically ethnic tourism was crucial to the Ainu's survival. According to the literature, contemporary Ainu maintain their culture in primarily two ways 1) ethnic tourism, and 2) story telling. Ethnic tourism not only meets economic needs but develops and transmits culture. The ethnic tourism involves Ainu cultural expressions, thus playing a vital role in the preservation.<sup>103</sup> As for storytelling, it has been one of the significant ways for Ainu to preserve and transmit their values and history. In Ainu society, women's role, especially that of the *huci*, is important and respected. A *huci* is an expert oral transmitter who maintains her role by telling stories to her offspring and acts as a "superb tutor" of Ainu values.

In the process of summing up the literature review, I realized that the existing literature indicates some core values of Ainu culture but does not convey issues from the eyes of contemporary, "average" Ainu. For instance, *Harukor* is a folktale of Ainu society as it existed a long time ago, although the attitudes of the protagonist, Harukor, toward her family and communities, can be shared by women in Ainu society today. Additionally, activists whom Suzuki and Oiwa interviewed are proud Ainu and their views may not represent the majority of "average" Ainu people, because they are socially and politically well-known, so they have found their identity already as Ainu through their lengthy struggle under *wajin*

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<sup>103</sup> Hiwasaki, "Ethnic tourism,"402.

oppression. So how and why do “average” Ainu maintain their culture? Do “average” Ainu women, especially older women play a special role in maintaining their culture? To better address my research questions, there is a need to look more directly at the opinions of average Ainu. This need motivated me to look for existing sources containing the views of ordinary Ainu, which led me to articles containing interviews of Ainu persons in the *Hokkaido Shinbun* (Hokkaidô Newspaper) called “*Piyara: Ainu Tribe Now.*”

#### **IV. Methods**

*Piyara* means windows in the Ainu language, and this feature in the Hokkaidô Newspaper included interviews with both men and women of Ainu descent, all various ages. The articles were started in July 2006 by the Kushiro and Nemuro branches of the Hokkaidô Newspaper, on the east side of Hokkaidô (see appendix: map 3) and have been appearing every other week since. As of September 15, 2009, eighty-two articles have been published; 24 are focused on individual men, 33 are on individual women and 25 articles contain more general information about Ainu communities and current news. The age of persons in the articles ranges from 13 to 88 with the following distribution: age 13-20 (4%); 21-40 (12%); 41-60 (31%); 61 and over (53%). Interviewees include *ekashi* (respected male elders), huci, Ainu language teachers, publishers of children’s books, wooden sculptors, a silver accessory designer, classic dancers, *upo-po* (festival song) singers, story tellers, embroidery artists, *mukkuri* (mouth zither) players and makers, actors, activists, community

organizers, Ainu cultural producers, and store owners. Because these interviews did not come from a random sample, they don't represent the "average" Ainu. However, this is perhaps the best information available to examine how "average" Ainu maintain their culture short of original data collection.

I conducted a content analysis of the fifty seven articles focusing on specific individuals by using the process of coding the manifest and latent content of the articles. Specifically, I identified the reasons they gave for maintaining their Ainu culture and processes by which they maintained it. After I read through the fifty-seven articles, I was overwhelmed with the abundance of information that these articles included. To organize this information, I coded the articles with basic categories such as name, age, sex, contact address, family, and gender roles within a family, affiliation, engaged traditional crafts (sculpture, music, dance or other art craft), and transmitted culture from the parents or the community, and future restorative work.

First I began to code with categories suggested by the literature such as religion, harmony of nature, and reciprocity to identify how the interviewees described their experiences with core elements of Ainu culture. Then, I coded for specific reasons given for preserving Ainu culture amid oppression. Again, I began with categories from the existing literature. I coded quotations where interviewees identified: 1) meeting emotional needs through cultural pride as a response to discrimination, and 2) meeting economic needs for

survival via ethnic tourism. Next, I coded the specific ways that interviewees preserve and transmit their culture. Here I also began with categories suggested by the literature, 1) ethnic tourism, and 2) story telling. I also allowed for additional reasons for and techniques of preservation to emerge from the data through open coding.<sup>104</sup> Finally, as I specified in the summary of the literature review, I found that the “wisdom of huci” underlies most of the interviewees’ comments, as one of the core processes and mechanisms by which Ainu people maintain their roots.

## **V. Findings and discussion**

Although the data seemed only to be abundant dots of information at the beginning, during the process of coding, I connected the dots and was amazed to see “a meaningful shape emerge.”<sup>105</sup> Most importantly, I found that underneath the diversity of information lay valuable core factors that address my questions: Why do contemporary Ainu preserve their culture amid oppression? How do they go about preserving their culture? What is the role of Ainu women, especially huci, in cultural preservation?

In addition to finding similar reasons and methods of Ainu cultural preservation that have been highlighted in the literature, through open coding I was also able to identify different categories from the data. I found that interviewees mentioned “gatherings,” where the Ainu people meet and learn traditional skills, such as Ainu language classes, classic dance

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<sup>104</sup> Robert M. Emerson et al., *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: The University Chicago Press, 1995), 150.

<sup>105</sup> Suzuki, *The Other Japan*, 305.

and song groups, local history study groups, and Ainu cultural preservation groups. These seemed to speak to another need motivating preservation of Ainu culture—a need for social interaction and connection. Through open coding I found that interviewees often mentioned outreaching activities as ways to maintain Ainu culture. Recently, these outreach activities are directed not only toward the Ainu themselves, but also toward the non-Ainu population to introduce their culture through storytelling, cooking, embroidery, and teaching how to play Ainu musical instruments. I also found that “the international indigenous people’s gatherings” function as a way of preserving the Ainu culture. Additionally, some very innovative approaches to preserve Ainu culture are joint concerts with young Ainu traditional music players and folk or ethnic musicians.

To demonstrate how the data addresses the questions, in this section I present excerpts from interviewees’ comments in terms of reasons and methods for maintaining Ainu culture. In doing so, I elaborate on the internal variation and nuances of these reasons and methods. Before I demonstrate why and how the data addresses the question, I will present excerpts that describe core elements of Ainu culture to demonstrate how these elements in the literature operated in the lives of these contemporary Ainu.

## **A. Core elements of Ainu culture**

### **1. Religion**

In this section, I present interview excerpts that demonstrate how traditional Ainu

religion has played a role in the daily lives of contemporary Ainu.

**Kotori Sawa (87), *huci* (respected women elder)**

Kotori keeps the traditional Ainu way of living called *Ainupuri*. She learned the Ainu language and traditional cooking from her grandmother. When she was little, she used to dance with her grandmother on many occasions. When the wind blew hard, they sang and danced in front of their house:

“We shook *yomogi* (mugwort), and sang “wind god, please don’t blow too hard,” so that evil spirits went away. My grandmother used to tell me “We owe our life to the mountain god and the river god. Therefore, we have to thank them and protect them.” (2006/09/05)

The Ainu believe that everything that surrounds them is a spiritual being, or god. They believe that these numerous gods protect them and provide food and safety. This belief is demonstrated in the actions of Kotori and her grandmother who asked the wind gods to calm down by singing and dancing. An interesting phenomenon here is that the nature gods protect the Ainu, but the Ainu also protect the nature gods. As Kotori said, “we have to thank them and protect them.” As a result, the Ainu tried very hard to maintain a balance with nature. Here, we also can see the important role of the *huci* who teach Ainu values of respect for nature, and cultural practices such as dancing, and singing in their daily lives.

