MARKETING "ETHNIC HARMONY" –

AINU TOURISM, THE NATIONAL AINU MUSEUM,

AND JAPAN'S IMPERIAL LEGACY

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Abstract

As a form of settler colonialism, Japan's imperial conquest of the Ainu homeland necessitated the erasure of the presence of its Indigenous population both directly and indirectly. This ongoing structure of elimination extends to the realms of memory and becomes entangled with the narratives transmitted in tourism and museums. Tourism in particular has long played a central role in the material and ideological structures of colonialism in Ainu Mosir, serving the agenda of different stakeholders. The realities of settler colonialism are often unacknowledged in dominant discourse, affected by settler memory and historical amnesia. This thesis analyzes Ainu tourism and museum narratives with frameworks of settler colonial theory, memory studies, and heritage tourism, paying special attention to the newly established Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park in Shiraoi as a complex site that reflects the historical dynamics of Japanese settler colonial memory in Yaun Mosir (Hokkaido). It finds that Ainu tourist sites and museums constitute contact zones in which official government narratives clash with Indigenous experiences and knowledge, revealing continued imperial structures and mechanisms. Though these spaces are deeply asymmetrical, there is potential for Indigenous empowerment and counternarratives, which can disrupt dominant narratives and subvert settler memory.

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A Note on Style

Japanese terms are generally romanized in the modified Hepburn style. However, in cases where certain place names are well established without macrons in English language uses, they may be omitted (such as in Tokyo or Hokkaido). As there is no standard way to romanize Ainu terms, colloquially accepted transcriptions will be used. Cyrillic is romanized according to the established scientific transliteration system. Non-English terms are *italicized* unless they have entered the English language. Japanese names and Ainu names are given according to Japanese conventions (last name – first name order), unless the person is better known otherwise. Official English translations of organizations and companies may be used if they exist, otherwise translations are chosen by the author. All translations used in this thesis are the author's unless indicated otherwise. If cited authors prefer to stylize their name in certain ways (such as writing it in all lower case) this will be respected. The term Indigenous is capitalized when treated as a proper noun to identify a particular historical/political community with pre-colonial origins or the collective body of such peoples around the world. Similarly, the term "Elder" (originally *Ekashi*) is capitalized when used as an Indigenous title. The term "Ainu" is a collective term for a culturally and linguistically diverse ethnic group indigenous to Ainu Mosir. The term "settler" is used for non-Indigenous peoples that are, or descend from, people that immigrated to settler colonies. This is an effort to accurately describe the ongoing power structures in settler colonial situations, while acknowledging that this usage may be controversial in non-academic contexts.

Ainu-Related Ethnonyms and Toponyms

English	Ainu	Japanese
Ainu	**Ainu**/ Aynu, temp. Utari	Ainu, Ainu-minzoku Hist. Ezo/Yezo
Hokkaido	**Yaun Mosir**/ Repun Mosir/ Akor Mosir	Hokkaidō, Hist. Ezo/ Ezochi
Yamato People, Wajin, (ethnic) Japanese	Sisam, Shamo	**Wajin**, Yamato-minzoku, Nihonjin, hist. Naichijin
Sakhalin	**Yanke Mosir**	Karafuto
Sakhalin Ainu	**Enciw**	Karafuto Ainu
Kuril Islands	**Rutomu/** Repun Mosir	Chishima
Kuril Ainu	Rurutomunkuru (Menasunkur)	Chishima Ainu
Ainu Homeland (parts of modern-day Japan and Russia)	**Ainu Mosir**	Hist. Ezochi

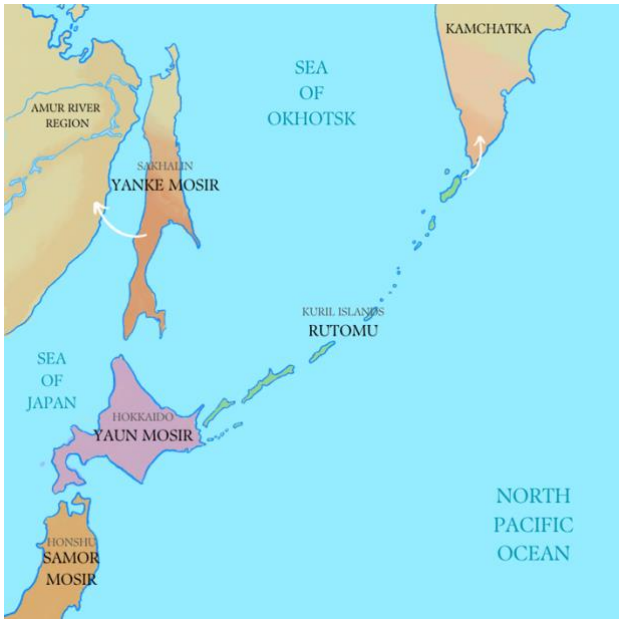
The terms in **bold** are the ones used in this thesis. Endonyms and pre-colonial names are preferred. All Ainu terms are taken from the National Ainu Museum and may reflect multiple Ainu languages/dialects.

Introduction

In the wake of WWII, many of the nations formerly part of the Japanese colonial empire started to decolonize and regain their independence. Millions of Koreans, Taiwanese, Manchurians, and other territories of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere celebrated their newfound freedom, and Japanese settlers in Manchuria, Karafuto (Yanke Mosir, now Sakhalin) and other colonies repatriated. The Potsdam Declaration and San Francisco Peace Treaty reduced Japanese sovereignty to what is now deemed Japan's "inherent territory". Though within today's borders, three former colonies remain: Yaun Mosir[1] in the north, and the Ryukyu and Ogasawara Islands in the South. These remnants of the former empire are not often perceived as such in the Japanese public sphere, and continued discourse of Japan as a "homogeneous" or "monoethnic" country renders its minorities almost invisible in collective memory. Yet in 2019, after decades of Indigenous activism, the Japanese government finally recognized the Ainu as "indigenous people of the northern part of the Japanese archipelago, in particular Hokkaido".[2] Ainu Mosir, the Ainu homeland, stretches from northern Honshu, Yaun Mosir (Hokkaido), now part of Japan, to Rutomu (the Kuril Islands), Yanke Mosir (Sakhalin), Kamchatka, and the Amur River basin, now part of Russia. By the time Japan officially annexed Yaun Mosir shortly after its "rebirth" as a nation-state in 1868, there had been centuries of unequal trade and colonial domination between the Ainu and the Wajin (the majority ethnic group in Japan).

[1] I intentionally use the word "Yaun Mosir" as a neutral term for "Hokkaido", while I use "Hokkaido" to specifically describe the imagined settler homeland.

[2] Ministry of Justice Japan, Japanese Law Translation Database System, *Act on Promoting Measures to Achieve a Society in which the Pride of Ainu People is Respected*, April 26 2019. https://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/en/laws/view/4538.



5 Map of Ainu Mosir

1 Map of Yaun Mosir highlighting important Ainu tourism sites

Although late-nineteenth-century Japanese tended to unambiguously call the settlement of Yaun Mosir "colonization" (*takushoku* of *shokumin*), popular imaginations of Hokkaido history mostly adhere to the euphemistic government-endorsed narrative of *kaitaku*, roughly translating to "development", "pioneering" or "reclamation (of a wasteland).[3] The logic of Japanese settler colonialism in Yaun Mosir is *terra nullius* (*mushuchi*), a legal rhetoric that posits a land as empty and unclaimed to justify colonization, while disregarding Indigenous claims.[4] The eliminatory rationale for this systematic form of dispossession and forced assimilation under the guise of "civilization", exploitation, and oppression became "a distinct feature of the modern form of settler colonialism with Meiji Japan's drive for nation-state building and capitalist development"[5]. *Terra nullius* still acts as the underlying framework of present Ainu policy, with the Japanese government

[3] Richard Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1999), 51; Ueki Tetsuya, *Shokumin-gaku no kioku – Ainu sabetsu to gakumon no sekinin* (Memories of colonial studies: Ainu discrimination and academic responsibility) (Tokyo: Ryokufu, 2015), 125 et seqq.
[4] Tristan R. Grunow et al., "Hokkaidō 150: Settler Colonialism and Indigeneity in Modern Japan and Beyond," *Critical Asian Studies* 51, No. 4 (2019), 603, https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2019.1665291.
[5] *Ibid.*

rejecting the self-determination aspect of Indigenous rights as established in the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Within the Japanese system of settler colonial domination in Yaun Mosir and beyond, Ainu became the subjects of a triad of disciplines: anthropology, tourism, and visual representation (photography/film). These fields are not only connected by their tendency to metaphorically transform people into "objects that can be symbolically possessed", but also by their deep connection to the processes of nation building and colonial expansion in Japan.[6] Early anthropological accounts of Ainu society and culture were often produced by amateur travelers in travelogues, many of those by Western visitors, who understood and represented the Ainu through various levels of Otherness.[7] With the establishment of the first course of Anthropology at Tokyo University in 1892 by Tsuboi Shōgorō, a founding father of Ainu studies in Japan, the discipline became inextricably linked with colonial policy making.[8] The formulation of the Ainu as a paradigm of Otherness –a barbarian, primitive people in need of civilization and modernization brought by the Wajin– through various methods of scientific research effectively legitimized colonial rule and reinforced the imperialistic ideology and agenda of the state. The rise of mass tourism in Japan did not only provide the state with a vehicle for spatial politics through which colonial conquest could be facilitated and justified. It also became a way through which Japanese citizens could make sense of the ever-expanding Japanese empire and their own place within it.

[6] Susan Sonntag*, On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 14; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society in Japan," In: *Beyond Ainu Studies: Changing Academic and Public Perspectives,* eds. Mark J. Hudson et al. (O'ahu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014).
[7] Hans Dieter Ölschläger, "Ainu Ethnography: Historical Representations in the West," In: *Beyond Ainu Studies: Changing Academic and Public Perspectives,* eds. Mark J. Hudson et al. (O'ahu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014).
[8] Morris-Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society in Japan," 50.

In her analysis of travel in the Japanese empire (though she does not analyze Ainu Mosir or Ryukyu), Kate McDonald finds that early forms of Japanese imperial tourism established a core-periphery geography that understood colonized lands as either already or quickly becoming Japanese, and rationalized the dispossession of colonized subjects from their land.[9] Later forms of imperial tourism started in 1910, when the Empire's unequal governing and territorializing structures were no longer sustainable. McDonald argues that the observed change included a shift from the "geography of civilization" to a "geography of cultural pluralism", in which the empire was re-placed as a space composed of diverse cultures and ethnicities.[10] This shift did not happen at the same time in Yaun Mosir, whose imagined place within the Japanese empire was more complicated. Michele Mason argues that the collective imagination of the newly established Hokkaido saw it simultaneously as "a natural part of the Japanese archipelago and a remote, alien land; a promise-filled frontier and an outpost of punishing prisons; a fount of untouched natural resources and an empty wasteland of snow and ice; and a utopian escape and a desolate dead end".[11]

The conflicting character of Yaun Mosir prompted the projection of a multitude of different conceptualizations, aspirations, and narratives upon its space. Although tourism companies were quick to encourage travel to the "exotic" Ainu, especially in Yaun Mosir and Yanke Mosir (Karafuto, now Sakhalin), the Japanese government struggled with how to present the perceived primitivity of the Ainu within their projected image of Japan as a country that was at once "civilized" and "exotic."[12] But on a regional level, local governments and opportune-minded business people were quick to turn Ainu villages like Shiraoi and Chikabumi (now part of Asahikawa) into regular tourist

[9] Kate McDonald, *Placing Empire –Travel and the Social Imagination in Imperial Japan*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014).
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] Michele Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan: Envisioning the Periphery and the Modern Nation-State* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 2.
[12] Morris Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society in Japan," 53.

attractions by the Taishō period (1912-1926). The souvenirs sold at these places, often traditional handicrafts like embroidery or wood carvings, roughly corresponded with the material collected by anthropologists for study and exposition at museums. But the objects desired by anthropologists also included things more "physical": blood, bodily measurements, and human remains were eagerly collected for research, mostly non-consensually or through coercion. Living Ainu became exhibition pieces too: human-zoo-esque "living exhibitions", like the Fifth National Industrial Exhibition in Osaka in 1903 or the Paris Colonial Exposition in 1931 presented Japan with a way to showcase its progress and power by displaying various peoples in their colonies, including the Ainu.

