



The Ainu Nation and its Fate in Japan (1945_1990)

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Abstract:

Japan witnessed in the aftermath of World War II general 1945: Deep political and social transformations that included reshaping its national identity and expanding the scope of democracy under the American occupation, but that the transformations did not include the Ainu people, who continued to suffer from marginalization and exclusion, despite the new Japanese constitution of 1947 declaring the principle of equality among citizens.

The isolation of the Ainu worsened during the 1950s, when the central state ignored the privacy of the that Nationalism was imposed on them through policies of forced assimilation through educational curricula and government institutions that ignored the Ainu language and culture, and even considered the Ainu to be merely "backward Japanese" in need of civilization, which led to the erosion of their cultural identity.

The Japanese government ignored it in the 1960s. Twenty Local and international calls for recognition of the Ainu as an indigenous minority, Especially as Japanese nationalism has risen amid economic growth, So development policies in Hokkaido have been used to expand economic control over Ainu lands, without legal recognition of their historical rights to land, water, and hunting.

Ainu activists intensified their efforts in the 1970s, establishing cultural and political organizations to demand recognition as a distinct nationality and criticizing what they described as policies of "forced assimilation" Inspired by that the movements of other indigenous peoples, such as the Inuit and Native Americans, led to mounting pressure on the Japanese government.

Global awareness of indigenous peoples' issues grew during the 1980s, embarrassing the Japanese government in international forums. Especially Following reports by human rights organizations that confirmed the existence of systematic discrimination against the Ainu in the areas of education, employment, and social welfare. Despite that Pressures, no official recognition of the Ainu was issued until the end of the 1980s from the twentieth century.

Between 1945 and 1990, the fate of the Ainu hung in the balance between official neglect and civil struggle. So they resisted attempts at cultural erasure by clinging to their traditional festivals and spoken language, despite limited resources and support. Legal recognition was not achieved until after 1990, when the government began taking timid steps toward recognizing their culture and rights.

Keywords: Ainu ethnicity, origins of the Japanese population, marginalization of the Ainu ethnicity, Japanese government's position on the Ainu ethnicity.

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The introduction

The Ainu people have inhabited the northern reaches of the Japanese archipelago since ancient times, particularly on Hokkaido, the Sakhalin Peninsula, and the Kuril Islands, where they have woven a unique cultural fabric and preserved their cultural and linguistic independence. Their society is characterized by an animist religion that reveres natural spirits, unique artistic and ceremonial traditions, and a tribal social system based on hunting and solidarity.

And exposed that As Japan advanced toward building a modern nation- state, the independent entity was subjected to successive waves of forced assimilation, seeking to dissolve its unique identity into the prevailing norm. The Ainu were gradually excluded from their natural resources, and Japanese educational systems and language were imposed on them, threatening the extinction of their rich cultural heritage.

The idea of this research arose to monitor the fate of the Ainu nation during the period Extending from 1945 to 1990, the book is based on a three- dimensional analysis. The first part provides a historical introduction that traces the origins of the Ainu, their places of residence, the characteristics of their language, and the components of their customs and traditions. The second part then covers three complementary topics that explore the depths of their social reality, the government policies directed toward them, and the cultural and political movement that characterized their struggle during that era.

This study sought to document the historical path that the Ainu people went through in light of the political and social storms that shook Japan following its defeat in World War II, especially after the 15 thdad1945, when it declared its complete surrender. The study focused on analyzing the radical transformations that occurred in the Ainu identity, between the pressures of forced erasure exerted by official policies and the manifestations of cultural resistance represented by community and linguistic movements. I touched upon the study examines the various stages of integration attempts and the relentless efforts to revive heritage, which embodied an ongoing struggle between self- effacement and the preservation of heritage.

Therefore, the research was divided into an introduction, a preface, three chapters, and a conclusion.

The introduction included (**Historical and Cultural Features of the Ainu Nation in the Japanese Archipelago: Origins, Identity, and Challenges**)As for the first topic (**The social situation of the Ainu nation after the war (1945–1990)**)While the second topic was titled (**Japanese government policy toward the Ainu nation (1960–1975)**)The third research dealt with (**The Cultural and Political Rise of Ainu Nationalism (1975–1990)**)The conclusion came to clarify the most important conclusions I reached.

The researcher relied on a number of sources in the Japanese language, due to the scarcity of information and Arabic sources that discuss the Ainu people.