**Senke Morio (65), male, photographer and detention home counselor**



Senke published six volumes of *Photo Collections of the Ainu People*. He has been shooting Ainu festivals, nature, customs and their lives. He also works as a counselor at the detention center for the Ainu. There he tells juvenile inmates about Ainu values:

“You know, in Ainu society we don’t have any suicide. We believe every living thing on this earth has purpose and we came down from heaven to pursue our duty. We receive our lives from nature, so we should thank nature, and not neglect our lives.”

(2006/12/12)

Senke tries to encourage juveniles in the correctional justice system, many of whom suffer from depression and may be contemplating suicide. He draws on the idea in Ainu religion that humans have received life from and are directly connected to the earth and nature. As such, they have an obligation to preserve their own lives and use them fruitfully to demonstrate their appreciation. Thus, for Senke, Ainu religion is not only something that guides his own life, but something he uses to help younger persons. In doing so, he works to transmit the culture to subsequent generations.

## **2. Harmony of nature**

### **Nemoto Kōzaburō (88), *ekashi* (respected male elder)**

In 1946 Nemoto conducted the last Iyomate festival in the village of Shiranuka, a town in eastern Hokkaido, before it was prohibited by the Hokkaidō municipal government.

In 1998, Nemoto reproduced old fishing tools and hunting equipment, and the traditional

fishing and hunting culture was documented in the book called *Ainu ethnic data of Shiranuka*.

He describes the Shiranuka of olden days:

“Shiranuka was surrounded with beautiful nature such as the sea, river and mountains.

Thus, many Ainu have been living here since ancient days. I used to hunt bear and

deer in the mountain and fish salmon and trout at the river. We were blessed with

an abundant gift of nature.” (2006/07/11)

This quote suggests that Nemoto’s appreciation of nature was instilled during his youth through hunting and fishing, likely with family members. He carries this appreciation with him today and it drives his work to preserve traditional tools of Ainu fishing and hunting culture. By doing so, he also preserves and transmits Ainu values to avoid “jeopardizing its [nature’s] ability to sustain them in the future.”<sup>106</sup>

### **Takiguchi Masamitsu (65), male, wooden sculptor**

Takiguchi is not Ainu but when he was twenty-two, he visited an Ainu village in Hokkaido from Tokyo. There he met a young sculptor, and he was astounded with his energetic way of creating objects. Since then he has lived in *Akan Kotan* (a tourist village in Kushiro area), where he married an Ainu woman and became a sculptor himself. His 130 wooden sculptures are displayed at the nearby hotels regularly and he received the Hokkaido Governor’s award of traditional crafts in 2000. Here he describes his inspiration for sculpting

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., xv.

and how he has been influenced by Ainu values.

“I feel the spirit in a tree, therefore as a sculptor, I want to express this spirit in my work. Without knowing about Ainu values, I could not become who I am now.”

(2006/11/28)

Takiguchi’s work life is profoundly shaped by the Ainu value of nature. He feels a spiritual connection with trees, the natural material of his work, and he draws on this connection when molding the material through sculpting. Despite not being of Ainu descent, he attributes his development as a sculptor to his immersion in Ainu culture and values.

**Nishida Kayoko (54), female, embroidery artist**

Nishida owns a folk handicraft shop at *Akan Kotan* (tourist village in Akan), and also is an Ainu kimono designer. In 1998, she received the Hokkaido Ainu Traditional Craft Award, and her first picture book called “Handiwork” will be published at the end of 2009.

“I learn colors, lines and shapes from the sky, mountains, lakes and trees. My mentor is nature.” (2007/02/06)

Nishida states that most of her kimono designs are inspired by nature. The Ainu cultural emphasis on connection with nature is manifested in her use of colors, lines, and shapes “divinely” designed by nature in her own kimono designs. She loves to examine old kimonos at the museum because she can get a sense of the creator’s delicate feelings and care by looking at the carefully designed embroidery and its designs. She receives her inspiration not

only from nature but also from antique kimonos, through which she feels the creators' spirits, which are also believed to be connected to nature in Ainu culture.

### **Comment**

As demonstrated in the existing literature, the Ainu gods are manifested in nature and have “Human characters, with all of humanity’s nobility and capriciousness.”<sup>107</sup> Given this complex nature of Ainu divinity, the Ainu always try hard to maintain a balance with nature to remain in its favor. Ainu do this by maintaining a close relationship with nature in their daily lives. They do so not only in times of emergency as described by Sawa when she and her huci tried to calm a storm, but also in their day-to-day work, whether as crafts persons or seemingly unrelated work such as counseling. Takiguchi and Nishida received their inspiration for their art from nature, and learning the traditional value of harmony of nature seems to be a vehicle to gain their identity as Ainu artists. For these artists as well as Senke, the counselor, their understanding of the need to maintain harmony with nature motivates them to preserve and transmit Ainu culture to future generations.

### **3. Reciprocity**

In this section, I present interview excerpts that demonstrate how reciprocal exchange, an important concept underlying Ainu philosophy, has played a role in the daily lives of contemporary Ainu.

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<sup>107</sup> Honda, *Harukor*, xv.

**Sasaki Miyako (63), female, Singer at Akan Kotan**

Sasaki has been singing at Akan Kotan almost fifty years. When she has free time, she enjoys hiking in nearby mountains.

“When we went to the mountain to forage edible wild vegetables, my grandma told me, “Don’t pull up a plant by the root. There is a circle of life in nature, and we should not kill their life completely.” (2008/03/18)

In the literature, Mauss explains mutual help as “three obligations,”<sup>108</sup> to give, to receive, and to return. Sasaki’s grandmother told her that it is this mutual exchange between nature and Ainu that creates the circle of life in nature.

**Yae Seijirō (82), ekashi (respected male elder)**

Yae has been contributing his knowledge and experience to his Ainu community and serving as an ekashi who conducts ritual ceremonies, such as ancestral worship. His parents came from Aomori in the northern part of Japan to Hokkaidō to work in the agricultural industry. However, the land they were allotted had poor soil, so they went back to Aomori. It was too dangerous for a baby to travel, so he was left with an Ainu family. Yae explains that in those days, many *wajin* left their children with Ainu and went back to their homeland. They knew that the Ainu were generous and helpful.

“My Ainu stepmother cared for me as if I were her own son and *kotan* (village)

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<sup>108</sup> Mauss, *The gift*, 50.

people treated me the same way. As long as I live, I want to repay them for the warm hearted kindness that they gave me. My body is Japanese but my heart is Ainu.”

(2006/07/25)

Ohnuki explains, “Generosity is a moral value that links an individual to his/her society. Also it is the most important human value among Ainu.”<sup>109</sup> Ainu’s generous act toward Yae’s family linked him to Ainu society. Yae expresses this link as, “My body is Japanese, but my heart is Ainu.” He has been returning the kindness to the Ainu community by serving as an ekashi who conducts ceremonial rituals for the community.

### **Comments**

In the literature, Mauss states, “Engaging in reciprocity makes social groups come together.”<sup>110</sup> This reciprocal exchange is not only from human to human, but as examined in Sasaki’s case it also occurs at a cosmic level—between humans and gods manifested in nature. In *Iyomante*, by giving the bear god an elaborate ceremony, the bear god is pleased, and in return he will visit the Ainu with gifts of meat and furs. The bear sending ceremony is a “ritual of rebirth to bear.”<sup>111</sup> Similarly, Sasaki reminds us of her grandma’s advice that “[a] circle of life in nature” is also a “rebirth of nature.” As for Yae, he has been repaying the kindness he received from his Ainu step-parents and the village people where he grew up through his role as an ekashi. This circle of obligation, reciprocal exchange, serves to

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<sup>109</sup> Ohnuki, “Ainu Sociality,” 245.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

maintain and transmit Ainu values and culture to the next generations. These excerpts demonstrate the presence of these interrelated elements of Ainu culture in the daily lives of contemporary Ainu. However, amid pressures to assimilate, why and how do they maintain their culture?