6 Shiraoi Ainu Kotan in the mid-20th century

Ainu approached the subject of tourism with various opinions and levels of participation. For some Ainu, tourism provided a way out of the poverty that the Japanese state had created through forced relocations, exploitative labor practices, and the limitation of Ainu access to their hunting and gathering grounds. For others, the fight against the process of "being made into an object to be looked at" (*misemonoka*) became a main tenet of activism for human rights and self-

determination. [13] For many Ainu and other minorities, the strategy for overcoming this dehumanization was assimilation into Wajin society, a policy that was also promoted by the Japanese government. This meant giving up visible forms of identity, like traditional housing, clothing, rituals, language, and crafts, which had already been threatened and changed by Japanese colonization. This process led to a wide-spread discourse among Wajin about who or what could be considered "authentic" Ainu versus who was an inauthentic "tourist Ainu" (*kankō Ainu*), fueled by the official narrative of the Ainu as a "dying race" that reduced Ainu identity to a frozen-in-time idea of an Indigenous way of life.[14]

But by the 1960s, during the first Ainu tourism boom, self-representation became a strategy employed by many Ainu to overcome objectification. The difference that had been made visual through various means could not be eliminated – but the representation of this difference could be controlled. Ainu-led museums like Kayano Shigeru's Nibutani Museum of Ainu Cultural Resources, opened in 1972, or the Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Museum in Chikabumi, which had already been established in 1916 but became increasingly politicized in the 1970s, started not only to present Ainu culture on their own terms, but also to narrate Ainu history from a point of view that had been absent from earlier representations. The Shiraoi Poroto Kotan, which had long been a tourist site even before being moved to the shores of Lake Poroto in 1965, also opened an Ainu Museum in 1984. In addition, they began to transmit other parts of Ainu culture, like *yukar* oral literature and song tradition, traditional dances, language, *mukkuri* and *tonkori* instrument playing, and other parts of Ainu material culture. However, their activities did not strictly center around

[13] Ibid.
[14] Higashimura Takeshi, "'Tabi' wa izanau — kankō zasshi to shippitsusha dokusha no 'Hokkaidō' to 'Ainu'. ('Tabi/Travel' is an invitation – 'Hokkaido' and 'Ainu' from tourism magazines, writers and readers'" In *Kin gendai Hokkaidō to Ainu minzoku - Wajin kankei no shosō (Modern Hokkaido and the Ainu-Wajin Relations)* (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2021).

tourists, but were also geared towards intra-community cultural transfer. For example, out of the sixteen dances taught to the performers at Shiraoi, only three were performed for visitors.[15]

7 Leaflet advertising the opening of the Ainu Museum at Shiraoi Poroto Kotan in 1984

Poroto Kotan closed in 2018 in anticipation of the establishment of a new government-operated facility. The Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park in Shiraoi finally opened in 2020. The complex operates for profit and encourages "ethnic harmony", under the motto "Let's sing together for ethnic harmony". The project, specifically accelerated to coincide with the Olympic Games, raises questions about whether it merely serves as an orchestrated display of multiculturalism and exploits Ainu culture for its tourism potential, especially considering the historical treatment of the Ainu in Japan.

Government officials have made it no secret that the legal recognition of the Ainu as Indigenous is directly linked to tourism, with Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide telling Asahi

[15] Naohiro Nakamura, "The Representation of Ainu Culture in the Japanese Museum System," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 27, no. 2 (2007), 354.

Shimbun that "having the world understand the splendid aspects of Ainu culture will contribute to international goodwill and lead to promotion of tourism".[16] Scholars and activists have also expressed their frustration about the creation of Upopoy being used as way to sideline and pacify the Ainu desire for substantive Indigenous rights.[17] What does the establishment of such a facility say about the relationship between the exhibitor and the exhibited, both in the past and present? Who speaks in this national museum? As Ainu artist Ukaji Shizue stated, "If the Japanese government wants to use the term 'ethnic harmony' in order to build [Upopoy], it is requested that the government make a formal apology to us Ainu for the historical injustices imposed on us".[18] Only five out of the twenty curators at the National Ainu Museum are Ainu, and the materials presented there have often been criticized for representing a Wajin-Japanese perspective.[19] The need to question Upopoy's narrative is especially pivotal when considering that the National Ainu Museum prides itself as promoting "correct recognition and understanding of the history and culture of the Ainu at home and abroad".[20] In many ways, Upopoy is the culmination of the separate dimensions of anthropology, tourism, and visual representation that have been decisive for mediating the colonial relationship between Wajin and Ainu. It is thus a crucial site for understanding Ainu-Wajin relations and Ainu history as a whole.

[16] "Bill finally recognizes Ainu as indigenous people of Japan," *Asahi Shimbun*, Feburary 6, 2019, archived at the Wayback Machine, https://web.archive.org/web/20190207015109/www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201902060037.html.
[17] Jeffry Gayman, "On Collaborative Ainu Research Initiatives: Needs and Challenges," In *Japan and Canada in Comparative Perspective: Economics and Politics; Regions, Places and People*, ed. David W. Edgington et al., (Japan Studies Association of Canada, 2015), 160.
[18] Shizue Ukaji, "A Quest for What We Ainu Are," trans. Hiroshi Maruyama, In *Indigenous Efflorescence: Beyond Revitalisation in Sapmi and Ainu Mosir*, ed. Gerald Roche et al., (Canberra: ANU Press, 2018), 172.
[19] Asahi Shimbun, "Japan builds 'Ethnic Harmony' tribute to indigenous Ainu", October 29, 2019. https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13059978; Citizen's Alliance For The Examination of Ainu Policy Annual Report 2019-2020, "Upopoi ni tsuite kangaeyō (Let's Think about Upopoy)" 6-9.
[20] National Ainu Museum, "Message from the Executive Director," published July 2020, https://nam.go.jp/en/about/.

With this thesis, I aim to analyze the historical narratives transmitted via Ainu tourism and museums in Yaun Mosir, situating them within the framework of settler colonialism and settler memory. This thesis is divided into two main parts. In the first half, I will introduce my analytical frame and then investigate the dynamics of settler memory, narrative, and counternarratives in Yaun Mosir. The second half is dedicated to an in-depth case study of the National Ainu Museum in Shiraoi. By building a solid framework that connects established theories from the fields of settler colonial studies, Indigenous studies, memory studies, public history, anthropology, tourism studies, and museum studies, I can analyze the development of tourism and museums in Yaun Mosir in relation to Japanese imperialism. Through systematic review, historiography, as well as an analysis of a tourist ad, and some panels at community-run Ainu museums, I will be able to demonstrate how dominant narratives, discourses, and dynamics of Ainu tourism are entangled with different aspects of settler memory. The study of Upopoy will consider the establishment, execution, and reception of the National Ainu Museum by analyzing the exhibition itself and reviewing the public discourse surrounding it, as well as analyzing a number of primary and secondary sources. Through that, I am able to connect the National Ainu Museum to the historically constructed discourses and narratives discussed in the first section. My work is partially based on field work conducted in Yaun Mosir in August 2023 and March 2024, when I visited a number of Ainu-related tourist sites, museums, and exhibition spaces.

Overall, I am able to trace several legacies of Japanese imperialism in Yaun Mosir that structure Ainu tourism and museum representations to this day, and thereby uncover the structure of settler colonialism in discursive spaces and dominant narratives. I will demonstrate why Ainu history is considered “difficult” to represent and discuss. At the same time, I will be able to identify

how diverse responses from Ainu activists, Japanese politicians and scholars, and Western researchers reinforce, challenge, and subvert these narratives in the public sphere.

Five years have gone by since the Japanese parliament passed the New Ainu Policy on April 19, 2019. This anniversary is not insignificant – a five-year review of the law in May 2024 beckoned the government and Ainu activists to review the changes brought about by the law, including those achieved through Upopoy. Additionally, the upcoming 2025 Expo in Osaka and the potential inclusion of Ainu culture in its events have inspired a backlash from Indigenous activists who recall the "human zoo" at the 1903 Osaka Expo – a historical event that, according to these activists, has not properly been reflected in the Japanese public sphere.[21] In this context, my thesis contributes to a growing movement that aims to subvert the historical amnesia related to Japanese settler-colonialism in Yaun Mosir, in an effort to help achieve justice for Ainu of the past, present, and future.

[21] "Banpaku ga kakaeru kokurekishi `ningen dōbu~tsuen'… 120-nen mae no Ōsaka de okita `jiken' to 2025-nen Ōsaka banpaku no sōjigata to wa," (The dark history of the World Expo: the 'human zoo'… What is the similarity between the 'incident' that took place in Osaka 120 years ago and the 2025 Osaka World Expo?) *Chunichi Shimbun*, December 17, 2023. https://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/296493.

A Framework for Settler Memory in Yaun Mosir

Since the late 1960s, the field of postcolonial studies has been incredibly influential in academia, with a number of scholars critically analyzing the lingering effects of colonialism after the formal end of colonial rule. Scholars investigate all dimensions of colonial experience, including cultural, psychological, and economic aspects, and fundamentally challenge epistemologies, value systems, and world views that had been accepted as universal truths. However, as Penelope Edmonds and Jane Carey point out, from the 1990s "a range of scholars began to view the singular category of 'colonialism' as too blunt a tool" in the colonies where "the settlers had come to stay".[22] In short, in settler colonies like Australia, the United States, or Aotearoa/New Zealand, there is no "post" in "postcolonial". This turn is owed to the voices of Indigenous and Black activists and scholars, who have criticized that the specific dynamics of settler colonialism and its impact on Indigenous peoples necessitate the adoption of a distinct analytic framework.[23]

The foundational concepts of the field of settler colonial studies originate in Patrick Wolfe's 2006 article "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native", in which he spells out the "logic of elimination" inherent to settler colonial projects. Taken from his earlier work in which he uncovered the "deep structures of the Australian colonial project", he argued that settler colonialism is Australia's "primary structural characteristic rather than its origins alone", and the logic of elimination seeks to "replace indigenous society with that imported by the colonisers".[24] This elimination can take the form of physical violence or forced assimilation. Patrick Wolfe thus

[22] Penelope Edmonds and Jane Carey, 'A New Beginning for Settler Colonial Studies', *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, No. 1 (2013), 2, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/18380743.2013.771761.
[23] Jane Carey and Ben Silverstein, "Thinking with and beyond settler colonial studies: new histories after the postcolonial," *Postcolonial Studies* 23, No. 1 (2020), 7, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2020.1719569.
[24] Patrick Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era', *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology* 36 (1994), 93, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23171805.

understands settler colonial invasion as a structure rather than an event, a defining concept for the field of settler colonial studies. Rather than the primary reason for the establishment of a colony being the extraction of surplus labor of the colonized, like in regular colonialism, the currency of settler colonialism is territory. Labor is primarily performed by settlers aiming to displace Indigenous peoples from the land, although exploitative labor practices can be an important factor in the dispossession, racialization, and assimilation of Indigenous peoples in settler colonialism, too.[25]

Yaun Mosir, "Hokkaido", and Settler Colonialism

Even though settler colonialism is a special form of colonialism, it needs to be understood within the larger dynamics of empire. As Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein point out, the strict binary separation of colonialism and settler colonialism obscures the ways in which settler colonialism is "constitutively entangled with broader imperial formations".[26] This is particularly important for the case of Japan, where the settlement of Yaun Mosir and the colonization of the Ainu were a quasi "pilot project" for the ideology, policies, and key principles that later characterized Japanese imperialism in other places. As Philip Seaton argues, "A Hokkaido-based view of Japanese imperialism is not […] an exercise in the localization and trivialization of Japan's imperial history. It is a means by which to connect the discussion of that history with the broader global history of empire in the modern era."[27] Despite that, analyzing Yaun Mosir as a settler colony, or even as a colony, is a niche framing within the larger sphere of Japanese

[25] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 4, No. 4 (2006), https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240.
[26] Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, Alyosha Goldstein, 'Introduction: On Colonial Unknowing', *Theory & Even*t 19, No. 4 (2016), muse.jhu.edu/article/633283.
[27] Philip Seaton, "Japanese Empire in Hokkaido," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, 17, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.76.

studies and Empire studies, so much so that Seaton presents this understanding as a "counternarrative" in his 2016 book on war memory in Hokkaido.[28] The Japanese colonial period is usually defined as lasting from 1895-1945, starting with the annexation of Taiwan, thus excluding the colonization of Yaun Mosir and Ryukyu (Okinawa and Amami). Yaun Mosir is often understood as part of the "inherent territory" of Japan, and its colonial conquest is understood as either mere development or reduced to an "internal colony" in the period of "informal empire".[29] This academic disconnect between the history of the Japanese empire and the history of Yaun Mosir renders "Hokkaido all but invisible in colonial and postcolonial research".[30] Within the last decades, this has slowly started to change. In English-language scholarship, scholars have started to recognize "settler colonialism as foundational to the modern Japanese state", and as such, recognize Yaun Mosir as Japan's "first colonial claim".[31]

While the analysis of "Hokkaido" within the framework of (settler) colonialism is becoming more popular in English language literature in recent years, Japanese public and academic discourse is largely characterized by the "development" (*kaitaku*) framework. This narrative, put forward by the Japanese government, honors the struggles of the brave pioneers who brought progress and civilization to a ruthless wilderness, and focuses on modernization and economic expansion. In this framing, the historical and present-day presence of the Ainu is obscured in favor of settler stories. When the Ainu are mentioned in historical writing, the dynamics between Indigenous peoples and settlers are primarily described as "exploitation" without

[28] Philip Seaton, *Local History and War Memories in Hokkaido* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).
[29] Such as Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, eds. *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*. Princeton University Press, 1984.
[30] Michele Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan,* 3.
[31] Kate McDonald, "Looking for Empires: Japanese Colonialism and the Comparative Gaze," *Comparativ – Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 30 (2020), 392, https://www.comparativ.net/v2/issue/view/161.

recognizing the structure of settler colonialism.[32] As is common in settler colonies, dispossession is naturalized as "a necessary transition from the Indigenous past to the settler present".[33] This is largely symptomatic of "settler memory", as will be discussed in the next section.