Introduction

Historical and Cultural Features of the Ainu Nation in the Japanese Archipelago: Origins, Identity, and Challenges

The Ainu people emerged from the deep roots of the early Jomon civilization, which settled in the Japanese archipelago around 1400 BC, during a period marked by the development of hunting tools and pottery, and a reliance on gathering and hunting. The Ainu formed a cultural extension of these societies, developing a lifestyle adapted to the harsh northern climate, relying on primitive agriculture and hunting. This preserved their unique identity, separate from the transformations that affected agricultural societies in southern Japan since the third millennium BC ⁽ⁱ⁾.

The Ainu settled in the northern part of the archipelago around 1000 BC, settling in Hokkaido, the Kuril Islands, and southern Sakhalin, establishing independent communities within clan units known as kotan. The social structure revolved around yarapi clans, which represented the family nucleus, led by elders who regulated resource distribution, rituals, and collective cooperation in hunting and toolmaking. They also established trade relations with the Japanese and the Ie peoples. V Nikki Sakhalin via ancient paths ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

Since the 7th century BC, the Ainu have adopted a seasonal lifestyle that is adapted to the climate and resources. They exploited rivers and forests and constructed wooden dwellings called "chisei" built to suit Hokkaido's climate. Men hunted and made tools, while women taught, made clothing from tree bark, and performed tattooing rituals that symbolized adulthood and marriage, embodying the Ainu cultural identity, although these were later banned by Japanese authorities in the name of modernization ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

The Ainu have embraced animism since their earliest times. They believed in the presence of spirits (kamuy) in living beings and in nature. They developed oral religious rituals that were passed down through generations. This was evident in the "Iomanchi" ritual, first documented in 1669. So they raised bears and sacrificed them in a ritual ceremony, honoring the animal's spirit as ascending to the world of the gods ^(iv).

The Ainu language emerged as an independent language belonging to an isolated language family, embracing spiritual vocabulary, wisdom, and oral myths, and forming a foundation for Ainu identity. However, that the language began to decline after the annexation of Hokkaido on 2 September 1869, when Japanese authorities imposed the use of Japanese in schools and administrations, creating a gradual rupture in communication between generations of Ainu ^(v).

The Ainu preserved their language, Ainokuta, until the mid-20th century, continuing to use it within their communities despite pressures. However, cultural modernization led to its rapid decline, threatening its existence as a living language ^(vi).

Many features of the Ainu national vocabulary were lost as a result of Japanese educational policies that prohibited the teaching of their language, resulting in a decline in the number of speakers. However, the 1960s witnessed from the nineteenth century Attempts to revive it through the efforts of Japanese elders and researchers, to document that the linguistic heritage threatened with extinction ^(vii).

The marginalization of the Ainu increased after World War II. On 15 August, 1945, the Japanese government did not recognize them as an ethnic minority in the 1947 Constitution, despite its provision for civil rights. The Ainu remained outside political and cultural representation and were recorded in official documents as "Japanese", with no sub-identity ^(viii).

It became clear to us that Ainu nation I represented a unique ethnic example that has maintained its cultural and political independence for period Long due to geographical isolation and a tribal social structure. However, modernization in the second half of 19th century this led to their marginalization through centralized policies aimed at forcibly integrating them into Japanese identity. Their historical trajectory demonstrates a clear conflict between their original cultural identity and the authority of the modern nation-state, making their experience a model of institutional exclusion in modern nation-building.

The first topic

The social situation of the Ainu nation after the war (1945–1990)

1. The worsening deterioration of the Ainu language and its impact on the Ainu nation (1945_1984).

The Ainu language crisis erupted after the end of World War II in 2 September 1945, when the Japanese government continued to impose Japanese as the primary language in educational and administrative institutions, this led to the marginalization of the Ainu language (Ainokuta) and severed linguistic ties between generations of the Ainu people. This affected the cultural identity of the Ainu, as younger generations lost the ability to speak their mother tongue. Forced assimilation into mainstream Japanese society intensified, weakening traditional social and tribal ties ^(ix).

Rural Ainu communities, particularly in Hokkaido and the Kuril Islands, maintained the use of their language in ritual occasions and tribal ceremonies until 1950s twentieth century and however, the language experienced a significant decline as young people moved to cities and urbanization increased during the 1970s and 1980s. From the twentieth century this prompted researchers and activists to document the language and protect it from extinction ^(x).

Launched on 15 April 1984 the first institutional cultural initiatives in Hokkaido to revive the Ainu language, so Local schools were established to teach children the language and cultural symbols, and accompanied that Initiatives: Intensive academic efforts to prepare dictionaries and curricula aimed at preserving linguistic heritage ^(xi).

Based on these data, it can be said that the decline of the Ainu language was not a natural reflection of social development, but rather a direct result of a systematic cultural policy aimed at dissolving national particularities within the framework of the central state.