## **B. Why do contemporary Ainu preserve their culture amid oppression?**

In this section, I present interview excerpts that demonstrate three reasons why Ainu have maintained their culture amid *wajin* pressure to assimilate. These reasons are: 1) to meet emotional needs given emptiness resulting from discrimination, and 2) to meet economic needs given their disadvantage in Japanese society, and 3) to meet social needs. This last reason is largely overlooked in existing research, and it emerged during my application of open coding.

### **1. Meeting emotional needs**

#### **Yae Kumiko (50), female, dancer and singer at Akan Kotan**

In the Ainu tourist village, without formal lessons, Yae learned many traditional songs and dances by watching her mother perform. Now she is one of the most prominent performers at Akan Kotan main theater. However, in junior high school, she was bullied by classmates many times and she eventually came to hate school. In those days, instead of going to school, she went to her parent's souvenir shop at Akan Kotan. There she enjoyed talking with tourists and shooting pictures with them.

“I tried to quit being an Ainu so many times, but I couldn’t. It is impossible for me to quit being Ainu. Now I have gained pride as a classical Ainu singer and dancer, and I feel that it is my duty to transmit the techniques of dancing and singing to young Ainu.” (2007/07/03)

Whenever she felt empty as a result of discrimination at school, she escaped to Akan Kotan. It was the safe place where she could hide and learn Ainu culture naturally from the sheltered tourist–village–environment. Her strong statement, “I tried to quit being an Ainu,” followed by “It is impossible for me to quit being Ainu,” demonstrates her struggle to find her identity as Ainu. For Kumiko, the tourist village meant not only a hiding place from the real world, but also, the place that nurtured her to become an artist who has pride as an Ainu. Now she is busy training many young Ainu performers for Akan Kotan.

**Yoshikawa Kanto (27), male, adviser at the Kushiro public employment security office**

Like Yae, Yoshikawa was discriminated against both in elementary and middle school. Kids did not include him in their play groups because he was Ainu. He was so frustrated and sad, but watching his parents, who were devoted in their woodcarvings and his grandmother who preserved Ainu traditional dances, gave him pride. This pride he saw in his family helped him to overcome hard times at school.

“It has passed eight years since I entered “the Ainu world.” I joined the Association of Ainu Culture Preservation and started to learn classic dances and also



ritual manners for the Ainu ceremony. I realized that after I was involved in preservation, my quality of pride had changed. I was able to have my own identity as a proud Ainu.” (2006/10/31)

Now his aim is to create and promote programs that will appeal to young Ainu. It was in response to the emotional damage and frustration that he experienced at school, that he decided to become an active member of the preservation group.

**Suzuki Kimiyo (60), female, *mukkuri* (mouth zither) maker and player**

Suzuki is a businesswoman and also a mukkuri player who produces 2000 to 3000 mukkuri per month. Unlike Kumiko and Yoshikawa, her devotion toward Ainu culture came after she lost her daughter in a traffic accident. She became so miserable and needed something to cling on to, so she concentrated on making mukkuri:

“When I was twenty, I made mukkuri to help my father’s business. At that time, I didn’t like it, because I had faced discrimination at school and in the community, which made me embarrassed being an Ainu. However, after my daughter’s death, I devoted myself to making mukkuri, and later I realized that the mukkuri business had become more than earning money; it became my life.” (2007/12/18)

Suzuki has hired women in her community to produce mukkuri which she completes with finishing touches. As she explains, her mukkuri business became her identity, and her life itself. Very soon a photo essay titled “Message from My Father” will be published and she

will be attaching a CD she created to it. She plans to distribute them to schools in Hokkaidô so that students will learn about Ainu instruments and music.

### **Comment**

As the literature shows, Mieko Chikkup, a human-rights activist, and also an embroidery artist, faced discrimination when she was young. Yae and Yoshikawa also faced harsh discrimination in their school age. Because of this condition, Yae “tried to quit being Ainu” so many times, and Yoshikawa became very frustrated and sad. However, emotional needs triggered Yae and Yoshikawa to be involved in Ainu culture, and they remained as Ainu, and now they are strong promoters of Ainu culture. As for Suzuki, the deep sadness that resulted from the loss of her daughter in a traffic accident caused her to become a successful businesswoman making mukhuri, Ainu traditional instrument. She preserves and transmits Ainu music by making CDs of her performance and distributing them to schools in Hokkaidô. Pride that eventually emerged from the emotional needs become a powerful vehicle to preserve and hand down Ainu culture to the next generations. As Kaizawa states, “...They have been pushed to the limit... but once they recover their pride, they’ll take everything back.”<sup>112</sup>

## **2 . Meeting economic needs: ethnic tourism**

**Akibe Hideo (47), male, Akan Crafts Cooperative: executive director**

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<sup>112</sup> Suzuki, *The Other Japan*, 109.

Akibe works not only as a business executive of the Akan Crafts Cooperative, but also as a writer and director of the theater at Akan Kotan.

“I believe a successful economy creates opportunity to preserve and transmit Ainu culture. I believe that it is the duty of tourist village employees to entertain tourists, and stimulate local economic growth and improve the quality of life of Ainu people who work in the village.” (2007/07/31)

To expand the tourist village, he is planning to build a sculpture garden at the lake side. He is one of the key persons in eastern Hokkaidô Ainu society.

**Kaoru Morita (54), male, professional woodcarver at Akan Kotan**

He is a professional woodcarver and an owner of handicraft shop at Akan Kotan.

“After I graduated from junior high school, I served an apprenticeship under a famous sculptor and worked at the souvenir shop in Akan Kotan to help my family financially. I was making trinkets so that we could sell them for money.” (2007/03/20)

When he attended a woodcarver’s contest, he was shocked by their artistic skills. He was deeply moved with woodcarvings at the contests and was ashamed of only making souvenirs so that he could sell them for money. He then visited Ainu museums and studied antique carvings. Recently he has been involved in the carving of *ikupasuy* (prayer sticks) for Ainu ritual ceremonies and has attempted to work with an antique method for lacquer finishing.

**Toko Midori (58) Store owner at Akan Kotan, mukkuri player**

Her family owns a restaurant with a craft shop at Akan Kotan. She has been serving as vice chairperson for the Association of Ainu Ethnic Culture Preservation in Akan.

“We sell *mukkuri* (mouth zither) at the store, to sell those, I had to learn to play them. Also, we rent Ainu kimonos for taking pictures, so keeping the authentic kimono, I had to learn how to make them.” (2009/02/03)

Toko Midori took special lessons from her mother-in-law to be able to show authentic Ainu culture to the tourists. As a result, she conserves Ainu culture and is transmitting it to the following generations.