"Memory for Forgetfulness"

Jelena Subotic and Brent Steele write that "the past – specifically, our memory of the past – informs and makes sense of our present, is a foundational block of individual and then national identity, and is always in the service of political projects in the present".[34] In this context, history and memory are mutually constitutive ways of interpreting the past and its impact on the present. The difference between these two concepts is often understood by identifying their goals. While history is considered to be a more objective, coherent reconstruction of the past based in research, memory is a more subjective, personal or collective recollection of the past, often tied to identity.[35] Individuals retain historical facts and consciousness through narratives told and repeated in social contexts. Subotic and Steele argue that

> Narratives – stories that help us make sense of history – are fundamentally political. They involve choices by the narrator of what to include, exclude, and how to sequentially fit information, such as events and characters, together. If these choices resonate with us, they become our choices and our narratives. […] Individuals become invested not only intellectually but emotionally in the narrative itself. As such, narratives about history implicate ourselves, our political communities and our individual and group identities.[36]

[32] Ueki, *Shokumin-gaku no kioku* (Memory of Colonial Studies), 125 et seqq.
[33] Emile Cameron, *Far Off Metal River– Inuit Lands, Settler Stories, and the Making of the Contemporary Arctic* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 176.
[34] Jelena Subotic and Brent Steele, "History and Memory – Narratives, micropolitics, and crises," In *Routledge Handbook of Historical International Relations*, ed. Benjamin De Carvalho et al. (London: Routledge, 2021), 503.
[35] David W. Blight, "Historians and 'Memory'," *Common Place* 2, No.3 (2002), https://commonplace.online/article/historians-and-memory/.
[36] Subotic and Steele, *History and Memory*, 504.

Narratives therefore reveal much about the structure and dynamics of memory and historical consciousness in settler colonial societies.

Settler colonies are in a constant state of self-negotiation as a "teleological project with the end goal of replacing the (settler) colony with a sovereign polity leaving no trace of the Indigeneity and coloniality that it succeeds".[37] Elimination and expansion are rooted within the ideology of progress, which in itself is verbalized by a logic of exceptionalism that gives settler colonialism a sense of purpose and righteousness. Settlers become "pioneers" that are entrusted with "a daring, necessary and even altruistic undertaking".[38] At the same time, settler colonialism is contingent on the denial of "hidden structures of violence that extend into the present".[39] Lorenzo Veracini explains that

> [S]uccessful settler colonies "tame" a variety of wildernesses, end up establishing independent nations, effectively repress, co-opt, and extinguish [I]ndigenous alterities… By the end of this trajectory, they claim to be no longer settler colonial (they are putatively "settled" and "postcolonial"). Settler colonialism thus covers its tracks and operates towards its self-supersession.[40]

The logic of elimination thus extends beyond the act of colonization itself, pervading the realms of collective memory. Settler memory becomes a "memory for forgetfulness" that eliminates claims for decolonization and memory for past wrongdoing.[41] It is constructed and reinforced through

[37] Augustine SJ Park, "Settler Colonialism, Decolonization and Radicalizing Transitional Justice." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 14, Iss. 2 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1093/ijtj/ijaa006. In settler colonies, "decolonization" often refers to Indigenous self-determination (without settlers having to return to their ancestors' land of origin), which is achieved in part by challenging underlying assumptions, motivations, and values shaped by the colonial power structure. See also Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London and New York: Zed Books Ltd; Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999).
[38] John Collins, *Global Palestine* (London: Hurst and Company, 2011), 34.
[39] Ibid., 35.
[40] Lorenzo Veracini, "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies," *settler colonial studies* 1 (2011), 3, https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648799.
[41] The term "memory for forgetfulness" was coined by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish in his 1987 poem of the same title, before being developed into a sociological concept in Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, "Memory for forgetfulness: Conceptualizing a memory practice of settler colonial disavowal," *Theory and Society* 52 (2023), 264, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-022-09486-0.

several mutually reinforcing mechanisms: environmental design (physical space), connection to the land and nation (emotional and affective space), as well as historical narrative and public discourse (ontological space).[42] The violent roots of settler states are oftentimes whitewashed and softened within public historical consciousness, obfuscated by grand narratives of pioneering, development, and progress.

Kevin Bruyneel argues that "a settler society habitually reproduces [their own] memories of Indigenous people's history," undermining Indigenous peoples' agency over their own histories.[43] Settler states disavow "the presence of Indigenous peoples as contemporary agents and of settler colonialism as a persistent shaping force".[44] The tension between competing versions of history is revealed in memory policy. State actors oftentimes envision the nation "on a pathway towards a more 'settled' post-colonial future that has 'reconciled' past injustice".[45] Indigenous peoples on the other hand tend to use memory as an opportunity to create "not a wall but a bridge" to "draw history into the present".[46] The administration of memory may open up discourse about the interconnection between historical injustices, sovereignty, and collective rights.

[42] Liana MacDonald et al., "Channelling a Haunting: Deconstructing Settler Memory and Forgetting about New Zealand History at National Institutions" *Public History Review* 29 (2022), 144, https://doi.org/10.5130/phrj.v29i0.8218.
[43] Kevin Bruyneel, *Settler Memory: The Disavowal of Indigeneity and the Politics of Race in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 2021), xiii.
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] Sarah Maddison, "The Limits of the Administration of Memory in Settler Colonial Societies: the Australian Case," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 32 (2018), 184, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-018-9303-0.
[46] Courtney Jung, "Canada and the Legacy of the Indian Residential Schools: Transitional Justice for Indigenous People in a Nontransitional Society," In *Identities in Transition: Challenges for Transitional Justice in Divided Societies*, ed. Paige Arthur (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 217.

From Colonization to Development – Japanese History and the "Ainu Problem"

In Japanese academic and socio-cultural discussions, the historical and ongoing issues faced by the Ainu are often bunched together under the term "Ainu Problem" (*Ainu mondai*). This term encompasses a range of issues related to discrimination, rights, and social integration.[47] What becomes clear quite quickly however is that the matter of question in the "Ainu Problem" is less the issues faced by the Ainu, and more the issue of the Ainu existing themselves. It is a "Wajin problem" – a foil to the otherwise smooth dominant narratives and discourses about the history of Hokkaido development and Japanese modernity. Mark Winchester argues that the main problems in Ainu history, or rather "the problem of Ainu history itself" is the negligence of the "*structural causality of discrimination*" in the "*exclusionary inclusion* of people to modernity in Japan", i.e. the unacknowledged ongoing structure of settler-colonialism.[48]

These aspects of the past that are challenging to confront, represent, and engage with are often dubbed *difficult history*, *difficult memory*, or *difficult heritage*, depending on the specific context. The settler memory framework helps untangle the ontological process that obfuscates the colonization of Yaun Mosir in the Japanese context through the reframing as "development" (*kaitaku*). The historical amnesia associated with such a narrative is of course not mere passive ignorance of the colonial past and present, it is a historically constructed discourse that actively engages with competing memories and histories. Tozawa Emi finds that public reception of academic works dealing with Japanese colonial history will often be limited by "active silencing and attacks from nationalistic groups".[49] As Roslynn Ang suggests, "settler colonialism is the

[47] See Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, 68-69, 161, 165, 168-173.
[48] Mark Winchester, "Everything You Know About Ainu Is Wrong: Kobayashi Yoshinori's Excursion Into Ainu Historiography," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 9(22), No. 1 (2011); italics in the original, https://apjjf.org/2011/9/22/mark-winchester/3538/article.
[49] Tozawa Emi, "Can It Be a Gamechanger? Interrogating the Prospects of Decolonization Through Public History in Japan," *International Public History* (2024): 4, https://doi.org/10.1515/iph-2024-2001.

structure that sets the conditions for seeing and not seeing the Indigenous Ainu, or defining who counts and who does not count as Ainu, or determining which history or culture counts as Ainu".[50]

Tatsiana Tsagelnik speaks of the use of "coded terms" in this context, arguing that official discourse will intentionally avoid terms with negative connotations in favor of those that will not *overtly* be anti-Ainu "as a means for the discourse of silencing".[51] The development narrative acts as the foundation upon which interactions between the Ainu community, the public, and the government are built to this day, which is to say that settler narratives and Ainu narratives of history oftentimes clash. This is exemplified by an occasion in 2018, when Ainu representatives asked for land rights and an apology from the Japanese government. Koyama Hiroshi of the government's Comprehensive Ainu Policy Office replied that "an apology would be uncomfortable for many Japanese, as well as an insult to the Japanese settlers who built modern Hokkaido […] It would focus people's attention on the bad things that happened and not the future".[52] This dynamic will be discussed further in the following chapters.

Historical Amnesia, Settler Identity, and Tourism

One of the main goals of this thesis is not only to demonstrate how clashing narratives of history become visible in tourism and museums in Yaun Mosir, but how the erasure of Ainu history and connection to the land is deeply entangled with tourism. Tourism here is understood as the

[50] Roslynn Ang, "Whose Difficult Heritage? Contesting Indigenous Ainu Representations," in *Frontiers of Memory in the Asia-Pacific: Difficult Heritage and the Transnational Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism*, ed. Shu-Mei Huang et al. (Hong Kong: HKU Press, 2022), 48.
[51] Tatsiana Tsagelnik, "Discourse of Silencing in the Context of the 150th Anniversary of the Naming of Hokkaido : Representation of Ainu- Wajin Relations in the Television Drama "Eternal Nispa, the Man Who Named Hokkaido, Matsuura Takeshiro," *Identity and Cultural Icons in a Multicultural World : Ethnicity, language, nation* (2020), 128, http://hdl.handle.net/2115/77222.
[52] Tim Kelly, "Japan builds 'Ethnic Harmony' tribute to indigenous Ainu," *Reuters – The Wider Image*, Oct 30, 2019, https://widerimage.reuters.com/story/japan-builds-ethnic-harmony-tribute-to-indigenous-ainu.

"activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment", primarily for leisure but also for other purposes.[53] I will intentionally not define a specific distance a person has to travel to be counted as a tourist because tourist activity such as visits to heritage sites can be undertaken by locals as well. Heritage sites are cultural landmarks, historic sites, or natural landscape that a society or culture views as important for their heritage. Heritage is a "set of attitudes to, and relationships with, the past" that can anchor and partially fix memory.[54] Heritage tourism then is the "experience of traveling to places and taking part in activities that aim to represent the stories and the people of the past".[55] If heritage is difficult –connected to traumatic memories of violence or oppression– the "politics of determining what to commemorate and what to obscure or forget means that repackaging the difficult past as 'heritage' typically involves shoring up the imagined frontiers that divide communities".[56]

The settler colonial ambition is to present settled land as a resource to be possessed. For this purpose, tourism can reframe the history of a place and the people within it, creating new identities for colonizers and colonized. Grimwood et al. argue that in a situation of *terra nullius*, "frontier logics code Indigeneity as an obstacle to be overcome, relocated, or erased completely to ensure development, while some 'original', 'wild' lands are set aside for conservation, science, and tourism".[57] Johan Edelheim writes of a touristic *terra nullius*, created by "focus on attractions as objects in the present", which "disregards what has existed in the past" and thus nullifies alternative

[53] Allan Beaver, *A Dictionary of Travel and Tourism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[54] Shu-Mei Huang et al., "Introduction" In *Frontiers of Memory in the Asia-Pacific: Difficult Heritage and the Transnational Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism*, ed. Shu-Mei Huang et al. (Hong Kong: HKU Press, 2022), 7.
[55] Katrina Phillips, *Staging Indigeneity – Salvage Tourism and the Performance of Native American History* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2021), 16.
[56] *Ibid*., 8.
[57] Bryan Grimwood et al., "A decolonizing settler story," *Annals of Tourism Research* 79 (2019), 3, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.102763.

interpretations.[58] He argues that this is done by redefining history as beginning with the arrival of the settlers, effectively "writing out" Indigenous peoples in touristic texts.

Through the effort of reinscribing land relationships in a way that erases Indigenous presence and legitimizes colonization, settlers create "settler identities" that are centered around relationships to the land, cultural practice, and shared ambitions. Emma Lowman and Adam Barker argue that settler identity is further characterized by "disavowal", or the condition of settlers benefiting from "dispossession and destruction of Indigenous peoples" while "denying complicity in the events and processes that make that happen".[59] As such, settlers tend to ignore the history and perpetuation of settler colonialism their country is built upon. Fortin et al. write that settler colonial dispossession "occurs through complex, mutually reinforcing elements", with tourism being an "especially significant context within which colonial identities and meanings of land circulate".[60] Grimwood et al. dub the narratives that transform settler colonial violence into heroic struggle "settler stories". Settler stories further characterize the history of settler-Indigenous relationships as one of compassion, internationally presenting the government as "peacemakers".[61]

Both narratives are based on a third condition: the modernist entitlement to make Indigenous lands and peoples "knowable", a manifestation of the desire for authorization and control.[62] This has also been pointed out by Edward Said, who argues that travel books are one of the main tools for the construction of the Western idea of the Orient, "the idea in either case is that people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or

[58] Johan Richard Edelheim, "A Touristic Terra Nullius," In *The Racial Politics of Bodies, Nations and Knowledges*, ed. Barbara Baird and Damien W. Riggs (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 47.
[59] Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker, *Settler – Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2015), 15-16.
[60] Kendra E. Fortin et al., "Land, Settler identity, and tourism memories," *Annals of Tourism Research* 91 (2021), 2, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2021.103299.
[61] Grimwood et al., "A decolonizing settler story," 3.
[62] *Ibid*.

text) acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes."[63] Settler colonialism, and tourism as its tool, reinscribe not only settler identities, but also Indigenous identities.