2. Cultural and institutional transformations in the course of Ainu nationalism between the years (1977_1990).

On 19 August 1977, the first expanded national Ainu youth conference was held in Asahikawa, Hokkaido. So participants discussed ways to combat discrimination, reclaim the language, and proposed an initiative to establish a community radio station in Inukota. That the event was a turning point in the awareness of the new generation of Ainu, and contributed to strengthening internal cohesion among their population components ^(xii).

On 4 January 1980, the Hokkaido local government approved a pilot plan to support traditional Ainu handicrafts, so Production grants were allocated to textile weaving, wood carving, and the making of ceremonial masks. That the first step of its kind after decades of official neglect of the Ainu's material heritage ^(xiii).

The Ainu Nationality Research Institute was established on 11 October 1982, with joint funding from Sapporo and Hakodate Universities. The goal was to document the Ainu language orally, collect historical narratives, and analyze myths within an anthropological context. Researchers from a variety of backgrounds participated in the institute, and they published the first Ainu Nationality Dictionary in 1984 ^(xiv).

The **"Revival of Ainu Culture"** project was launched on 2 March 1985, with funding from the Japanese Ministry of Education and the Hokkaido Culture Authority, and included: that the project documents ritual songs, collects folk tales from the mouths of elders, and organizes educational workshops to teach children the Inukta language. The first that the workshops were held in the village of Nibutani and continued until the end of the school year ^(xv).

On 27 November 1986, the central government in Tokyo issued the **"Explanatory Note on the Cultural Rights of the Ainu Nation,"** in which it recommended that regional bodies respect Ainu rituals and ceremonial practices in the public sphere, including allowing the

use of traditional symbols in official ceremonies. That the document is the first government recognition of the Ainu's right to practice their culture within the Japanese legal framework^(xvi).

Following intensive negotiations led by Ainu community activists, the Hokkaido Board of Education incorporated a course entitled "**Introduction to Ainu Culture**" into the high school curriculum on 9 July 1989. The course incorporated various elements of Ainu heritage, such as oral history, the arts, language, and social relations, and was supplemented by audiovisual documentation of ritual practices^(xvii).

It indicates that Developments that Ainu nationalism began, during the second half of the 1980s In the twentieth century a transitional phase towards partial recognition of their cultural rights, without any real changes in political representation or economic rehabilitation of the Ainu community.

The second topic

Politics and Government of Japan Towards Ainu Nationalism (1960–1975)

1_Cultural and administrative integration policies towards the Ainu nation.

The Ainu people's efforts began in 1963 with the establishment of secret educational circles within their communities in Hokkaido, so they worked to teach their mother tongue away from the supervision of the Japanese authorities, striving to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage, which began to erode due to unification policies^(xviii).

Ainu knot in 12 November 1967 Their first national conference in Asanuma City, which marked a turning point in unifying their ranks, discussing strategies to confront political and cultural marginalization, and emphasizing the demand for official recognition by the Japanese government of their national rights^(xix).

Popular protests escalated in 1970, so a series of sit- ins and protests were held in front of government offices in Hokkaido, protesting laws that restricted their rights to hunt and gather natural resources, threatening their traditional way of life. That the activities continued until the mid- seventies, which contributed to raising awareness of local and international public opinion about their cause^(xx).

In 1973, an Ainu Cultural Center was opened in Sapporo. So become that the center is a beacon for teaching the Ainu language, preserving traditions, and supporting scientific research related to their civilization, which has helped revive their cultural identity among new generations^(xxi).

The stage was characterized by (1960–1975) As the Ainu nation moves from marginalization to conscious cultural resistance, so the Ainu elites realized the danger of assimilation and took the initiative to revive identity through cultural work and political organization. That the activities were not merely an expression of self, but rather represented the beginning of an organized national action aimed at asserting its presence and gaining recognition in the face of Japanese policies of erasure.

2_Cultural resistance and community mobilization of the Ainu nation

On 5 November 1964, Japanese authorities terminated the last broadcast of Ainu-language radio programs on Hokkaido Regional Broadcasting. The Ministry of Communications justified that the decision to reduce listening rates, however, was viewed by specialist researchers as a systematic attempt to exclude the Ainu language from media presence and a symbolic erasure of the Ainu people's identity in the public cultural sphere. That the decision comes at a time when language revival initiatives have declined, exacerbating the linguistic disconnect among younger generations and leading to the disintegration of the link between the Ainu language and self- identity^(xxii).