### **Comment**

In the literature, Hiwasaki states that ethnic tourism leads to the structure of three main roles: 1) The tourist, 2) the host (Ainu tourist village and its people), and 3) the middleman (tourist industry). Until recently many tourist centers were controlled by the tourist industry, and they produced stereotypical images of the Ainu. As a result, general perceptions of tourism were negative even though it was a necessary financial source for Ainu survival. Akibe confessed that “Once I tried to escape from this tourist village.” However, he realized the importance of tourism, and now insists that a successful economy creates opportunity to preserve and transmit Ainu culture. Additionally, in the late 1940s and by the late 1950s, *wajin*, middle men were forcing the Ainu woodcarvers to create stereotypical figurines, such as bear carvings. To survive economically, many made trinkets

as souvenirs. Morita regrets, “I was ashamed of only making souvenirs so that I could sell a lot.” Then he studied authentic ways of carving, such as the special prayer sticks for the ritual ceremonies. For Morita and Toko, they started to work at the ethnic tourism sites to survive. As they worked there, they became eager to learn more about their culture and perfect their skills. This attitude helped them not only to gain cultural satisfaction but also to reestablish their own identity and to preserve and transmit Ainu culture in an authentic manners.

### **3. Meeting social needs: gatherings**

In the process of open coding, I found that “gatherings” were an important part of the maintenance of Ainu culture among interviewees. There are two main sponsors that operate gatherings. One is The Ainu Association of Hokkaido, Inc. (formerly known as Hokkaido Utari Organization) and its branches, and the other is The Association of *Rimse* (classic Ainu dance) Preservation, and its branches. These two organizations support local gatherings with funding to foster their activities.

#### **Togashi Masae (66), female, classic dancer**

Togashi is one of the leaders of the Association of *Rimse* Preservation in Kushiro branch. She was born in an Ainu village but after junior high school, she went to Kushiro city and worked in a beauty salon. When she was forty, she heard about the *Rimse* group, and she really wanted to join the group.

“I was away from my Ainu village, and I had felt empty inside. When I first visited a gathering, I was astonished by how many huci were dancing and singing with joy at the gathering place.” (2008/06/10)

Togashi became a member of the Rimse Preservation group and has now been dancing and teaching for more than twenty-seven years. Her regret is that there are very few young Ainu dancers who want to learn traditional Ainu dances.

**Iga Katsuko (67), female, singer in the Association of Rimse Preservation in Harutori branch.**

Iga is one of the most prominent singers in the eastern part of Hokkaidô. Her authentic way of singing has been highly praised.

“My hard life of raising nine children and working at the seafood packing company changed completely after I joined the Rimse group. I was fascinated to see the Ainu elder’s energetic way of dancing and singing with joy at the meeting.”  
(2007/09/11)

In 1995 her Rimse group received an invitation from the American indigenous people in New Mexico where she sang Ainu classic songs and realized that people could understand each other despite not sharing a common language. This experience gave her pride as an Ainu and also as an indigenous tribe in Japan.

**Comment**

Gatherings include three important factors for Ainu people. First, gatherings represent a place where Ainu gain a sense of belonging, a place where the Ainu can find their sense of identity. Secondly, gatherings are the place where the Ainu meet people and learn traditional skills, such as the Ainu language, classic dances and songs, local Ainu histories, and Ainu cooking. Finally, gatherings are the place where the Ainu experience social interaction and connection. In this section, I chose two Ainu women who attended gatherings to meet emotional needs. Both Tagashi and Iga felt empty through their hard-working days and needed to hang on to something. When they visited gatherings that were managed by local branches, they were amazed by huci's energetic way of enjoying Ainu dances and songs and also their earnest way of promoting Ainu culture. After so many years away from their Ainu culture, both women gradually found their own identities. They felt at home in gatherings and protected from the harsh outside world. Now they are huci themselves, and it is their turn to preserve and hand down Ainu traditional dances and songs.

### **C. How do they go about preserving Ainu culture?**

In this section, I present interview excerpts that demonstrate three ways that Ainu maintain and transmit their culture amid oppression. The three methods are 1) ethnic tourism, 2) storytelling, and 3) local and international gatherings.

#### **1. Ethnic tourism**

**Hirono Toyo (71), female, singer at Akan Kotan**

Hirano's father was a well-known Ainu ekashi and a great preserver of Ainu culture. As she grew up, she was surrounded by Ainu traditional culture. She remembers that her aunt, a huci, stressed to her the importance of maintaining Ainu culture. Now it is her turn to train young people to preserve what she has inherited.

“I have been dancing at the Akan Kotan theater almost forty years. Our classic dance is certified as a significant intangible folk cultural asset, and it is our duty to preserve these dances. During the tourist season, spring to fall, we perform six times a day at the theater. I sing ten songs in thirty-minute performances.” (2008/02/19)

She loves to entertain the tourists and their warm cheers give her the power and motivation to continue preserving her culture. To her joy, her son who lived in Tokyo, came back with his family to live near her. She is so happy to have this opportunity to transmit her culture to the younger generations.

**Shitaku Toyojiro (71), male, Akan Crafts Cooperative: retired executive director**

Shitaku moved to Akan Kotan in 1961 from Shiranuka. Lately many tourists visit Akan Kotan Theater where classical dances and songs are performed, however, in 1961, tourists gathered only at the souvenir shops along Akan Lake. To attract more tourists to watch the classical Ainu dances, he started to have regularly scheduled performances at the theater inside Akan Kotan. Until then, dancers and singers were performing at the nearby hotels under the control of *wajin* tourist companies.



“I was so happy to see many tourists starting to visit our theater. We formed “Akan Kotan Yukar Play Group” and performed “Epic of Ainu Creation.” regularly.”

(2009/03/03)

Shitaku established a basis for Akan Crafts Cooperative that promotes tourism and also people who are in charge of tourist businesses.

**Matsuda Kenji (53), Chairman of the Association of Ainu Ethnic Culture Preservation in Akan, and also owns a restaurant at Akan Kotan**

His father was a seasonal bear carver who worked at Akan Kotan during summer time. Matsuda worked at a sheet metal company in Sapporo right after graduating high school, but when he was twenty-two, he came back to Akan Kotan. Since then, he has been involved in the preservation of Ainu culture.

“Historically Ainu dances were meant for the ceremonial occasions like coming age, marriage and ancestral worship. Therefore, we should not charge for our performances. I love Ainu culture, but I don’t like to sell it as a “commercial product.” Akan Ainu Craft Co-op is for promoting tourism, but Association of the preservation of Ainu Culture is to preserve Ainu culture.” (2007/05/22)

Matsuda points out that while he is deeply involved with ethnic tourism, he feels discomfort “selling” Ainu culture. He also insists that Ainu culture does not mean only perfecting dances or songs but maintaining an Ainu way of living which should be passed down to future

generations.

## Comment

Even though ethnic tourism is perceived as something negative because “a culture is commoditized for tourism,”<sup>113</sup> and as Matsuda says, he does not like to sell Ainu culture as a “commercial product,” tourism can stimulate local economic growth and also enlighten the tourists as well as the natives themselves. Interestingly, among 57 interviewees, Matsuda is the only one person who criticizes ethnic tourism. Hirano who has been dancing at Akan Kotan more than forty years, proudly mentioned that their classic dance was certified as a significant intangible folk cultural asset, and it is her duty to preserve these dances. The official recognition from the government changed the attitudes of many dancers at Akan Kotan. They became professionals who took pride in their performances. As Hiwasaki argues, ethnic tourism involves Ainu cultural expressions, thus playing a vital role in the preservation, and also it helps the revival of dances, songs and certain aspects of Ainu culture.<sup>114</sup> Shitaku’s strategy that moved Ainu performances from hotels to Akan Kotan Theater fostered an essential role of preservation and gave performers a sense of Ainu pride and identity. Additionally, it is noteworthy to tell that according to the *Hokkaidō News Paper*, the classic dances of Akan Kotan, certified by the Japanese government before, were certified by

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<sup>113</sup> Hiwasaki, “Ethnic Tourism,” 395.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

UNESCO in September, 2009.<sup>115</sup>

## **2. Story telling**

### **Shindô Sueko (73), female, house wife**

Before WWII, in the Shiranuka area, where she lives now, there were many Ainu people who spoke the Ainu language in their daily lives. Shindô is one of the very few Ainu who knows the Ainu way of living.