Tourism is a site where the paradoxical nature of Indigeneity becomes most visible: Settler colonialism attempts to erase the distinction between colony and metropole by eliminating Indigenous peoples, often through genocide or assimilation, but the Othering mechanisms of tourism reinscribe ethnic difference visually. The contradictory conceptions of Indigeneity often lead to the belief that Indigenous people will soon vanish in the face of modernity and assimilation. Katrina Phillips argues that this can lead to "salvage tourism", which "combines the theoretical framework of salvage ethnography with the practices and yearnings of heritage tourism"[64]. Similar to salvage ethnography, which desires to save and preserve Indigenous cultures for the benefit of the colonizers, salvage tourism "builds on ideas of a nostalgic past through the nation-building practices of tourism"[65]. In this context, history is conveyed "in a way that seeks to secure the unadulterated and uncontaminated past"[66]. This allows non-Indigenous peoples to "to travel and see the wilderness through the eyes of a genteel vacationer, not a violent conqueror".[67] Salvage tourism "requires transformation and reinterpretation; in this sense, it is the commodification of a distinct historical narrative around Euro-American ideas of the loss of Indigenous history and culture".[68] Indigenous tourism thus tends to replace violent pasts with imaginaries, anachronizing Indigeneity to parallel romantic and exotic tropes carried by tourists.[69] The Indigenous identity

[63] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978), 88.
[64] Phillips, *Staging Indigeneity*, 16.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *Ibid*, 20.
[67] *Ibid*., 21.
[68] *Ibid*.
[69] Bruce Erickson, "Anachronistic others and embedded dangers –Race and the logic of whiteness in nature tourism" In *New Moral Natures in Tourism*, ed. By Brian Grimwood et al. (London: Routledge, 2018).

performed for tourists may be an abstracted, frozen-in-time concept of ethnic Otherness that is ready to be commercialized.[70]

Self-Representation, Counter-Narrative, and Museums

Narratives are not simply unidirectional ways to make, de-make, or re-make the peoples and places and histories of a given region – counter storytelling can also function as a form of resistance.[71] Indigenous peoples can interrupt settler narratives and present counter-narratives by re-centering themselves in their own narratives and re-affirming their connections to the land. Huang et al. use the concept of "frontiers of memory" to describe "shifting, indeterminate zones of contestation between rival narratives—spaces where heritage actors vie to plant their flags and stake their claims".[72] Yaun Mosir is a geographic frontier for Japan – an area of change, expansion, and forward movement – but also a mnemonic frontier. Mary Louise Pratt describes this as a "contact zone", deeply asymmetrical spaces in which a "dominant" culture provides a "negotiated space" for cultural exchange, discussion, and the negotiation of power relations and shared histories.[73]

One strategy for negotiating memory and historical narrative in tourism is through museums, which are central to the cultural dimension of today's consumerist tourist industry. In museums and tourism, Indigenous peoples, their culture, and history are on display – throughout the history of colonialism, this often includes human zoos. Ainu activists tend to call this form of

[70] Dean MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds –The Tourist Papers* (London: Routledge, 1984).
[71] Grimwood et al., "A decolonizing settler story," 2.
[72] Shu-Mei Huang et al., "Introduction," 14.
[73] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis Group, 1992).

objectification *misemonoka* – being made into an object to be looked at.[74] Museums are not neutral spaces; rather, they serve as platforms for the presentation of political and social constructions influenced by colonial ideologies. In Japan, they are directly tied to the process of modernization, colonization, and imperialism, originally serving as spaces to reimagine state, society, and colonial subjects in the late nineteenth century. Their methods of collection and display were used to legitimize and confirm their colonial conquest of other cultures.[75]

Museums have the power to establish and delimit knowledge and historical narrative; their purpose is to "tell the story of a nation's past and confirm its present importance".[76] In settler colonial structures, they provide avenues for disseminating the typical grand narratives of development, pioneer struggle, and progress, while Indigenous presence is reduced to silent figures – objects rather than subjects of history. Ironically, some settler-colonies also use Indigenous culture to define their new settler identity. As Jeremy Beckett writes for the case of Australia,

> Meanwhile, having separated Aboriginal culture from living people – or all but a few very old individuals who would 'soon die out' – Anglo-Australians could enshrine it in museums and libraries as part of the national heritage they were 'discovering' in the process of differentiating the Australian nation from that of the 'Mother Country.[77]

This means that many Indigenous people have mixed emotions about museums – on the one hand, museums are tied to the trauma of colonization, but on the other, they are directly linked to pre-colonial life and traditions. Bryony Onciul argues that is this specifically this "paradoxical

[74] Morris-Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society," 55. The word "*misemono*" means "spectacle" and is at least semantically related to Tokugawa-era "*misemono*" displays that operated similarly to cabinets of curiosities or freak shows.
[75] Aso Noriko, *Public Properties: Museums in Imperial Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).
[76] James Cuno, *Who Owns Antiquity?: Museums and the Battle over Our Ancient Heritage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), xix.
[77] Jeremy Beckett, "Aboriginality in a Nation-State" In *Ethnicity and Nation-building In the Pacific*, ed. M.C. Howard (Tokyo: United Nations University, 1989), 129.

duality of their roles" that "makes museums key sites for post-colonial debate, as they embody colonial narratives whilst having the potential to decolonise the history of former colonial states".[78]

James Clifford recognizes the discursive nature of museums and, referring to Pratt's concept, argues that viewing museums as contact zones means that "their organizing structure as a collection becomes an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship—a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull".[79] Rather than mere repositories for colonial objects, museums can be places for communication, collaboration, and negotiation. The contact zone concept has become widely influential in museology since the 1990s, with many museums promoting their "post-colonial" status, realized through inclusionist programs in exhibitions and collaboration with Indigenous stakeholders.[80] However, the recognition of museums as asymmetric spaces is often neglected in these optimistic appropriations of the concept. While it encourages discussion, the institution is ultimately not challenged in its role as an authoritative educator on "the Other". As Robin Boast argues in his critique of museums as contact zones, while the "periphery" may momentarily gain something from this collaboration, the power and control essentially lies with the museum, which is by and for the "core".[81] He writes that because it continues to display and narrate through hegemonic standards, the "new museum, the museum as contact zone, is and continues to be used instrumentally as a means of masking far more fundamental asymmetries, appropriations, and biases".[82]

[78] Bryony Onciul, *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice – Decolonizing Engagement* (London: Routledge, 2015), 26.
[79] James Clifford, *Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 192-193.
[80] Robin Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited," *Museum Anthropology* 34, No. 1 (2011), 56.
[81] *Ibid.,* 65-66.
[82] *Ibid.,* 67.

This control is especially obvious in the case of national museums, which play an important role for how subjects view themselves and their place in the nation, and reinforce settler versions of history. Magdalena H Gross and Luke Terra define "difficult history" as "periods that reverberate in the present and surface fundamental disagreements over who we are and what values we hold"[83]. They argue that modern history was designed to be part of the larger nation-building efforts and strengthen grand narratives of the nation-state. Difficult histories, despite oftentimes being central to a nation's history, are difficult because they challenge and undermine "dominant societal narratives" und national myths.[84] Exhibitions at national museums oftentimes advance settler memory and forgetting that suppress violent, difficult histories of settler colonialism in favor of affective relationships to the new land.[85] When national museums display Indigenous histories, difficult histories are often communicated as a "harmonious and historically resolved view of Indigenous-settler relations".[86]

On the other hand, community-run Indigenous cultural centers and museums may more closely represent a less asymmetrical contact zone in which Indigenous peoples can tackle social injustices and counter dominant narratives while successfully participating in the economic sphere through tourism.[87] However, as Aina Pubill Ambros and Christine Buzinde point out, at such centers, there is a tension between "a need to draw on marketing essentialisms that lure customers" and "the will to engage in the political decolonial exercise of asserting agency and rewriting

[83] Magdalena H. Gross and Luke Terra, "What makes difficult history difficult?", *Kappan,* Feature Article (2018) https://kappanonline.org/gross-what-makes-difficult-history-difficult/.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Liana MacDonald et al., "Channelling a Haunting", 144.
[86] *Ibid.*, 153.
[87] Marisa Elena Duarte, "Connected Activism: Indigenous Uses of Social Media for Shaping Political Change," *Australasian Journal of Information Systems* 21 (2017), https://doi.org/10.3127/ajis.v21i0.1525.

historical erasures".[88] Addressing difficult histories in museums and cultural centers is thus incredibly complex, deeply entangled with settler colonial dynamics, and challenging to do in a way that does not completely alienate settler visitors.

Julia Rose clarifies that difficult histories are something that every form of public history needs to tackle.[89] This is an opportunity for creating tangible change in the present: "in reconsidering a difficult history, learners might recognize that the historical social issues described in the interpretation presented can inspire social justice action and education in the present".[90] Rose puts forward that both interpreters/history workers and visitors are "learners" that need to come to terms with these histories in five stages: reception, resistance, repetition, reflection, and reconsideration.[91] As such, museums can become shared spaces in which people can approach these difficulties together. Rose suggests how museums can ethically interpret difficult histories through their narratives. Narratives should be multidimensional, use an active, purposeful tone that describes why history matters, and encourage visitors to be empathetic. They should "emphasize the personhood of the historical individuals and groups; critically research historical content to include multiple perspectives", and encourage dialogue.[92] She recommends institutions and history practitioners to make commitments to "authentic concern and interest in the history to avoid voyeuristic spectacles and exploitative representations".[93]

[88] Aina Pubill Ambros and Christine Buzinde, "Indigenous self-representations in the touristic sphere," *Annals of Tourism Research* 86 (2021), 2, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.103099.
[89] Julia Rose, *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016),
[90] *Ibid.*, 49.
[91] *Ibid.*, 78.
[92] *Ibid.*, 169.
[93] *Ibid.*

The "Ainu as a Situation" – Ainu Tourism, Museums, and Difficult Heritage

In 1973, Ainu poet and writer Sasaki Masao wrote that

> What we are facing now is neither the 'Ainu' as a race (*jinshu*), nor the 'Ainu' as a people (*minzoku*), but simply 'Ainu' as a situation (*jōkyō*) – a situation in which people call us 'Ainu' and the meaning of that 'Ainu' comes to constrain our lives.[94]

His understanding is emblematic of the essence of what makes Ainu representation a point of contention in the frontier of memory. The "difficult heritage" is not that of the Ainu, it is of the colonizers, who encode Indigeneity as an obstacle to overcome. After all, as Patrick Wolfe wrote, under the eliminatory logic of settler colonialism, "to get in the way, all the Native has to do is stay at home".[95] Sasaki's recognition of the Ainu as a situation describes the inherent conflict of the Ainu in modern Japan – the colonization of Yaun Mosir had irretrievably altered Ainu society, but what it meant to be Ainu in modern Japan was forever defined by the Wajin imagination. Just like the "Ainu problem" is really a Wajin problem, Yaun Mosir's difficult history is actually the inherent difficulty that the Ainu pose for popular imaginations of Yaun Mosir as *Hokkaido*. Tourism as a production site for colonial identities and meanings of land then becomes a site where this difficulty is articulated most clearly.

In the early phases of colonial Hokkaido, tourism served as a vehicle through which Wajin could come to understand the new frontier as part of *naichi*, the Japanese homeland. At the same time, it was the primary way through which Wajin, both settlers and visitors, could encounter the Indigenous Ainu population. As ann-elise lewallen argues, "Ainu have been synonymous with Hokkaido in the tourist imagination since […]1789", even before the formal annexation of Yaun

[94] Translation via Mark Winchester, "On The Dawn Of A New National Ainu Policy: The 'Ainu As A Situation' Today," *The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus* 7, Iss. 41, No. 3 (2009), https://apjjf.org/mark-winchester/3234/article.
[95] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 38.

Mosir in 1869.[96] Narratives of the Ainu, their past, and their future reflect a variety of facets of settler colonial elimination, becoming a discursive tool. However, the production of knowledge through discourse is not unidirectional, and as a contact zone, tourism provides an (unequal) space in which Ainu can participate in discourse and negotiate their representation. Katarina Sjöberg argues that because of their nature as places where Ainu put themselves, their culture, and history "on display", "tourist villages also function as a sort of public sphere for the Ainu".[97] Ainu tourist sites and museums are tightly interwoven as spaces in the frontier of memory, as Lisa Hiwasaki argues, museums are "one of the most vital sources of constructing images of the Ainu".[98]

Ainu and Tourism in the Public Sphere

The concepts of "Ainu" and "tourism" are closely interconnected in the Wajin imagination. According to Lisa Hiwasaki, "many Japanese consider tourism as the primary occupation in which Ainu people are, or can be, engaged".[99] Ainu tourism and museums are sites where Ainu are hyper-visible and thus serve as avenues for discourse and negotiation of narrative and memory. But because of that, the very nature of Ainu tourism and museums becomes a subject of popular discourse in the Japanese public sphere. Several debates related to tourism have been continuously present in popular discourse, particularly the notions of authenticity versus commodification and the criticism of so-called "*kankō* Ainu" (tourist Ainu). These interact with the larger discussions on

[96] ann-elise lewallen, "Signifying Ainu Space: Reimagining Shiretoko's Landscapes through Indigenous Ecotourism", *Humanities* 5, No. 49 (2016), 7, https://doi.org/10.3390/h5030059.
[97] Katarina Sjöberg, *The Return of Ainu: Cultural mobilization and the practice of ethnicity in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1993), 17.
[98] Lisa Hiwasaki, "Ethnic Tourism in Hokkaido and the Shaping of Ainu Identity," *Pacific Affairs* 73, No. 3 (2000), 402, http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2672026.
[99] *Ibid*.

colonization versus development and assimilation versus resistance, and are associated with continuing historical amnesia through the notion of settler memory.