The Japanese Ministry of the Interior issued on 18 July 1967 an administrative directive officially prohibits the registration of traditional Inouye names on official documents, such as birth certificates and identity cards. Authorities have required Inouye families to adopt standard Japanese names, under the pretext of streamlining administrative procedures. However, that the decision was met with strong rejection by Ainu intellectuals, who considered it a sovereign tool to erase cultural memory, and a deliberate severance between the Ainu person and his family and symbolic extension in history ^(xxiii).

The Japanese Ministry of Education has taken on 12 December 1972 a decision was made to dismiss a number of Inu teachers working in rural schools in Hokkaido, citing their incompatibility with "**national principles**". An internal report at the time indicated that the presence of teaching staff of purely non- Japanese origins could weaken the unity of the national identity. That the measure sparked a wave of protests within Inuit cultural circles, who saw it as stark evidence of discriminatory policies hidden behind slogans of national harmony ^(xxiv).

On 23 April 1974, Ainu children were subjected to institutionalized discrimination when the administrations of several high schools in Asahikawa City, Hokkaido Prefecture, refused to accept applications from Ainu families. The administrations cited "**low expected academic proficiency**" as the reason for their decision, a flimsy argument that was widely condemned by human rights organizations, which considered it a form of social exclusion based on ethnicity. Educational policy researchers have asserted that such that these practices are a reflection of a centralized nationalist ideology that looks down on the cultural uniqueness of the Ainu and perpetuates the structural inequality between Japanese and indigenous minorities ^(xxv).

3-Ainu Nationalism Between Cultural Marginalization and Identity Rise in Japan (1945–1975).

On 27 July 1964, municipal policies targeting Ainu concentration areas on Hokkaido Island were implemented, so Ainu families were relocated to the outskirts of cities under the pretext of "**urban rehabilitation**". However, that the measure effectively isolated them in marginalized neighborhoods that lacked the most basic infrastructure and services, exacerbating the urban and social exclusion they suffered. That Policies reflect an authoritarian orientation toward spatial marginalization rather than civic integration, and have contributed to the dismantling of the social and economic structures upon which Ainu life was based within Japanese society ^(xxvi).

On 9 January 1972, a proposal submitted by Ainu activists to allocate a representative seat for them on local councils was rejected by the Japanese authorities, who based their refusal on the principle of "**constitutional equality**". However, that the official position ignored the historical context of the systematic discrimination that the Ainu people have endured for decades, demonstrating the state's continued denial of their national identity and political rights. That Rejection was a widespread feeling of frustration among the Ainu, especially in light of their growing political and cultural awareness at the time, and their relentless pursuit of establishing their identity and rights through peaceful and democratic channels ^(xxvii).

Ainu activists launched a 26 November 1974, an intensive media campaign in the local press in Hokkaido, through which they called for a review of educational and administrative policies that targeted their national identity with marginalization and exclusion. That the campaign emphasized the urgent need for official state recognition of the Ainu as an indigenous people, and focused on the need to include their language and history in the Japanese educational curriculum. That Initiative, they entered the Ainu are entering a new phase of their struggle, moving from limited cultural activity to public

rights activism, establishing a clear political discourse calling for the restoration of identity and ensuring social justice^(xxviii).

The Third Topic

The Cultural and Political Rise of Ainu Nationalism (1975–1990)

1_Ainu Nationalism and the Policies of Cultural Marginalization in Modern Japan

On 6 August 1977 contributed to the consolidation of political awareness among the Ainu nation, as it witnessed that History: A large popular conference was held in Shiraoike City, under the title "**Towards Recognition of the Historical Rights of the Ainu**". that the event is the culmination of tireless efforts by activists from the second generation of the Ai movement. Now, they sought to draw attention to the ongoing injustices against them and to demand equal cultural and educational rights. The conference included extensive discussions on education in their mother tongue and ways to integrate Inuit history into Japanese school curricula, marking a significant step toward framing the cultural struggle. In an organized political format^(xxix).

On 12 October 1978, marked the beginning of the cultural and political advancement of the Ainu people when the establishment of the New Ainu Cultural Rights Association was announced in Sapporo, headed by activist Shinkita Masaru. That The announcement is a direct response to the continuation of the policy. TD is crimination and the Japanese authorities' neglect of the Ainu's demands to incorporate their history and identity into the national cultural fabric. The association proposed a political document calling for constitutional recognition of the Ainu as an indigenous people, with a focus on ensuring the right to education in their mother tongue and providing fair economic opportunities. Y Their historical regions. and that the event marked a turning point in the course of modern Ainu political organization, as it began for the first time to link cultural rights with constitutional legislation, which constituted a qualitative shift in the content of Ainu political discourse^(xxx).