“I am wajin, but I was adopted by the Ainu when I was a little girl. I remember how my grandma invited her friends and they exchanged their stories for hours sitting around the fire pit.” (2007/04/24)

Shindô remembers the Ainu way of cooking, such as their main meal consisting of corn and potatoes and the roots of wild lily. She is one of the Ainu storytellers who performs at the cultural center and nearby schools.

### **Isobe Etsuko (58) female, a chairman of the Association of Ainu Ethnic Culture**

#### **Preservation**

She started to transmit Ainu traditional culture when her children went to high school. They encouraged her to be involved in the Ainu cultural preservation movement.

Isobe recalls a memory of fishing with her father:

“My father was a fisherman. One day when we went squid fishing, my father stopped

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<sup>115</sup> There is a special article of the certification by UNESCO in Piyara. (2009/10/13)

fishing even though there were plenty of squid left. He told us that what we had was enough for us and we should leave some for other people.”

(2008/04/01)

Her father told stories about Ainu values and morals that were connected to daily activities.

**Taira Tomoko (37), female, writer of children’s books**

Taira is a two-time recipient of the children’s book award conducted by the Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture (FRPAC). Her stories can be viewed on the website operated by FRPAC.

“When I was a little girl, my grandma carried me on her back and sang many lullabies.

I loved to listen to her storytelling, and I was fascinated by how many stories she knew. Even though I had never written a children’s book before, I wanted to introduce my grandma’s stories to many children.” (2006/10/03)

Taira wrote traditional Ainu stories which convey important values regarding life and the relations between spiritual beings and humans by using animals as characters. I categorize children’s books, written by Taira based on her grandmother’s story, as a new form of storytelling.

**Ikemura Mihiro (49), male, Shiranuka municipal office: planning financial division manager**

While working at the Shiranuka municipal office, Ikemura was involved in many

events promoting Ainu values. He is not Ainu, but he was brought up with a family who were open to the Ainu people.

“In 2007, at the Ainu Cultural Festival in Shiranuka, we performed an Ainu language play. I wrote a script and acted as a director there. Now I am planning to publish a children’s book of Shiranuka folk tales.” (2008/03/17)

Ainu language plays can be categorized as an alternative form of storytelling that transmits Ainu values in their own language.

### **Comment**

The Ainu language does not have an alphabet, and thus they have orally transmitted literature in ways such as tales, legends, experiences, and morals for everyday life. In *Harukor*, Honda states vividly the huci’s important role as storytellers in Ainu society. Kayano, who learned Ainu language from his huci, describes huci’s stories with “practical bits of wisdom for carrying out daily activities and lessons for life.”<sup>116</sup> Though universal education in Japanese undermined the Ainu language, and very few Ainu can tell stories in their own languages, Ainu values and morals that story telling used to transmit, could be told in alternative ways, such as Isobe’s father telling Ainu values at the fishing site. Taira’s case is very creative. Her strong motivation to convey her huci’s story was realized by writing her huci’s stories in children’s books. Her books can be found on the website of The

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<sup>116</sup> Kayano, *Our Land*, 5.

Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture (FRPAC) and are widely read not only by Ainu children but also non-Ainu children. Additionally, I deliberately included Ikemura's Ainu language play as storytelling, because it is also an alternative new medium of conveying traditional stories. Taira's books and Ikemura's Ainu language play will transmit Ainu values and morals not only to Ainu children, but also to non-Ainu children.

### **3. Local and international gatherings**

In this section, first, I observe Ainu leaders who are aware of the social needs in Ainu society, and who plan and conduct local gatherings for a wide variety of audiences. Second, I examine the international gatherings that raise awareness about the Ainu. I will explore effective ways that gatherings serve to preserve and transmit Ainu culture.

#### ***Local gatherings***

##### **Tokida Iwakichi (81), ekashi (respected male elder)**

He worked on the committee of the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô from 1984 to 1998. He has been planning many events where young Ainu are willing to learn their culture.

“I have planned many fun events such as bus tours to visit places where their Ainu names are still maintained. I also had a special walking tour to hike the wilderness, and while hiking, I introduced guests to wild edible plants in the Ainu language. I also showed hikers how to thank the nature gods before picking plants.” (2007/06/05)

His aim is to plan interesting classes and events, so that young Ainu show interest in their

own culture.

**Uchiyama Fujiko (46), female, instructor of dance and embroidery**

She started an outreach program with her friend in which they visit elementary and middle schools to share traditional Ainu dances and songs.

“It is amazing to see non-Ainu children with bright eyes when they listen to mukhuri music. Since I had experienced harassment at school during my childhood, I cannot believe their open-minded attitudes toward our culture. I am so happy that time has changed.” (2009/ 01/20).

Their activities have been highly praised by Japanese communities and are an effective way of decreasing discrimination.

**Toko Akira (64), male, The Ainu Association of Hokkaidô: Akan Kotan branch chief**

He has been dancing at Akan Kotan more than forty years. His worry is that there are very few young Ainu who participate in their cultural events.

“In 2008, the Japanese government finally recognized us as an indigenous race. I am very happy about this, but at the same time I still feel the strong responsibility to maintain our traditional culture.” (2008/06/24)

He insists that it is important to embrace Ainu traditional culture in their daily lives, and it is imperative to take action to preserve and hand down “genuine” Ainu culture to future generations.

## *International gatherings*

### **Kaoru Morita (54), male, professional Sculptor**

He is a professional sculptor and an owner of handicraft shop at Akan Kotan.

On one occasion, he traveled with a group to Alaska for an indigenous peoples meeting, where he and other Ainu performed traditional dances. Indigenous people in Alaska watched them earnestly and cheered them on. He felt that their eyes were filled with respect. Later he was told that a long time ago, Ainu ancestors sent many gifts to the nearby islands.

“I hated being Ainu when I was young, but this experience in Alaska changed me completely. I was so happy because I became Ainu.” (2007/03/20)

During international gatherings he experienced connectedness with other indigenous people and gained a sense of belonging.

### **Toko Akira (64), male, The Ainu Association of Hokkaido: Akan Kotan branch chief**

He is one of the prominent traditional dancers at Akan Kotan. In 1976, he attended an international gathering sponsored by UNESCO with his theater group called “Yukar-za.”

They went to Paris to perform their divine yukar play.

“Though they could not understand any Ainu language, we could share our history and culture through classical Ainu dances and songs. After the show we had a potluck and enjoyed the diversity of foods from all over the world.”

(2008/06/24)



**Shitaku Toyojirô** whom I mentioned before at the ethnic tourism, expresses his feelings when he performed at Paris:

“In 1976, we took a Yukar play called “Epic of Ainu Creation” to Paris. Parisians gave us more than a fifteen minute standing ovation. I was deeply moved finding that our Ainu culture was accepted internationally.” (2009/03/03)

International gatherings are the place where indigenous people feel a sense of belonging and find their identity.