In this chapter, I will discuss Ainu tourism and museums in the context of settler memory and historical amnesia, not only analyzing historical narrative (or lack thereof) transmitted in Ainu tourist literature, cultural centers, and museums, but also trace the discourse *surrounding* Ainu tourism as a site for the manifestation of settler memory. Through a systematic review of the development of tourism and museums in Yaun Mosir in the context of Japanese settler colonialism, the analysis of a tourist ad, and consideration of the dominant discourses surrounding Ainu tourism and museums, I will demonstrate how current dynamics of settler memory were constructed throughout history, and how tourism and museums are used to stake claims in the frontier of memory.

Building on the work of Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Lisa Hiwasaki, Saito Reiko, and Sidney Cheung, it is possible to identify four key phases of Ainu tourism, each of them connected to distinct but interrelated discourses that negotiate the interpretation and representation of Ainu heritage.[100] The first phase in pre-war Japan served to rationalize the colonization of Yaun Mosir and the exploitation and assimilation of the Ainu. The Ainu were defined as "primitive" and in need of help and "protection" by Wajin that would "develop" their land and turn them into civilized members of the imperial nation. In post-war Japan, most importantly during the first Ainu boom of the 1950s and 1960s, salvage tourism helped further historical amnesia by imagining Ainu as still

[100] Morris-Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society"; Hiwasaki, "Ethnic Tourism in Hokkaido and the Shaping of Ainu Identity"; Saito Reiko, "Hokkaidō kankō an'nai no naka no Ainu bunka shōkai no hensen: Shōwa-ki no ryokō an'nai Hokkaidō shōkai kiji no kōsatsu o tōshite,"(The transition of the introduction of Ainu culture in Hokkaido tourist guidebooks: through the examination of travel guidebooks and articles introducing Hokkaido in the Showa period), *Showa Women's University Institute of International Culture Bulletin* 6 (2000); Sidney Cheung, "Change of Ainu images in Japan: A reflexive study of pre-war and post-war photo images of Ainu," *Visual Anthropology* 9, No.1 (2010), https://doi.org/10.1080/08949468.1996.9966688.

living in a nostalgic past, unaffected by colonization. At the same time, a meta-discourse questioned the authenticity of contemporaneous Ainu culture. The third phase from the late 1960s can be seen as a precursor to contemporary tourism, in which Ainu started to self-represent through museums and actively counteract historical amnesia. The fourth phase is characterized by the second Ainu boom of the 21st century, tentatively set into motion by the UN's International Year for the World's Indigenous People in 1993 and fully consolidated by the success of the manga *Golden Kamuy* and the opening of the Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park. In this current phase, different interpretations of the past become the most complex.

Terra Nullius and the Performance of Difference

When the nascent Japanese nation-state annexed Yaun Mosir in 1869, it renamed it "Hokkaido", the "northern sea circuit". This renaming is emblematic of the Japanese government's ambition to "remake Native land as settler home" by erasing Ainu connections in the land and declaring it as "terra nullius", an unclaimed, empty land, lying fallow in anticipation of Japanese development.[101] As Johan Edelheim describes in his formulation of the "touristic terra nullius", the history of Hokkaido was imagined as beginning with the arrival of the Wajin settlers, while the history of the Ainu was erased. Colonial Hokkaido was placed firmly in the future as a space full of potential, while Ainu were situated in the past as an antithesis to the imagination of modernity, civilization, and progress that Hokkaido was to represent.

While the Meiji government was quick to claim Hokkaido as "inherent territory", the understanding of Hokkaido as *naichi*, Japanese homeland, was much more complicated. The

[101] lewallen, "Signifying Ainu Space," 4.

government attempted to erase Ainu presence by promoting Ainu assimilation into Wajin society, outlawing visual markers of ethnic difference such as beards and tattoos.[102] At the same time however, Ainu Otherness was sensationalized for tourism. As Lisa Hiwasaki suggests, "[t]he Japanese government established and promoted Ainu tourism precisely at the time when the destruction of Ainu traditional life and Ainu impoverishment were at their worst".[103] This may seen paradoxical at first glance – after all, the destruction of Ainu ethnic difference was crucial for the maintenance of Japanese sovereignty in the former Ainu homelands, but this ethnic difference was made hyper-visual through tourism. However, this "spectrum of presence and absence" of Ainu representation is the manifestation of intersecting dimensions of settler narrative.[104]

From Yaun Mosir to Hokkaido: Pre-War Tourism and the Primitive/Civilized Dichotomy

The narratives disseminated in early tourism to Hokkaido can be understood by analyzing a tourist ad published in the Japan Tourist Bureau (JTB)'s *Tabi* magazine, a journal meant to promote tourism to the Japanese public. JTB was the Japanese government's official tourist organization.[105] Kate McDonald calls them a "colonial booster" that "sought to transform the new territories of the state into (new) national land".[106] The tourist ad was published in 1931, towards the beginning of an era Richard Siddle (referencing Kawamura Minato) dubs "mass orientalism", in which "the colonised were categorised in popular media as backward and uncivilised 'races' of

[102] Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, 157.
[103] Hiwasaki, "Ethnic Tourism in Hokkaido and the Shaping of Ainu Identity," 403.
[104] The idea of Ainu representation as a "spectrum of presence and absence" is borrowed from Roslynn Ang, "Whose Difficult Heritage?," 50.
[105] McDonald, *Placing Empire*, 14.
[106] *Ibid.,* 42, 40.

inferior natives in contrast to a modern and civilised Japan".[107] While travel had been a luxury in early Meiji, the expansion of the middle class in the 1920s made tourism a mass activity.[108] Kate McDonald argues that at that time, imperial tourism was presented as "the duty of all national subjects".[109] Hokkaido became popular as a "return to wilderness", with the Ainu forming an integral part of the tourist landscape as part of that wilderness.[110] Shiraoi and Chikabumi became regular tourist attractions by the Taishō era (1912-1926), consolidated by visits of the imperial family which symbolically reinforced the authority of the colonial state and the status of Shiraoi as a tourist destination.[111] The Hokkaido Development Agency (*kaitakushi)* began building tourism infrastructure (notably railways) and initiatives concurrently with other "development" measures aimed at transforming Yaun Mosir's foreign landscape into Hokkaido.[112] By the 1930s, the Japanese government started developing intentional tourist policies "as a way of presenting 'Japan' both to its own citizens and to the outside world".[113]

As Kate McDonald argues, tourism in the Japanese empire functioned as a way to stabilize the multitude of meanings humans give to a space in order to reimagine colonized lands as either already, or quickly becoming, Japanese, and to rationalize the dispossession of colonized subjects from their land.[114] This was important in the case of Yaun Mosir, where Michelle Mason argues that the collective imagination of the newly established Hokkaido saw it simultaneously as "a natural part of the Japanese archipelago and a remote foreign land; a fount of untouched natural

[107] Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*, 107.
[108] Morris-Suzuki, „Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society," 52.
[109] McDonald, *Placing Empire*, 91.
[110] Hiwasaki, "Ethnic Tourism in Hokkaido and the Shaping of Ainu Identity," 398.
[111] Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*, 93.
[112] Saito "Hokkaidō kankō an'nai no naka no Ainu bunka shōkai no hensen" (The transition of the introduction of Ainu culture in Hokkaido tourist guidebooks).
[113] Morris-Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society," 53.
[114] McDonald, *Placing Empire*, 7.

resources and an empty wasteland of snow and ice; a utopian escape and a desolate dead end".[115] These conflicting images were a stumbling block to the Meiji government, which wanted to firmly establish Hokkaido as Japanese homeland to prevent Russian invasion.[116]

11 "The Imagined Hokkaido"

12 "The Real Hokkaido"

The stabilization of meaning is visible in the tourist ad, which explicitly attempts to subvert undesired imaginations of Hokkaido by contrasting the "imagination of Hokkaido" (*Sōzō no hokkaidō*) with the "reality of Hokkaido" (*Jissai no hokkaidō*). Both versions of Hokkaido include Ainu, a testament to their importance for the touristic image of Hokkaido, but the representations differ starkly. The "imagined Hokkaido" is constructed using common tropes of Hokkaido as complete wilderness, evocative of Tokugawa-era poetry that imagined *Ezochi* as "inhospitable;

[115] Michele Mason, "Writing Ainu Out/Writing Japanese In: The 'Nature' of Japanese Colonialism in Hokkaido," in *Reading Colonial Japan: Text, Context, Critique*, ed. Michele Mason and Helen Lee (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2012), 32.
[116] David Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 145.

frightening; exotic".[117] In this Hokkaido, the emphasis is on a wild, dangerous, dark landscape inhabited by bears, lizards, and Ainu. The Ainu seem to all be male, have long beards, and wear traditional robes while hunting a bear with bow and arrow and swords. The idea of wilderness and nature was central to popular imaginations of Hokkaido, as a conception that placed it in the past as a savage, backwards land.

Desirable however was a conception of Hokkaido as a future-oriented space, a laboratory for modernity and progress. This is represented by the "real Hokkaido", which is depicted using the urban landscape of Sapporo, which was much more familiar looking to the Japanese eye. As Vivian Blaxell argues, the architecture of Sapporo was constructed to "transform built space in the city in ways that recirculated the prevailing discourses of modernity and Japaneseness".[118] Through the depiction of tamed landscape and culture rather than wild nature, Yaun Mosir is presented as closer to *naichi*, a domesticated landscape with rich history, culture, and human relationships.[119] This was a common trope of Japanese imperial tourism. As Kate McDonald writes, colonized lands were placed "within the bounds of a past, present, and future that was both 'civilized' and 'Japanese,' and at the same time, to mark colonized subjects as 'out of place' in these same lands".[120]

The "real Hokkaido" features a male, (presumably) Wajin tourist dressed in modern Western clothes, and an Ainu woman dressed in a kimono, wearing a *nihongami*-style updo associated with traditional Japanese femininity. Her head is lowered in submission while the man

[117] For a translation of a poem by Shima Yoshitake that uses very similar tropes and phrasing see Vivan Blaxell, "Designs Of Power: The 'Japanization' Of Urban And Rural Space In Colonial Hokkaidō," *The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus* 7, Iss. 35, No.2 (2009), https://apjjf.org/Vivian-Blaxell/3211/article.
[118] Blaxell, "Designs Of Power".
[119] Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan*, 34.
[120] Kate McDonald, *Placing Empire*, 16.

smokes and laughs. The text, written from the perspective of the tourist, suggests that "Hokkaido is becoming more advanced, and there are some beautiful women here", and that "I'm sure I'll receive an Ainu *menoko* [woman, girl] as a souvenir".[121] The Ainu woman is depicted as already assimilated into Wajin–Japanese society, wearing an explicitly Japanese outfit, and though not depicted as overtly sexual, the suggestion of taking home an Ainu *menoko* clearly marks her as an exoticized object of the Wajin male gaze. Official policy at the time encouraged intermarriage, though as ann-elise lewallen argues, Ainu women were frequently assaulted and sexually enslaved by settlers from the early 19th century.[122] The ad also reflects eugenics-influenced discourse at the time, which discussed the supposed inherent primitiveness of the Ainu and other colonized subjects. Government official Kita Masaaki argued in in 1937 that "the natives are being gradually Japanized. Assimilation and intermarriage – for these two reasons the natives are gradually losing their primitive appearance".[123]

Ainu Tourism, Anthropology, and the Ainu as a "Vanishing Race"

While the Ainu woman is visually turned "Japanese" through assimilation, thus opposing the image of traditional Ainu in the "imagined Hokkaido", she is nevertheless contrasted with the "modern" Wajin man by being depicted in clothes associated with traditional Japan. While this is likely partially a gender issue, the racial Otherness of the Ainu is reinforced by the singling out of Ainu women as "souvenirs" and the depiction of Ainu culture as frozen in time.

[121] For a translation of the ad see appendix.
[122] Grunow et al., "Hokkaidō 150," 605-613.
[123] Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, 95.

The discourse of race science at the time allowed the Japanese government to define the Ainu as a primitive, savage, and backwards ethnic group, unable to "develop" the space of Yaun Mosir on its own, while the Japanese, inherently superior and more civilized, could properly "open up" Hokkaido. Hirano Katsuya argues that through the reduction of the "rich historical experience of mankind to the binary structure of 'progress or stagnation'", in which "each ethnic group is rewritten into a narrative of its oscillating rise and fall", the government could reframe the colonization of Yaun Mosir as "*kaitaku*" (development).[124] As Hirano suggests, "the territorial expropriation of, and assimilationist policy towards, the Ainu was rationalized through this term".[125] They were legally dubbed "former natives" (*kyū-dojin*), with dominant discourse regarding them as a "dying" or "vanishing race". In return, the assimilation policies were recast as a "civilizing measure", since the abandonment of Ainu cultural practices was merely a way to make Ainu more Japanese and as such, modern and civilized.