Formed a day 3 November 1979 marked a turning point in the path of Ainu media awareness, as it witnessed the launch of the Ainu Cultural Media Association, which issued its first periodical, "**Voice of the North**", as a platform speaking on behalf of the Ainu community. I undertook that the newsletter played a vital role in conveying the suffering of the Ainu to the Japanese media, revealing the discrimination they faced in education, employment, and political representation. The inaugural issue included critical articles that addressed the historical roots of their marginalization, calling for me Reconciliation based on mutual recognition and the preservation of cultural dignity. That the event marked the dawn of a new phase of mass mobilization based on media awareness, and later paved the way for intensified political efforts to confront the centralized government in Tokyo^(xxxi).

On 5 February 1980, marked a turning point in the efforts of the Ainu people to represent their political culture, when the first open conference, **titled "Ainu and Political Identity in Modern Japan"**, was held in Asahikawa City, sponsored by the Ainu Youth League. Participants included: that the conference has a number of publications. Taa Researchers and media representatives, and a political document was presented during the conference calling on the Japanese government to officially recognize the Ainu as an indigenous people with guaranteed cultural and political rights. The conference also discussed the need to reform Japanese educational curricula to include a fair account of Ainu history. Establishment An elected representative body that defends their interests before the state. That the conference brought the Ainu into more organized political engagement and contributed to raising national awareness of their issues^(xxxii).

On 18 April 1981, a cultural forum was held in Shikotsu, Hokkaido, organized by the

Ainu Intellectuals Association, under the slogan "**Recovering the Voice of the Ancestors**". That the forum is a response to growing calls within the Inuit community to revive the language and customs. T Traditional culture that is on the verge of extinction. Touched on in their speeches, the participants addressed the challenges faced by the new generation of Ainu under the cultural assimilation policies practiced by the state since the late nineteenth century, stressing that the restoration of the language is not only an educational matter but an act of resistance. Fierce the meeting resulted in the launch of the initiative to establish the "**Ainu Language and Heritage Center**" in the town of Nibutani, as a starting point for reviving collective memory through education, research, and publishing^(xxxiii).

On 3 November 1981, a protest conference was held in Susukino Square in Sapporo. It was organized by the Ainu Youth Association for Cultural Justice, with the participation of representatives from Inukawa and Atsubetsu indigenous groups. Speakers focused their speeches on the demands By enacting a law to protect the linguistic and cultural rights of the Ainu, they denounced their continued exclusion from the media and official educational curricula. Participants held up banners reading, "**We are not remnants, we are a living nation**" and "**History begins with recognition**". Leaflets were distributed during the conference. Qifiyya About the history of the symbolic genocide of the Ainu, the organizers announced their intention to submit a petition to the National Parliament demanding that the Ainu language be included among the languages protected by law^(xxxiv).

On 14 February 1982, a field campaign to collect signatures was launched in Asahikawa City, organized by the Ainu Education Defense Association, with the aim of pressuring the Japanese Ministry of Education to include materials on Ainu history and culture in the official school curriculum. Tens of these were distributed. T Ainu activists gathered at stations, schools, and parks to collect signatures. They wore traditional costumes and held up slogans such as, "**Without Ainu history, Japan is incomplete**" and "**No equality without a shared memory**". The campaign was met with a relatively positive response from Japanese citizens and students. appointed, the initiative's organizers were able to collect more than 24,000 signatures within two months, which were officially delivered to the office of the Minister of Education on 20 April 1982, amid limited media coverage^(xxxv).

A on 22 June 1982, we held a consultative conference on Ainu identity in Kushiro City, at the invitation of the "**Joint Committee of Ainu Village Representatives**", under the title "**Ainu Society between Memory and Rights**". It was dedicatedthat The conference will discuss the legal marginalization that the community continues to suffer from. With Aino an, and Especially In the areas of collective land ownership, recognition of traditional religious rituals, and the role of the media in presenting a distorted image of Ainu culture, the conference highlighted a new document, signed by representatives of more than fifteen Ainu settlements, calling for the inclusion of constitutional recognition. Inu As an indigenous people under local government law, their culture and language are legally protected. The conference received extensive media coverage, helping to strengthen the position of the Ainu within the national debate on multiculturalism in Japan^(xxxvi).

On 27 September 1982, an Ainu Cultural Festival was held at Kitara Hall in Sapporo. Organized by the Young Ainu Artists Association in cooperation with the city government as part of activities to promote cultural diversity, the festival featured musical performances, folk dances, and traditional storytelling. blood money Performed by artists from the villages of Nibutani and Birka, the festival also featured a scientific symposium titled "**Ainu and Collective Memory: From Exclusion to Expression**", attended by historians and anthropologists. More than 1,200 people attended the event, including officials from the provincial council. Rude Hokkaido, in a sign of growing

symbolic recognition of Ainu culture. Demands were raised during the event for the establishment of a "**permanent Ainu cultural center**" with government funding ^(xxxvii).