**Toko Emi (34), Professional singer of *upo-po* (traditional Ainu song)**

She was born and raised in Akan Kotan, where Ainu music was everywhere. Since she was a little girl, she learned *upo-po* naturally simply by listening to her family sing. At first, she did not understand the words of the songs, but gradually as she learned the Ainu language, she learned meanings behind them as well.

“When I came to Tokyo and started to work at an Ainu restaurant called *Rera Chise* (House of Wind), I joined “*Rera no Kai* (Group of Wind) and I was fascinated to see the hucis’ energetic way of conveying their feelings by dancing and singing. It’s more enjoyable to participate in *upo-po* singing.” (2008/08/05)

Now Toko has her own CD of Ainu music and sings at concerts and gatherings. She enjoys playing with other groups, and her music appeals to many generations.

**Matsuno Ayaka (13) and Tokita Hotaru (13), *mukkuri* (mouth zither) players**

They are cousins, and have been practicing mukkuri since they were 8 years old.

“At first, we practiced so hard that we injured our lips. After practicing for about half a year, we could finally make sounds that we liked. In 2007, we performed at the festival and played with a folk music singer, a Japanese shamisen player, and a South American ethnic musician. It was a lot of fun.” (2008/01/22)

Their innovative way of presenting their music helps to attract young audiences and it is a very effective way of preserving and handing down Ainu traditional mukkuri music to the young generations.

### **Comment**

Before the 1950s the Ainu had many family gatherings, however since around 1955, because of the growth of industries of Japan, the number of the Ainu engaged in agriculture slowly declined and many left the Ainu community to urban societies or engaged in seasonal work. Under this social change, it was necessary to plan gatherings to maintain Ainu culture. The Ainu Association of Hokkaidô, Inc. established in 1948, is an organization made up of Ainu who live in Hokkaido. Their purpose is to help reestablish the dignity of the Ainu people. They started to form cultural classes in different areas in Hokkaidô to preserve their traditional dances and songs and other traditional arts such as woodcarvings and embroidery. Recently Ainu language, cooking, and many other fun events like what Tokida introduced, have been added to the organization’s classes. In order to attract young people, who are

scarce among members, Tokida planned appealing tours for the youth. As for Uchiyama, she visits elementary and middle schools to introduce Ainu culture to non-Ainu students. In 2008, the Japanese government finally recognized the Ainu as an indigenous race. As Toko argues “It is imperative to take action to preserve and hand down Ainu ‘genuine’ culture to the next generation.” Gathering is a very effective way of accomplishing this, but they need to plan events that appeal to younger generations as well.

Since the 1970s, the Ainu have sought to expand their community level ties with other indigenous people. They have traveled to Alaska, Asia, Europe and mainland of U.S. to visit other indigenous people. Attending international gatherings helped them to strengthen the collective identity among the Ainu. Kaoru described his experience visiting Alaska as “having changed me completely. I was so happy because I became Ainu.” Yoshikawa says after exchanging ideas with other indigenous people, “I was able to have my own identity as a proud Ainu.” Interactions with other indigenous groups have resulted in progress among the Ainu to recognize the importance of their traditions.

Toko Emi and Matsuno and Tokita’s cases are quite unique. Toko Emi is a professional upo-po singer and Matsuno and Tokita are thirteen-year-old mukuri players. They enjoy joint concerts with folk music players, and South American ethnic musicians, just to name a few. Their musical expression is based on Ainu culture, but their performances express their unique identity that will appeal to many young people.

#### **4. Significant role of huci**

**Amano Shigeki (21), male dancer of Ainu classic dance**

He is one of the prominent Ainu dancers and his dream is to move his audience's hearts through his dance.

“When I was three years old my grandma took me to a classical dance group. I enjoyed dancing so much among the huci. So later she taught me a male solo dance. My grandma is the one who opened my eyes to Ainu culture. She loved me so much and taught me about wild vegetables, the way of Ainu living, and classical dances. One day she gave me a scrap book of Ainu articles from the newspapers saying “be sure to read them when you get old.” (2006/10/17)

Recently he exchanged his ideas of dancing with young Ainu dancers in Hokkaidô. This opportunity motivated him to learn Ainu traditional dances more earnestly.

**Takagi Kikue (60), female, Instructor of Ainu language**

Takagi's mother was a founder of the Shiranuka (eastern Hokkaido) Ainu preservation group. She remembers when her mother started the group and went to visit many huci in town to ask them to become instructors for their classes. After her mother formed a group, some huci taught dances and songs, while some taught storytelling and other taught the Ainu language.

“My mother not only helped teach Ainu people who wanted to learn about Ainu culture, but she also helped elder women, huci, who wanted to transmit their

culture. It was amazing that she was able to find so many buried talents.”

(2008/09/16)

The Association of Ainu Ethnic Culture Preservation in Shiranuka branch is one of the largest groups in the eastern part of Hokkaido.

### **Comment**

In the literature, Kayano explains the importance of storytelling and the huci’s role. He mentioned that huci taught him many life lessons, tales of the great earth and gods. Kayano respects huci as “A superb personal tutor when I was growing up.” Amano, one of the most talented young Ainu male dancers in the east region of Hokkaidô, remembers her huci, “My grandma is the one who opened my eyes to Ainu culture.” It is impressive that huci gave him a scrap book of Ainu articles, so that he could learn Ainu culture and the traditional way of living. His huci was also a great personal tutor for Amano as well. According to *Harukor*, Ainu women preserve their heritage and their identities in their daily lives. Women in *Harukor* contribute in a diverse way to preserve and transmit Ainu culture by teaching songs, dances, embroidery, and their traditional cooking to their children throughout their daily lives. Takagi’s mother is a founder of the Shiranuka Ainu Preservation Group and she intensely studied Ainu culture to help conserve it. Her effort to find the “hidden ability of huci” as instructors, empowered huci and gave an important opportunity for the Ainu to learn their culture in their daily gatherings.

## VI. Conclusion

In July 2008, the “Indigenous Peoples Summit Ainu Mosir 2008” was held at Tôyako Hokkaidô in advance of the G8 Summit in Hokkaidô. There were over 600 participants gathered from Hokkaidô, Uchinanchu (Okinawa), mainland United States, Canada, Hawaii, Guam, Australia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Norway, Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Taiwan and Aotearoa (New Zealand). They gathered to celebrate the change to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by the United Nations General Assembly and to express their profound concern for climate change, the global food crisis, high oil prices, increasing poverty and disparity between the rich and the poor, and the elusive search for peace.<sup>117</sup> Indigenous people that gathered there emphasized the contribution of their culture to the world response to environmental crises. They argued that indigenous culture must be preserved, because it suggests a model that all the world could learn from.

Examining the stories of the everyday lives of the Ainu people in the findings, I found answers to my questions: Why do contemporary Ainu preserve their culture amid oppression? How do they go about preserving their culture? First of all, I learned their emotional needs such as experiencing frustration and sadness because of discrimination, triggered them to have the strength and pride to consequently preserve their culture. The

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<sup>117</sup> Nibutani Declaration of the 2008 Indigenous Peoples Summit in Ainu Mosir

second reason for preserving their culture is to meet economic needs. As one interviewee, Akibe, describes, “a successful economy creates opportunity to preserve and transmit Ainu culture.” Ethnic tourism stimulates local economic growth and improves the quality of life of Ainu people. The third reason that emerged through my application of open coding is to meet a social need through gatherings. Gatherings include three important aspects for “average” Ainu people. First, gatherings are the place where Ainu can gain a sense of belonging and the place where they find their identity. Second, it is where individuals can meet another Ainu and learn traditional skills that help them to fill the emptiness that they face in the real world. Third, gatherings give Ainu the opportunity to experience social interaction and connection. In this sub community, the Ainu find their concealed talent and empower their ability.