This idea was also propagated through tourism, expositions, and museums. While the government outlawed most aspects of Ainu culture deemed "primitive" or "savage", they were permitted (or even forced) to perform their ancestral culture and rituals for tourists. This is reflected in public discourse. As Lisa Hiwasaki writes, "tourism, which offered glimpses into the 'savage' lives of the Ainu, was an integral factor in images of Hokkaido perpetuated by the mainstream media of the time".[126] In concurrence with the establishment of anthropology at the time, staged photographs and postcards depicted the Ainu in a pseudo-scientific way that emphasized their racial alterity.[127] The Hokkaido government also promoted visits to so called "native schools" as sites

[124] Hirano Katsuya, "The Politics Of Colonial Translation: On The Narrative Of The Ainu As A 'Vanishing Ethnicity,'" *The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus* 7, No. 4 (2009), https://apjjf.org/katsuya-hirano/3013/article.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Hiwasaki, "Ethnic Tourism in Hokkaido and the Shaping of Ainu Identity,", 398.
[127] Cheung, "Change of Ainu images in Japan".

where tourists could "observe the efforts being undertaken to civilise the Ainu", thus further legitimizing Japanese colonization.[128] One school alone attracted over 4000 visitors between 1904 and 1931, with school children being forced to produce handicrafts for sale.[129]

14 Enciw at the 1913 Meiji Colonial Exhibition in Osaka

*13 Tourist postcard titled "Civilized Ainu" (*shinka shitaru Ainu*) showing Ainu in Japanese clothing, circa 1920s*

The Meiji government imported the Western concepts of "museum" and "exposition" to Japan to "cultivate an 'imperial public' loyal to the emperor".[130] Ainu-related objects were collected for various expositions and the new Tokyo National Museum in Ueno (est. 1882). All Ainu objects were classified as archaeological items in museums at the time, and the Ueno museum presented them under the moniker "*Ezo fuzoku*" (Ainu folkways, though notably using the old ethnonym).[131] Expositions became incredibly important for the nascent Japanese state aiming to establish its status in the international scene. Because international expositions were organized to rank nation-states by their level of civilization and progress, "imperial powers boasted of their colonial possessions in simulated 'native' villages, populated by subjugated 'primitives' who

[128] Siddle, Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan, 106.
[129] *Ibid.*, 94; 119.
[130] Aso, *Public Properties*.
[131] Edwin Pietersma, "From Crafts to Agency: The Legacy of Colonial Discourses in Exhibiting the Ainu in the Tokyo National Museum and National Museum of Ethnology at Osaka between 1977 and 2017," *Museum and Society* 21, No. 3 (2023), 25, https://doi.org/10.29311/mas.v21i3.4324; Nakamura, "The Representation of Ainu Culture in the Japanese Museum System," 339. Please note that Nakamura gives the transcription "Emishi fuzoku" for the term used at the TNM, but this is likely false considering the famous Ainu-e titled "Ezo fuzoku".

composed a highly visible and thoroughly exploited lower class within the fairgrounds".[132] Ainu from Yaun Mosir and Yanke Mosir (Karafuto) were brought to several expositions to "perform" their difference in human-zoo-like exhibits. This was not without controversy, as some Wajin objected to their fellow countrymen being put on display as spectacles. Kirsten Ziomek suggests that this is evidence for a split between discourse in academic and official contexts versus the general public, some of which disagreed with the "racial division of imperial subjects (although they supported civilizational differences)".[133]

Overall, the tourist narrative in pre-war Japan served as a way to reframe the colonization of Yaun Mosir as "development". While both official local government policies and academic discussions used unambiguous terms for the "colonization" (either *takushoku* or *shokumin*) of Yaun Mosir in the late 19th century, by the turn of the century they fell out of use in favor of the "development" (*kaitaku*) discourse, which had been the Meiji government's term from the beginning.[134] Tourism was used to spread narratives that reinforced the status of Wajin-Japanese as a superior race that could legitimately claim the land of Yaun Mosir for themselves, while the Ainu were a primitive race, soon destined to vanish. Assimilation and cultural genocide were recast as acts of welfare and goodwill. Yaun Mosir was turned into Hokkaido, a settler home instead of native land. Ainu activists started to struggle against the "*misemonoka*" (objectification, being made into a spectacle) of tourism and anthropology from the 1930s, and many Ainu deemed assimilation to be a strategy through which they could escape this Othering gaze.[135] With the

[132] Aso, *Public Properties*, 27.
[133] Kirsten Ziomek, "The 1903 Human Pavilion: Colonial Realities and Subaltern Subjectivities in Twentieth-Century Japan," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 73, No. 2 (2014), 513, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911814000011.
[134] Ueki, *Shokumin-gaku no kioku* (Memories of Colonial Studies), 130. According to Ueki, the Meiji government 'inherited' the term *kaitaku* from the *Bakufu*, but various local government policies and discussions used *takushoku* and *shokumin* initially. The term *shokumin* would continue to be used for Yanke Mosir (Karafuto).
[135] Morris-Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society," 55-56.

progression of the Asia-Pacific war into World War II, the hyper-visibility of the Ainu as an Other through tourism became undesirable, as the government wanted to amplify the notion of Japan's unity under the emperor. The Hokkaido prefectural authorities issued a directive to ban tourist activity in 1941, though it is unclear how this affected Ainu tourism.[136]

The First Ainu Boom and Salvage Tourism

The end of the second World War meant that Japan lost most of its colonial possessions. The Japanese claim on Ainu Mosir was reduced to Yaun Mosir, with most Enciw (Sakhalin Ainu) sent to Yaun Mosir and a small number remaining in Russia.[137] The question of how Wajin, whose identity had been so thoroughly defined by Self/Other discourses transmitted through tourism, anthropology, and the media, could understand themselves and their nation led to some interesting developments in the sphere of tourism. Kate McDonald writes that the American occupation government was quite set on erasing "all of Japan's ties to its former empire" and promoting Japan as a peaceful nation of culture.[138] Tourism was seen as a safe way to revitalize the economy, though the repackaging of Japan for tourism meant that references to difficult histories of the war and colonies became buried under a veneer of peaceful nature, culture, and reconstruction. Richard Siddle suggests that the racialized ideology of Wajin as superior continued in the form of *Nihonjinron* (literally "discussions about the Japanese"), which emphasized Japanese uniqueness, and often manifested in the idea of Japan as a "homogeneous nation" (*tan'itsu minzoku kokka*).[139] He further argues that this also reflected "a widespread amnesia concerning Japan's recent colonial

[136] lewallen, "Signifying Ainu Space," 7.
[137] Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan,* 147.
[138] McDonald, *Placing Empire*, 165.
[139] Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, 156. Siddle writes that these works started appearing in the 1940s and 1950s, but became a mass phenomenon by the 1970s.

past" which "denied the existence of the Ainu as a distinct population with a right to a separate identity".[140]

Several developments in public history and memory-making contributed to this state that scholar Tozawa Emi calls the "collective oblivion of Japan's imperial past" accompanied by "the construction of public silencing".[141] She points to a narrative of nationalized Japanese victimhood that emphasized the suffering caused by the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki thus concealing memories of Japanese imperialism and settler colonialism.[142] Similarly, Shu-Mei Huang et al. observe that in post-war Japan, "nationalists have sought to promote the legacy of the Meiji era largely because they see this as a way of distracting public attention from the 'difficulties' of the mid-twentieth century and fostering instead an uncomplicated pride in national success".[143] This is especially true in Yaun Mosir, where post-war memory was primarily focused on the *tondenhei*, the samurai-turned-settler-colonists that bravely fought against cruel nature to bring modernity to Hokkaido.[144] Richard Siddle argues that the exclusion of Ainu from official versions of Yaun Mosir's history after the war is not mere ignorance but part of this intentional historical amnesia that "served to mask the violence of the colonial enterprise".[145] This discourse became hegemonic through the centennial of "Hokkaido's founding" in 1968, which spurred the construction of museums and commemorative sites.[146] As Michele Mason argues, at all of these sites, "it is implied that the colonization of Hokkaido and the history of Ainu are completely unrelated, forever separated in time and space".[147] The depictions of Ainu at these museums were

[140] *Ibid.,* 157.
[141] Tozawa, "Can it be a Gamechanger," 3.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Huang et al., *Introduction*, 10.
[144] For a detailed study of war memory in Hokkaido see Seaton, *Local History and War Memories in Hokkaido.*
[145] Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, 163.
[146] Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan*, 147.
[147] *Ibid.,* 153.

"fossilized, represented by the preserved items of their ancient traditions, and erased from the historical narratives that record Japan's steady march toward modernity"[148]. Overall, the narratives thus deny the violent colonization of Yaun Mosir.

The absence of the Ainu as a living ethnic group in the popular imagination did not mean, however, that Ainu tourism ceased to exist. On the contrary, Yaun Mosir became such a popular destination in the 1950s and 1960s that this era is often dubbed the "Ainu boom".[149] Lisa Hiwasaki attributes this development to economic development in Japan and the popularity of media products featuring the Ainu, such as the 1959 movie *Kotan no kuchibue* (Whistle in Kotan, dir. Naruse Mikio) or the hit song *Iyomante no Yoru* (released in 1950 by Hisao Itō).[150] While there is little doubt regarding the impact these media contents had, Katrina Phillips' salvage tourism framework remains applicable to the first Ainu boom.[151]

The Quest for Authenticity: Nostalgic Visions of the Pseudo-Ainu

Post-war images of Hokkaido remained rooted in nature. Similar to the static images of Ainu at the museum, the Ainu culture commodified by tourism during the Ainu boom is often characterized as ahistorical. Performers were made to play into the stereotypes of Ainu still living as their ancestors did, unchanged by colonization and modernity. Some photographers refused to employ men not fitting the stereotypical image of a bearded Ainu, thus contributing to sustainment of pre-war images of the Ainu as primitive barbarians.[152] Sidney Cheung similarly observes that

[148] *Ibid.*
[149] Hiwasaki, "Ethnic Tourism in Hokkaido and the Shaping of Ainu Identity," 399.
[150] *Ibid.*
[151] Phillips, *Staging Indigeneity*, 16.
[152] Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, 158.

post-war tourist postcards often removed non-Ainu looking observers of Ainu rituals to make the scene appear more authentic, untouched, and homogeneous.[153]

Ainu tourism was one of the few ways Ainu could easily make a profit while transmitting culture. The term "tourist Ainu" (*kankō Ainu*) became popular to describe Ainu who made their living in tourism. Kayano Shigeru, a famous Ainu activist and politician, worked as a "tourist Ainu" to fund his ambitions to build his own Ainu museum. In his memoir, he recounts that "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 when we weren't even happy or excited".[154] Kayano further describes that he constantly answered tourists' questions that quite obviously had no idea that Ainu lived their daily lives as modern people, and many still believed in the "vanishing race" idea. He explains that even though he did his best "to explain how Ainu history, language, and customs had been vanishing (or, rather, had been made to vanish)", the nostalgic image of untouched ancestral Ainu culture dominated the minds of tourists even after their contact with Ainu through tourism.[155]

It becomes clear that Phillips' concept of salvage tourism is quite applicable to the case of post-war Ainu tourism.[156] History is constructed through the romantic imagination of Wajin travelers, who replace a violent past with the anachronizing imaginary of Ainu culture along common tropes. Through the continued idea of the Ainu as a "vanishing race", people went to see "the last specimen" of living Ainu culture. Ironically, the case of the Ainu is related to that of the Native Americans in a more direct way too. Post-war films featuring the Ainu like *The Rambler*

[153] Cheung, "Change of Ainu images in Japan," 19.
[154] Kayano Shigeru, *Our Land Was a Forest: An Ainu Memoir* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 72.
[155] Kayano, *Our Land Was a Forest*, 73.
[156] See Phillips, *Staging Indigeneity*.

Rides Again (*Daisogen no wataridori,* dir. Saitō Buichi, 1960) worked in tandem with tourism to create an image of a "Japanese Far West" inspired by the American Wild West.[157] This led to the creation of a "pseudo-Ainu" image that furthered exoticization and historical amnesia by replacing contemporary problems caused by the settler colonial structure with a pseudo-past shaped by Hollywood tropes.[158] By 1975, a survey of school children and university students in Tokyo found that "all age groups regarded the Ainu as non-Japanese and associated them with American Indians", with images based on tourist stereotypes.[159]

15 Native American-inspired pseudo-Ainu image in The Rambler Rides Again (1960)

The growing commercialization of Ainu culture, emblematicized by the establishment of Akan as a mall-like site for Ainu tourism in the 1950s, led to a wider discussion of Ainu tourism and authenticity in the Japanese public sphere.[160] The "tourist Ainu" discussion became the tip of the iceberg for this issue, serving as a negative image from which "intellectual" tourists and Ainu strove to separate themselves. As ann-elise lewallen writes, "by the postwar era, Ainu outside the

[157] Marcos P. Centeno Martín, "The Fight for Self-Representation: Ainu Imaginary, Ethnicity and Assimilation," *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* 13(2017), 72-73, http://dx.doi.org/10.33178/alpha.13.04.
[158] *Ibid.*
[159] Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, 158. The survey included 810 school children and university students, with individuals above secondary school emphasizing Ainu hairiness in their responses.
[160] Akan was a nature-related tourist attraction by the 1920s, but only became an Ainu-related site when Wajin businessman Maeda Mitsuko provided free land for Ainu who moved there from all over Yaun Mosir. For an in-depth study see Sidney Cheung, "Rethinking Ainu Heritage: A Case Study of an Ainu Settlement in Hokkaido, Japan," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 11, Iss. 3 (2005), https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250500160500.