A contract in on March 18, 1983, a large political conference was held in the town of Nibutani. The conference was called by the National Federation of Ainu Associations to formulate a unified vision for Ainu demands in the face of centralized policies from Tokyo. More than 60 representatives of village associations and other organizations attended. Rhyme and human rights, along with researchers and observers from Hokkaido and Tokyo universities. The bulk of the sessions were devoted to discussing the "**Act on the Recognition of Indigenous Minorities**", which had been informally introduced in parliament in late 1982. The conference also produced the "**Nibutani Political Document**", which called for I met by establishing an independent government body concerned with Ainu rights, and reviewing educational curricula that exclude their history. That the document is the first collective attempt to formulate a clear political program expressing Ainu nationalism in the post- war period ^(xxxviii).

On 7 August 1983, the "**Ainu Heritage Week**" was launched in the village of Birka, Hokkaido Prefecture, organized by the "**Association for the Promotion of Ainu Culture**" and supported by the Japanese Ministry of Culture. Activities spanned seven days and included educational workshops on traditional crafts such as weaving and for fabrics Woodworking, and oral recitation sessions of Ainu myths, in addition to Holding a documentary exhibition on the historical oppression of the Ainoi people in period Before and after the war. The week also witnessed widespread participation from Japanese visitors, university students, and the media, which was considered a significant success in bringing Ainu identity into the public sphere after decades of marginalization ^(xxxix).

On 12 February 1984, the Ainu Rights Coordinating Council issued a protest statement addressed to the Japanese Diet, denouncing the legislative delay in passing a law recognizing the Ainu as an indigenous people and the continued systematic discrimination against them in education and employment. That the white N Following an emergency session held in Sapporo, attended by representatives of 14 Inuit civil society organizations, the statement called for the formation of a permanent parliamentary committee to monitor indigenous issues and the allocation of independent budgets to support Inuit language and culture. that the demands had limited resonance within Parliament, but it is It prompted some progressive MPs to reopen debate on the recognition bill, which had previously been postponed since 1982 ^(xl).

On 29 July 1984, a major cultural event titled "**Voices from Nibutani: Reviving Inuyue Heritage**" was held in Nibutani Village, Hokkaido Prefecture, co- sponsored by the Inu yue Youth League and Hokkaido University. The event aimed to promote communication between Inu yue generations. and re- Respect for oral and musical traditions that were nearly extinct. Programs included musical performances using the traditional mukuri instrument, and the screening of documentaries about the daily lives of Ainu tribes in the first half of the 20th century. In addition to open discussions between intellectuals ai nu and Japanese researchers on the possibilities of writing Inouye history from a subjective perspective. Media coverage has highlighted that the event is the growing awareness of the Ainu of their role as cultural actors in the national arena ^(xli).

On 17 November 1984, an expanded meeting was held in Kushiro City, convened by the General Federation of Ainu of Hokkaido, and attended by more than 70 representatives of civil society organizations and local councils. Ways The meeting addressed the ongoing violations of Ainu rights, particularly in Y The field of land and forest ownership confiscated without legal compensation since World War II. Participants called for the establishment of an arbitration committee. Especially To consider property disputes related to Ainu lands, and to develop a comprehensive map of the historical areas that were under the control of Ainu communities. Intends Before the imposition of colonial

laws at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was also agreed to submit an official petition to the Prime Minister's Office in Tokyo during the first quarter of 1985, highlighting pressing human rights issues that had not yet been addressed ^(xliii).

On 14 March 1985, an official petition was submitted to the Japanese Prime Minister's Office by the General Federation of Ainu in Hokkaido, in implementation of the decisions of the Kushiro meeting in late 1984. The petition contained a series of legal demands related to the Ainu's rights to property ownership and their right to recognition of their culture as a distinct language and identity in the Japanese Constitution. The petitioners called for the enactment of a special law that would restore the Ainu's status as an indigenous people and guarantee their political representation within national institutions. The petition was met with an indirect official response from the Prime Minister's Office, which stated that **"the government continues to study ways to improve the conditions of the local population in Hokkaido"**, without explicitly referring to legal obligations towards the Ainu. That the response from the Ainu leadership is a new procrastination, which prompted them to call for an escalation of the human rights discourse at the local and international levels ^(xliii).