The most effective way to preserve their culture is ethnic tourism. Despite the strong feelings some people have against ethnic tourism, “it has had a profound impact on the Ainu.”<sup>118</sup> First, it stimulates local economic growth and enlightens the tourists as well as the Ainu. Second, tourism plays an important role in preserving and transmitting Ainu culture, such as traditional dances and songs. Inside their sheltered villages away from real world, the Ainu nurtured their culture and raised it to professional level. Third, tourism is helping to perfect the craftsmen’s skills and giving them opportunities to develop and maintain their culture. Finally, tourism provides opportunities for political change because of its “visibility

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<sup>122</sup> Hiwasaki, “Ethnic Tourism,” 406.

within Japanese society.”<sup>119</sup> The craftsmen working at the tourist villages became very prosperous by producing and distributing Ainu crafts for the tourist trade.”<sup>120</sup> They constitute a social group and have an important voice in community affairs,<sup>121</sup> and their skills have been perfected because of tourism.<sup>122</sup> Interestingly, most of the leaders who represented the international gatherings are from tourist villages.

Story telling is another effective way to transmit Ainu culture and values. As described in *Harukor*, it played an important role in the huci’s transmission of Ainu wisdom and values. Although universal education in Japanese undermined the Ainu language, and there are few remaining Ainu who can tell stories in a traditional way, there have been innovative and alternative storytelling methods introduced by the Ainu people. Two examples include children’s books based on huci’s storytelling and Ainu language plays based on epic tales.

Finally, gatherings, both locally and internationally, are effective ways to preserve and transmit Ainu culture. The Ainu Association of Hokkaidô started to form cultural classes so that they can teach and transmit Ainu culture to average Ainu people. Recently in order to attract young people, instructors have begun to plan classes that appeal to them and have also planned outreach programs that visit elementary schools to introduce Ainu culture. Attending

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 404.

<sup>120</sup> Peng, “The Socioeconomic,” 745.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 745.

<sup>122</sup> Hiwasaki, “Ethnic Tourism,” 406.



international gatherings helped Ainu people to strengthen the collective identity among the Ainu. Both cases help facilitate social interaction and connection between Ainu people.

I argue that even though ethnic tourism and gatherings are the two most effective ways to preserve and transmit Ainu culture, there are big differences between them. Apparent differences are; ethnic tourism occurs within the profit sector, but gatherings occur in the nonprofit sector; ethnic tourism perfects professional skills, but gatherings perfect average Ainu people's skills; ethnic tourism is more market oriented, but gatherings are more community oriented; and ethnic tourism shows Ainu rituals and culture as entertainment, but gatherings show them in a real life setting. Despite the strong attitude that some Ainu have against ethnic tourism, having been described by Kayano as "a culture [that] is commoditized for tourism," and "display Ainu,"<sup>123</sup> I only found one interviewee in my research who is against tourism. The rest of the people possessed a variety of relationships to ethnic tourism and did not focus on its negative effects. I assume the main reason for a lack of criticism of ethnic tourism is "the Ainu have become more active participants in tourism."<sup>124</sup> They are no longer controlled by *wajin* middlemen. It is noteworthy that most of the board members of the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô who plan and manage gatherings, are involved with ethnic tourism. Ethnic tourism and gatherings are different but intertwined, and serve as the two most effective venues to preserve and transmit Ainu culture to the next generations.

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<sup>123</sup> Kayano, *Our Land*, 118.

<sup>124</sup> Hiwasaki, "Ethnic Tourism," 411.

It is significant to note that a month before the G8 summit on June 8, 2008, the Ainu were officially recognized as indigenous people who have their own language, religion and culture by the Prime Minister's office. Even though Japan is not a homogenous race as stereotypically believed, many Japanese have felt as former Prime Minister Nakasone remarked that "Japan is a mono-ethnic country."<sup>125</sup> Harumi Befu argues, "Conservative definition of "Japaneseness" is supported by conservative politics, which is still very much alive, and in fact dominates Japan."<sup>126</sup> He describes the view of restrictive "Japaneseness" as:

It clings to the idea that there are 'pure' Japanese and non-pure Japanese, who are ranked accordingly. These definitions emphasize the homogeneity of the Japanese in a genetic and cultural sense, ignoring the reality of heterogeneity, and end up being xenophobic, patronizing and discriminating against those who are not 'pure.'<sup>127</sup>

This view of "Japaneseness" that was held by a number of influential politicians resulted in the segregation of the Ainu after the Meiji Restoration. The effect started a lengthy struggle for the Ainu to gain recognition as indigenous peoples. The official recognition in 2008 can change not only the situation of Ainu people, but also correct the long-standing misconception embraced by many Japanese people that Japanese are homogenous.

Finally, to pursue my main purpose, I explored the role of Ainu women, and I found innovative and energetic women, especially huci, who are trying very hard to preserve and

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<sup>125</sup> Mizuno, "Ainu," 143.

<sup>126</sup> Harumi Befu, "Concepts of Japan, Japanese culture and the Japanese," in *Modern Japanese Culture*, ed. Yoshio Sugimoto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 35.

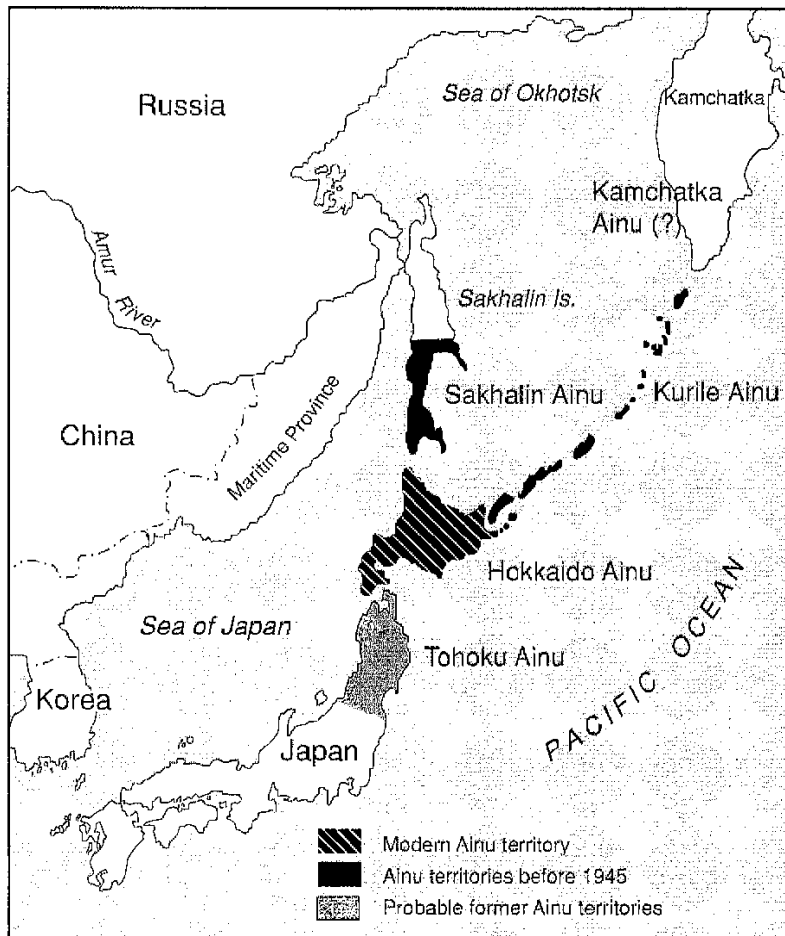
<sup>127</sup> Befu, "Concepts," 35.

transmit their culture: as dancers and singers at the tourist site, as instructors in cultural classes, and as huci (grandmother) teaching their culture in everyday life. Additionally, young professionals such as a writer of the children's books, a professional singer and mukkuri players, have started to create their own identities based on Ainu culture. Along with huci, these young innovative Ainu women play an important role in the preservation of their culture, like the Seminole women who created their own patchwork designs and preserved them as their own culture.