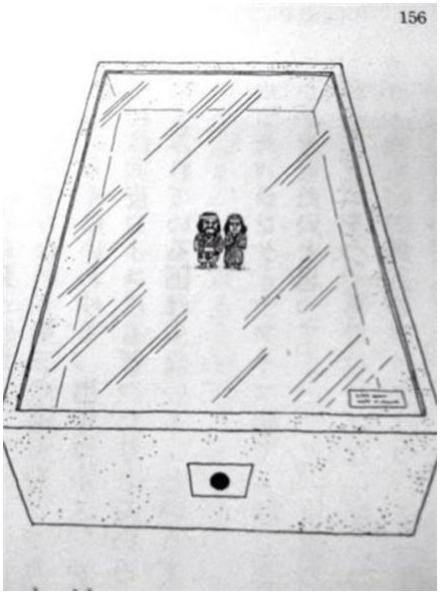
tourist industry lambasted what they termed "tourist Ainu" for circulating anachronistic images of Ainu, thus fanning racism".[161] This debate had existed before the war too, after all "authenticity versus commodification" is one of the main tensions underlying ethnic tourism, though the Ainu boom magnified this debate into wide-spread discussion and reflection.[162] Travel guides like those written by Wajin Ainu culture researcher Sarashina Genzō for *Tabi* offered alternative, "authentic" travel tips to Ainu sites, while he claimed that "there are no Ainu left in Akan".[163] This not only led to travelers invading non-touristic Ainu villages for glimpses of the "real Ainu", but also to a growing dissatisfaction of Ainu with the way they were represented in the public sphere. Assimilation proved not to work as a measure to counteract structural discrimination, after all, as Sandra Niessen put it, Ainu are "damned if they are, and then damned if they are not" assimilated.[164] The historical amnesia associated with settler memory would ultimately always place the blame for the "Ainu problem" on the Ainu themselves, rather than question the circumstances that forced Ainu into commercializing their culture.

"We are Still Here!" – The Fight for Self-Representation

Although the struggle against *misemonoka* had been a central concern for Ainu activists for many decades, by the 1960s this struggle had moved from "a strategy of invisibility to a strategy of taking control over the presentation of Ainu culture to outsiders".[165] The first Ainu-run museum had already been opened in Chikabumi in 1916, when local Ainu chief Kawamura Itakisiroma

[161] lewallen, "Signifying Ainu Space," 7.
[162] Li Yang and Geoffrey Wall, "Ethnic tourism: A framework and an application," *Tourism Management* 30, Iss. 4 (2009), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.09.008.
[163] Sarashina's "Visit to the Pure Ainu" was included in *Tabi* in 1958 and 1960, see Higashimura, "'Tabi' wa izanau" ('Tabi/Travel' is an invitation).
[164] Sandra Niessen, "Representing the Ainu Reconsidered," *Museum Anthropology* 20, No. 3 (1996), 142, https://doi.org/10.1525/mua.1996.20.3.132.
[165] Morris-Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society", 59.

noticed an increasing number of Wajin visitors that began looking at local Ainu "with curious eyes" and school children were made to dance as an attraction for local military personnel.[166] He constructed a separate Ainu dwelling for visitors to "foster an accurate understanding of Ainu heritage".[167] By that time, Chikabumi Ainu already had a decades-long land conflict with local authorities and "acquired a reputation of active opposition" to their power, suggesting a link between political awareness and intentional self-representation via museums.[168] This idea proves to be accurate when considering the political and social developments that turned Ainu activism visible in the public sphere of the 1960s and 1970s.



16 Caricature from a 1993 article by Honda Katsuichi, a Wajin journalist engaged in Ainu activism in the 1970s

17 The original building of the Chikabumi Ainu Museum, photo taken in 2023

Richard Siddle names 1968, the year of the Hokkaido centennial, as a pivotal moment when the exclusion of the Ainu from historical narratives was met with a new political movement,

[166] "Kinenkan no rekishi," (History of the Memorial Museum) Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Memorial Museum, http://k-aynu-mh.jp/cn24/about.html; Museum panel entitled "My grandfather, my father and me".
[167] Description of a panel at the museum in 2023 entitled "The Origin of the Aynu Museum".
[168] Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*, 116-119.

inspired by the radical political atmosphere of Japan at the time.[169] Though the Ainu community was deeply divided on how to approach social issues, a more active wing of Ainu activism directly engaged with questions of Ainu erasure and self-determined narratives. While a series of terrorist attacks by radical left-wing Wajin "allies" targeted sites of "Ainu exploitation" like tourism companies in Shiraoi in the 1960s, Ainu themselves engaged not only in frequent protests of commercialized events, they started to take self-representation seriously.[170] Similarly, Richard Siddle observes that "cultural manifestations of Ainuness - embroidered traditional costume, prayers in the Ainu language, oral literature, dance - were increasingly in evidence at Ainu events, for the benefit of Ainu, not tourists", which was coupled with a "rapidly growing interest in Ainu history and culture" as "part of a general movement to rediscover Ainu heritage that accompanied politicization".[171]

When the National Museum of Ethnology (*Minpaku*) was established in Osaka in 1977, they aimed to subvert the idea that cultures could be split into civilized and uncivilized, representing Ainu as a separate ethnic group despite the lack of official government recognition. Though the museum's collection is now being criticized as being "intertwined with colonial legacy", and its exclusive representation of traditional Ainu culture divorced from contemporary political struggle was at the heart of an international controversy in the 1990s, it represented a shift towards explicit inclusion of Ainu voices for exhibition design.[172] Especially for Kayano Shigeru,

[169] Ibid., 162.
[170] While it is outside the scope of this thesis, the developments surrounding "Ainu Revolution Theory" and the New Left are very interesting. There are very few works in English, but it is partly described in Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*, 162 et seqq; see also Kinase Takashi, "Difference, Representation, Positionality: An Examination of the Politics of Contemporary Ainu Images," *Senri Ethnological Studies* 60 (2009), 176 et seq, https://doi.org/10.15021/00002778.
[171] Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*, 173.
[172] For a recent criticism of Minpaku see Pietersma, "From Crafts to Agency"; for an analysis of the controversy in the 1990s see Ang, "Whose Difficult Heritage?".

who was involved in the creation of Minpaku's Ainu exhibition, this new approach showed him that "the role of museums is not merely to collect existing artifacts but to revive and propagate forgotten crafts".[173]

18 Protest featuring the Ainu flag designed by famous Ainu sculptor Sunazawa Bikky in 1973

19 A panel at the Kayano Shigeru Ainu Museum in Nibutani

Kayano would become the most prominent figure embodying the fight for Ainu self-representation, fulfilling his goal of turning his hometown of Nibutani into a "knowledge center", an alternative avenue for transmitting Ainu culture and history.[174] Kayano's "Ainu Culture Exhibition Hall" (now the Kayano Shigeru Nibutani Ainu Museum) opened in 1972, while the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum would open in 1992.[175] Over time, Nibutani became home to craft centers, Ainu artisans, researchers, a reconstructed *kotan*, and other cultural initiatives. Kayano's ambition to counteract dominant settler narratives of history becomes clear from the panels at the museum, with one panel detailing the "historical truth" (*rekishi no shinjitsu*). The panel recounts

[173] Kayano Shigeru cited in Sjöberg, *The Return of Ainu*, 149.
[174] Nibutani is one of the few villages that still has a majority Ainu population, with its remote location meaning it kept the traditional *kotan* structure, Ainu language, and cultural practices into the 20th century.
[175] A third museum, the Historical Museum of the Saru River, opened in 1998. It reinforces the narrative of Ainu cultural continuity and connection to the land by telling the natural and cultural history of the Saru river, especially pre-colonization.

that "historically, it is clear that Ainu Mosir (the quiet land where the Ainu live) has been unilaterally invaded by Wajin, especially since the Meiji period, and this continues to this day". This panel further explains the ongoing discrimination Ainu face, and asks for the solidarity of "*Sisamu*" (the more friendly Ainu term for Wajin) to enact a law that guarantees the rights of Ainu and respects Ainu culture.[176] A newer panel details the campaign for the New Ainu Law, directly criticizing the Meiji government's treatment of Ainu Mosir as a no man's land by renaming it Hokkaido, bringing in settlers, and attempting to erase the Ainu's rightful claim to the land.[177]

At the time of its establishment in the 1970s, many Ainu activists and local media understood the Nibutani museum as "the symbol of the Ainu self-awareness movement".[178] Although some Ainu criticized Kayano's endeavors to take back control over representations of their culture and preferred to stay hidden from the public eye, other Ainu-run museums popped up in Yaun Mosir, most prominently the Ainu Museum in Shiraoi in 1984.[179] However, as Henry Stewart and Hazuki Korin note, many of the community-run Ainu museums still mostly transmitted aspects of traditional Ainu culture.[180] Sunaga Kazuhiro interprets this as "strategic essentialism", a method to disrupt the dominant discourse of homogeneity.[181] The focus on culture may have also been a strategy to "de-racialize" the difference between Ainu and Wajin by reframing it as something positive. Kinase Takashi points out that this development, especially considering its concurrent focus on "Ainu Mosir" as decolonial vocabulary, as observed in the panel at Kayano's

[176] It is unclear when this panel was made, but the time capsule feeling of the museum makes me suspect it is from the 1980s when the Hokkaido Utari Association (now the Hokkaido Ainu Association) rallied for a new Ainu law.
[177] This panel seems to be from the late 1990s or early 2000s.
[178] Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*, 173.
[179] For some direct quotes by Ainu who were critical of Kayano Shigeru, see Sjöberg, *The Return of Ainu,* 177-180.
[180] Henry Stewart and Hazuki Korin, "Report on representation of the Ainu in public and private museums," *Journal of the University of the Air* 24 (2006), https://api.core.ac.uk/oai/oai:ouj.repo.nii.ac.jp:00007490.
[181] Sunaga Kazuhiro, "Revitalization of Indigenous Culture and Community Museum: A Case Study of the Indigenous Ainu in Hokkaido, Japan," *Asian Journal of Tourism Research* 3, No. 2 (2018), 50, http://dx.doi.org/10.12982/AJTR.2018.0010.

museum, may have been a strategy to re-appropriate and re-contextualize the essentialist images transmitted in salvage tourism for Ainu self-representation and a variety of political stances.[182] Indeed, as Stewart and Hazuki find, many Ainu-run museums intentionally focus on traditional culture to "highlight the uniqueness of the ethnic group by emphasizing its differences from the Japanese", since they were fighting for legal recognition as a separate Indigenous group.[183] Beyond that, people were unsure how to display contemporary Ainu culture, and remarked that this was the task of the Hokkaido Ainu Association.

Overall, Ainu have been utilizing museums as discursive tools to counteract dominant settler narratives transmitted through tourism and the media since the 1960s, most directly counteracting the idea of Japan as a "homogeneous" country. However, they still continue to focus mostly on traditional culture. Ainu-Japanese art historian Chisato Dubreil sees this as a "double-edged sword," saying that "traditional dress is a visible political statement saying, 'We are still here!'. But when it's the only image, it can become negative".[184] Even with an increased focus on an alternative "people's history" that counteracted hegemonic narratives, Ainu still remained largely politically disenfranchised.[185]

[182] Kinase, "Difference, Representation, Positionality," 177-178. Kinase does not speak of salvage tourism specifically, rather pointing to general Wajin interest in the parts of Ainu culture believed to be "dying", such as "idyllic folklore" which concealed the reality of Ainu people, something he calls "imperialist nostalgia".
[183] Stewart and Hazuki, "Report".
[184] Chisato Dubreil, "The Ainu And Their Culture: A Critical Twenty-First Century Assessment," *The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus* 5, No. 11 (2007), https://apjjf.org/chisato-kitty-dubreuil/2589/article.
[185] For an in-depth discussion of the Ainu-related people's history movement see David Howell, "Is Ainu History Japanese History?" In: *Beyond Ainu Studies: Changing Academic and Public Perspectives,* eds. Mark J. Hudson, ann-elise lewallen, and Mark K. Watson, (O'ahu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 103 et seqq.

Indigenous Rights, Hate Speech, and Museum Narrative

In an analysis of Ainu in the Japanese museum system, Nakamura Naohiro finds that the UN's International Year of the World's Indigenous People in 1993 greatly increased the visibility of Ainu in the Japanese public sphere, with a record number of Ainu exhibitions cropping up all over Japan.[186] In fact, out of 180 exhibitions featuring the Ainu (both permanent and temporary) between the 1940s and 2005, only 22 were created before the 1990s.[187] More historians started researching the history of Yaun Mosir (though mostly between the 13th and 19th century), and exhibitions of their results spread the recognition of Ainu, if not as contemporary people then at least as prominent figures in the era before colonization.[188] As of 2024, at least 49 museums, exhibition spaces, and tourist facilities are partially or fully dedicated to Ainu culture and/or history.[189]

After focused Ainu activism and support from the international Indigenous community, the Japanese government replaced the 1899 Former Native Protection Act with the Ainu Cultural Promotion Act in 1997. While not yet recognizing the Ainu as an Indigenous people, this law proclaimed them to be an ethnic minority, based on an expert report that, as Richard Siddle puts it, "glossed over the colonial history of dispossession and forced assimilation, and offered no reflection or apology for the role of the state".[190] In an essay on the political achievements of the Ainu, Simon Cotterill suggests that this may not actually be an intentional act of silencing but rather ignorance of the past based on a "vacuum of knowledge", created by the fact that "many in modern

[186] Nakamura, "Ainu Culture in the Japanese Museum System," 346.
[187] *Ibid*., 337.
[188] *Ibid*., 348.
[189] "Hokkaidō rekishi bunka pōtaru saito akarenga ainu myūjiamu bācharu gaido," (Hokkaido History and Culture Portal Site Akarenga Ainu Museum Virtual Guide), *Akarenga*, https://www.akarenga-h.jp/ainu-virtual/.
[190] Richard Siddle, "An epoch-making event? The 1997 Ainu Cultural Promotion Act and its impact," *Japan Forum* 14, No. 3 (2002), 408, https://doi.org/10.1080/0955580022000008763.