On 23 August 1985, a major cultural event was organized in the town of Nibutani, Birka, at the initiative of the **"Association for the Revival of Ainu Culture"**, so during the event, traditional musical performances were presented, as well as workshops on hand-weaving and wood carving techniques. In addition to a scientific symposium discussed the relationship Culture the Ainoa in the environment. It represented that the event marked a pivotal moment in the revitalization of Ainu heritage, as it saw, for the first time, Japanese researchers and Ainu intellectuals participate in a joint discussion on ways to document oral heritage and include it in school curricula. It was also announced that Lal the occasion is the establishment of the **"Ainu Documentation Center"** in Nibutani, to serve as a permanent platform for collecting folklore and archival documents related to Ainu history ^(xliiv).

On 17 October 1985, a special documentary program was broadcast on the channel NHK The Japanese film, titled **"A Voice from Nibutani "**, highlighted the daily lives of the Ainu people and focused on their efforts to preserve their language and traditional cultural practices. It included The program The documentary features interviews with key figures from the new generation of Ainu activists, who spoke openly about the social exclusion they face and their misrepresentation in mainstream media. The program received significant attention from viewers and sparked widespread debate in the press about the need to correct stereotypes about the Ainu and expand the scope of cultural programs that reflect the diversity of Japanese society. That broadcasting is a first step in opening up public media to indigenous issues ^(xliiv).

Founded on February 12D1986 the Ainu Youth Cultural Forum was held in Sapporo, with the aim of fostering the participation of the younger generation in formulating a new cultural discourse that expresses Ainu identity in a contemporary way. The forum focused on organizing workshops on oral poetry and training in traditional dances, in parallel with the publication of illustrated booklets documenting Ainu vocabulary threatened with extinction ^(xlivi).

On 9 November 1987, a joint research conference was held in Tokyo between the University of Tokyo and the Center for Ainu Studies, devoted to the inclusion of Ainu history and culture in school curricula. The conference generated widespread academic and media interest. Especially After submitting a proposal to create a mandatory study unit on indigenous peoples at the secondary level ^(xlvii).

On 4 June 1988, an investigative report titled **"Are the Voices of the Ainu Heard?"** was published in the Asahi Shimbun. It highlighted structural discrimination in educational

and health policies directed toward Ainu areas. The report included field testimonies documenting the deprivation of many Ainu families from social services, contributing to the mobilization of public opinion ^(xlviii).

On 22 September 1989, the Ainu Rights Lawyers Association was founded in Hokkaido, initiated by a group of Japanese legal professionals in solidarity with the Ainu movement. The association aimed to provide legal support in land expropriation cases, prevent employment discrimination, and document violations against indigenous peoples ^(xlix).

Crowned that The path was taken on 1 December 1990, when the Japanese Ministry of Education issued a decision officially allowing the inclusion of elements of Ainu heritage in junior high school curricula. This represented the initial recognition by the state of Ainu culture within the institutional framework, although it remained below the level of full legal aspirations ^(l).

2_Legal recognition and the state's shift towards the Ainu nation (1975_1990).

In 1975, a new phase of national consciousness among the Ainu people began when the Hokkaido Ainu Association issued a public statement demanding the repeal of the 1899 Law on the Protection of Former Aborigines, considering it a colonial tool that erased, rather than protected, Ainu cultural identity. That the statement is the first modern document to explicitly call for recognition of the Ainu as an indigenous, culturally sovereign nation ^(li).

The Inouye Associations organized a general conference in Sapporo City. On 28 November 1975 In it, she called for the recognition of collective rights, including the protection of the Ainu language, the return of confiscated lands, and the establishment of an independent educational system. As a result, that some academic institutions, particularly at Hokkaido University, began organizing scientific seminars that studied the Ainu from a legal perspective, which contributed to giving academic legitimacy to the nationalist demands ^(lii).

Ainu demands were renewed in 1976, when a delegation from the Hokkaido Ainu Federation submitted a petition to the Japanese House of Representatives, stressing the need to abolish the assimilationist policies imposed by the state since the beginning of the twentieth century and demanding official recognition of the collective rights of the Ainu. That The petition sparked an unprecedented debate within the Parliament's Home Affairs Committee, marking a political turning point that brought the Ainu issue onto the national policy agenda., This coincided with the issuance of solidarity statements by a number of Japanese intellectuals—including historians and sociologists—emphasizing that denying the Ainu's cultural uniqueness was incompatible with Japan's development as a democratic state. A large-scale symposium, held at the University of Tokyo in December 1976 under the title "Pluralistic Japan: The Ainu as a Model," was one of the most prominent events that contributed to shaping a more open elite public opinion on the Ainu issue ^(liii).