(End of the essay)

## Appendix

Map 1



### Traditional and Modern Ainu Territories.<sup>128</sup>

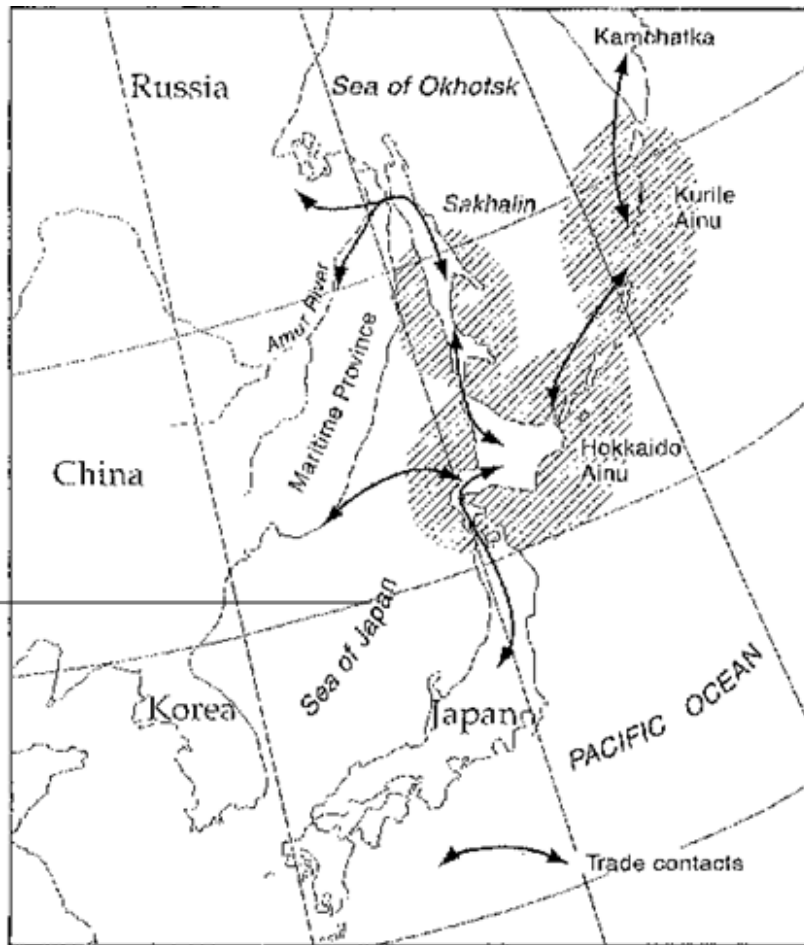
This map shows changes to Ainu territories between 1400 and 1945: parts of northern Honshu were lost to Japanese expansion, while the Kurile Islands and southern Sakhalin were lost to Russia.

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<sup>128</sup> William W. Fitzhugh, "Ainu Ethnicity," In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubrell (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History, 1999), 11.

## Appendix

Map 2



### Ainu Maritime Traders

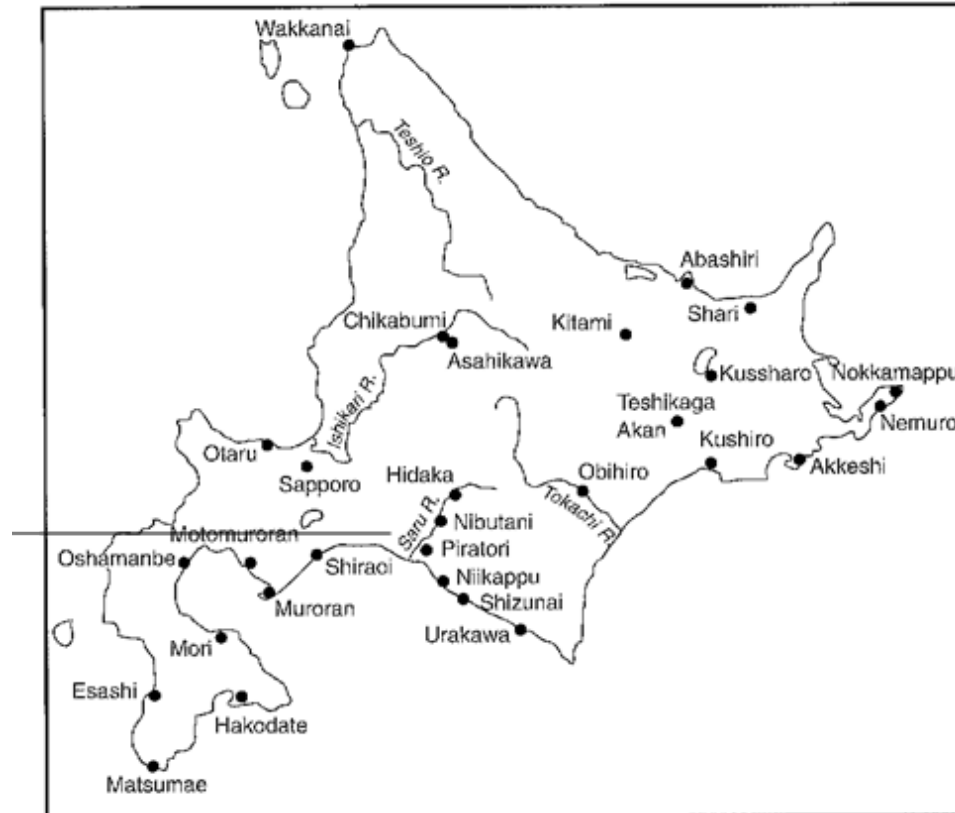
By The fifteenth century Ainu mariners had become influential traders linking Japan, Korea, China, Russia, and Kamchatka. Chinese silk, bronze, and glass beads moved south into Hokkaido and Japan, and Japanese iron, rice, and sake flowed north into Hokkaido, the Kurile, and Kamchatka.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Shiro Sasaki, "Trading Brokers and Partners with China, Russia, and Japan," *In Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubrell, (Washington DC: National Museum of Natural History, 1999), 86.

## Appendix

Map 3



### Distribution of population

According to the “Hokkaido Utari actual conditions survey in 2006”<sup>130</sup>, the current Ainu population in Hokkaido is 23,782. Three large population areas are:

Hidaka area, south of Saru river: 7,530 (31.7%)

Shiraoi, Murooran area, west of Saru river: 6,622 (27.8%)

Kushiro, Nemuro, Akan, area, eastern part: 3,204 (13.5%)

Note: In this essay, *Harukor*'s location and also “*Piyara*” interviewees' location are at Kushiro, Nemuro, Akan, Kitami area, eastern part of Hokkaido.

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<sup>130</sup> Hokkaidô Chô, “Hokkaidô Utari Jittai Chôsa,” 2006.

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