The year 1977 witnessed a qualitative development in the course of the Inouye struggle, when It started **Ainu Youth Association** A massive media campaign, under the slogan "Give Us Back Our Names," focused on rejecting the Japanese names forcibly imposed on Ainu in official records. Articles were published in local newspapers, and radio programs were broadcast, highlighting the erasure of Ainu identity through language and name, raising public awareness. That practices ^(liiv).

A conference was held in Asahikawa City, attended by representatives of indigenous organizations from North America. On 14 June 1977 in it, the legitimacy of the Ainu demands was affirmed within the global context of indigenous peoples' rights. That the event was the first external step through which the Ainu movement coordinated with

similar movements, which strengthened its international dimension and established a new discourse that transcended the borders of the nation-state ^(lv).

The year 1978 witnessed a significant development in the cultural and political landscape of the Ainu people, when the Center for Ainu Studies was established in Sapporo in March, a joint initiative of researchers at Hokkaido University and representatives of Ainu associations. The center sought to document the language and the then-endangered Ainu people, and the collection of oral heritage and material traditions such as handicrafts and religious rituals, represented a new starting point for the Ainu cultural awakening ^(lvi).

On 15 October 1978 marked the end of the annual general conference of the Ainu Federation in Kushiro City witnessed the adoption of a unified political document known as the "**Ainu Bill of Rights**" which included a demand for legal recognition of the Ainu as an indigenous people and the integration of their history into school curricula, and impose official representation for them in local administrative bodies, in addition to protecting their language and holy sites ^(lvii).

And she came that the moves are a response to growing global discourse on indigenous rights, and have received tacit support from some liberal currents within Japan's Ministry of Education and Culture, which has begun to show flexibility in dealing with Ainu cultural issues ^(lviii).

On 1979 saw the Hokkaido Ainu Federation launch a political lobbying campaign called "For Our Voice in Tokyo", so the youth delegation was sent to the Japanese capital to meet with members of parliament, demanding a review of educational policies that neglected the history of the Ainu people. They rallied on 20 March 1979 In front of the Ministry of Education, they raised signs written in their mother tongue, which constituted a historical precedent; this resulted in the inclusion of paragraphs about the Ainu in the official teachers' guide for middle school grades ^(lix).

In 1981, a parliamentary report issued by the House of Representatives' Education and Culture Committee, entitled "Assessment of the Conditions of Cultural Minorities," devoted an entire chapter to the status of the Ainu people, noted their institutional marginalization since the Meiji period, and recommended a review of local laws in Hokkaido to ensure their active participation in public life ^(lx).

The Ainu Cultural Association opened in 3 July 1984 The Ainu Cultural House in Nibutani, a community center for language and traditional arts education, became a meeting place for young activists and contributed to the consolidation of cultural awareness through theatrical and poetic productions in Ainu ^(lxi).

In 1986, the Japanese government allocated the first research grants for indigenous studies, including Ainu projects, accompanied by a media shift. The Asahi Shimbun published a series of articles titled "Erased Identity: The Ainu in Modern Japan," which put public pressure on political institutions ^(lxii).

In 1987, during a joint conference in Muroran, five Ainu associations submitted a formal request to the Parliament's Law Committee, calling for the enactment of a law recognizing the Ainu as an indigenous people and granting them cultural and political rights in line with international standards ^(lxiii).

The Japanese government announced in 15 December 1990: A ministerial committee was established to study the legal recognition of the Ainu nation, considering the move the beginning of a gradual shift in the state's position from denial to partial recognition of the Ainu cultural identity ^(lxiv).

Conclusions

1. Since 1945, Japanese policies have perpetuated a pattern of systematic marginalization of the Ainu people, manifested in the obliteration of their mother tongue within the educational system and their exclusion from social and economic integration.
2. Starting in the 1960s, the state pursued a policy of forced cultural assimilation, aiming to erase the Ainu identity in the name of national unity. Their linguistic and spiritual landmarks gradually disappeared under the weight of these policies.
3. In the 1970s, the Ainu people launched a conscious cultural renaissance, during which they took the initiative to establish institutions concerned with reviving their language and preserving their popular heritage, defying the severity of marginalization and resisting oblivion.
4. The Japanese authorities took the initiative in the late 1980stwentieth century...to make some symbolic legal amendments, which, while representing a shift in the official position, did not amount to full recognition of their rights as an indigenous people.
5. Showed The period extending from 1945Until1990 that the survival of the Ainu depended on their willingness to resist culturally, and on the willingness of the Japanese state to reconsider its monolithic national structure.

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