Japanese government have grown up with textbooks and teachers, and under political leaders, that denied the Ainu's existence".[191] This reflects a changing dynamic in settler memory, where dominant narratives have naturalized the settler-colonial structure so much that it has succeeded in its goal of becoming "settled", no longer recognizing itself as a settler colony. But if this were completely true for Yaun Mosir, the 1997 law would not skillfully circumvent the land rights and collective self-determination envisioned by Ainu activists in favor of merely providing funds for the research and dissemination of Ainu culture. Ishihara Mai points out that some Ainu believe that the law was passed in an attempt to counteract potential Ainu resistance movements by solely focusing on the non-contentious aspects of culture.[192] As Tessa Morris-Suzuki remarks, "The law's most obvious result has been to focus attention on the fundamental question, 'how and by whom is 'Ainu cultural heritage' defined'? […] Do the 'other cultural properties passed down by Ainu' include memories of the long struggle against discrimination, and if not why not?".[193]

While the passing of the law undeniably gave a big boost to those already engaged in the dissemination of Ainu cultural heritage, including "tourist Ainu" and curators, it did little to counteract the dominant ideas of Ainu as embodying the essentialized stereotype transmitted in tourism and museums. This disconnect between lived Ainu experience and the predominant view that reduces the recognition of "actual" Ainu to a narrowly defined archetype makes Ainu even less visible in the public imagination. Since most Ainu no longer wear the visible markers of ethnic identity every day, and many pass as Wajin due to generations of assimilation and intermarriage, it

[191] Simon Cotterill, "Ainu Success: The Political And Cultural Achievements Of Japan's Indigenous Minority," *The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus* 9, Iss. 12, No. 2 (2011), https://apjjf.org/2011/9/12/simon-cotterill/3500/article.
[192] Ishihara Mai, "Akademikku sabarutan no koe to 'kenkyū'— gakumon ni okeru decolonization (datsu-shokuminchika) e mukete" (The voices of the academic subaltern and "research"-Towards decolonization in academia), *Hokkaido Journal of Ethnology* 17 (2021), 20, https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1523106606045350656.
[193] Morris-Suzuki, "Tourists, Anthropologists, and Visions of Indigenous Society," 63.

becomes easy to ignore them as existing people with collective rights. Or in the worst case, their existence is denied outright.

20 Notice promoting an "Ainu problem symposium" by Nippon Kaigi featuring well-known Ainu deniers

Since the 1990s, Ainu have become the target of hate speech, indigenous denial, and historical revisionism by conservative factions. This represents the most extreme, or perhaps most overtly eliminatory, version of settler memory. Right-wing organizations such as Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference) not only deny Japanese settler colonialism in Yaun Mosir and exploitation by the government, they outright deny Ainu existence, Indigeneity and pre-Meiji sovereignty. Current Ainu are oftentimes described as simply playing dress up, wanting to play the victim, benefitting from government welfare, and inciting anti-Japanese hatred.[194] Mark Winchester writes that many Ainu deniers exhibit an "aggressive and deliberate ignorance of the structural asymmetries of power between indigenous peoples and the rest of society – in other words, of history itself as it is history that has created these asymmetries". [195] Ainu denialism is not only found on the fringes of

[194] ann elise lewallen, "Human Rights and Cyber Hate Speech: The Case of the Ainu," *Human Rights Osaka: Focus Japan* 81 (2015), https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section3/2015/09/-in-early-autumn-2014-two-hokkaido-politicians-engaged-in.html.
[195] Mark Winchester, "Backlash: hate speech, Ainu indigenous denial and historical revisionism in post-DRIPs Japan" In *Cultural and Social Division in Contemporary Japan*, ed. Shiobara Yoshikazu et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), 83.

the Japanese political establishment. Rather, it is widely found within sectors of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), local politicians in Yaun Mosir, and beyond.[196] Nippon Kaigi has an immense impact on Japanese politics, with prime ministers Kishida Fumio, Abe Shinzō, Asō Tarō, and Suga Yoshihide being confirmed members.[197]

When a part of Yaun Mosir, the Shiretoko peninsula, was proposed as Japan's third World Natural Heritage site in 2004, Ainu were excluded from the official narrative beyond a recognition of the toponym's origins in the Ainu language. When Ainu ecotour[198] operator Fujisaki Tatsuya argued for an inclusion of Ainu in the property management committee, officials brushed him off by saying "You know Fujisaki, you keep bringing up Ainu, but Ainu no longer exist, period". Fujisaki suggests that "that was the level of awareness of most Tokyo bureaucrats and anyone educated in Japan—an ordinary response from your average Japanese person. They weren't simply talking about Shiretoko Ainu, they meant no Ainu in Japan".[199] Although ann-elise lewallen suggests that Ainu-organized ecotours can function as a way to reclaim settler land as Indigenous space and recover buried memory, she recognizes the overall imbalance in power structures.[200]

[196] Winchester, "Backlash,"; lewallen, "Human Rights".
[197] Tawara Yoshifumi and Yamaguchi Tomomi, "What Is The Aim Of Nippon Kaigi, The Ultra-Right Organization That Supports Japan's Abe Administration?" *The Asia-Pacific Journal –Japan Focus* 15, Iss. 21, No.1 (2017), https://apjjf.org/2017/21/tawara.
[198] Ecotourism is environmentally conscious travel to scenic sites.
[199] lewallen, "Signifying Ainu Space," 5.
[200] *Ibid.,* 12-15.

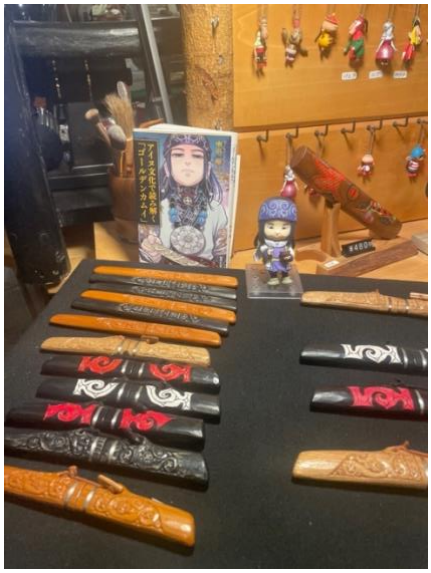
Interlude: The Second Ainu Boom and New Horizons

The 2010s and 2020s have seen an unprecedented surge of interest in Ainu culture.[201] Now that we have entered the era of a new Ainu Boom, the opportunity to recast Ainu tourism as a transformative tool arises once again. This presents itself as very difficult. Much of the renewed interest in Ainu culture and history is due to the success of *Golden Kamuy*, a manga series that started in 2014, with a 2016 anime adaption, and a 2024 live action film. Set in Meiji-era Ainu Mosir, *Golden Kamuy* features many Ainu characters.[202] However, scholar Ito Rika argues that it "unintentionally constructs a sanitized Ainu-Japanese relationship that epitomizes the discourse of ethnic harmony by erasing Japan's colonial past".[203] Koarai Ryo on the other hand suggests that *Golden Kamuy*-related tourism is oftentimes connected to fans' desire to learn about the historical background of the manga, including "how the Ainu were affected by Japan's colonization of Hokkaido in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century".[204] This has potential for the dissemination of counternarratives, but only if museums and tourist sites make these easily available. Smaller Ainu-run institutions like the Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Memorial Museum in Asahikawa use strong language to tell histories of pain, cultural destruction, forced assimilation, and forced relocation, while explicitly calling out colonization (*shokuminchi*). They are beginning to find a new identity "somewhere between tourism and tradition".[205] As the Kawamura Kaneto

[201] Tsukada Arina, "An Ainu-language expert illuminates their worldview," *Japan Times*, Translated by Carrie Edwards, https://sustainable.japantimes.com/magazine/vol06/06-05; Oki, "Calling us *minzoku*".
[202] The series was created by Noda Satoru, a Wajin man from Hokkaido, with expertise from various experts of Ainu culture. Asirpa, a young girl of mixed Yaun Mosir Ainu, Enciw, and Polish heritage is the deuteragonist of the series. She is played by Wajin actress Yamada Anna in the live-action film.
[203] Ito Rika, "Please take her as your wife: Mediatizing indigenous Ainu in the Japanese anime, Golden Kamuy," *Language, Culture and Society* (2024), 1, https://doi.org/10.1075/lcs.21020.ito.
[204] Koarai Ryo, "Hokkaido as imperial acquisition and the Ainu in popular culture and tourism," in *War as Entertainment and Contents Tourism in Japan*, ed. Yamamura Takayoshi and Philip Seaton (London: Routledge, 2022), 76.
[205] Panel at the Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Memorial Museum as of 2023 entitled "My grandfather, my father and me," written by director Kenichi Kawamura.

museum puts it, it is "part of history, and the role of the museum is to preserve and convey that history, which would otherwise be lost". [206]

21 Golden Kamuy stamp rally that features several Ainu-related locations in Yaun Mosir such as Upopoy or Akan, initiated in 2020



22 Ainu-owned shop in Akan advertising carved makiri (knives) with Asirpa from Golden Kamuy

In most other history museums in Yaun Mosir, this is quite different. Michele Mason's fieldwork in 2012 found that most museum representations of the Ainu remain strictly culture focused, reflecting the "enduring power of modern Japanese ideology".[207] This is confirmed by Marrianne Ubalde's fieldwork in 2020. [208] Murata Mariko argues that a discourse of "decolonization" (*datsushokuminchika*) is largely absent in the Japanese museum scene, though a 2023 article in *artscape,* Japan's largest curatorial magazine, briefly discusses the issue.[209] While

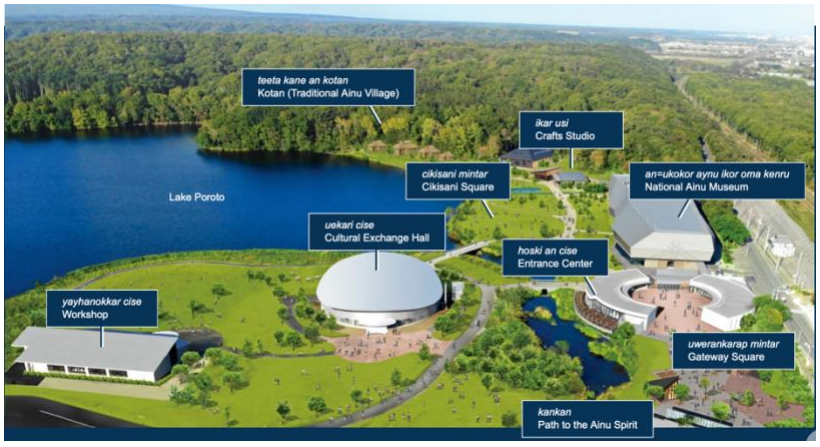
[206] Panels at the museum as of 2023 entitled "The Kawamura Family Story" and "My grandfather, my father and me," written by director Kenichi Kawamura.
[207] Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan*, 160.
[208] Marianne Ubalde, "A Survey on the Representation of Ainu People," *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum* 14, No. 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.18848/1835-2014/CGP/v14i01/29-48.
[209] Murata Mariko, "Decolonizing Museums through Exhibits/Exhibitions: Methods to Deconstruct the 'Colonial Technology'," *Kansai Daigaku Shakaigakubu Kiyō* 53, No. 1 (2021), 152; Yamaki Kasumi, "Myūjiamu ni okeru datsu shokuminchishugi − shinguru sutōrī kara no dakkyaku," ((Decolonization in Museums: Moving Away from Single Stories), *artscape*, Feb 15, 2023. https://artscape.jp/focus/10182871_1635.html. Some other articles also mention it, but not in relation to Japan.

awareness of the Ainu might be at an all-time high, Ubalde's survey suggests that many Japanese people have no ambitions to visit any Ainu-related exhibitions, and even those that do retain stereotypical images of the Ainu.[210] As the new National Ainu Museum and Park is expected to become the entry space for all things Ainu, Ainu counternarratives may have finally gotten a new stage – or the Japanese government's narrative will fully take root unchallenged.

[210] Ubalde, "A Survey on the Representation of Ainu People".

Settler Memory, Ainu Narratives, and "Ethnic Harmony" at the National Ainu Museum

On the surface, Upopoy, the National Ainu Museum and Park, seems like an incredible step in Ainu-Wajin relations. As a national institution and a "symbolic space for ethnic harmony" it rings in a future in which "indigenous people are treated with respect and dignity, without discrimination".[211] Upopoy lies on the shores of Lake Poroto, surrounded by the natural landscape of Yaun Mosir, yet standing out against the modest buildings in the rest of Shiraoi. The National Ainu Museum (NAM) forms the heart of the ethnic harmony complex and promises to uphold its mission "to respect the dignity of the Ainu as an Indigenous People, promote correct knowledge and understanding concerning Ainu history and culture at home and abroad, and contribute to the further development and creation of new Ainu culture".[212] The Upopoy complex also includes, among other things, a Cultural Exchange Hall, which showcases Ainu dances and songs, a *Kotan* –a traditional Ainu Village consisting of 4 *cise* (traditional houses)– a Crafts Studio, and a workshop. Cafés, restaurants, and souvenir shops complete the facilities.



23 Aerial view of Upopoy

[211] "About Upopoy," Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park, https://ainu-upopoy.jp/en/about/.
[212] "About the Museum," National Ainu Museum, https://nam.go.jp/en/about/.

The National Ainu Museum

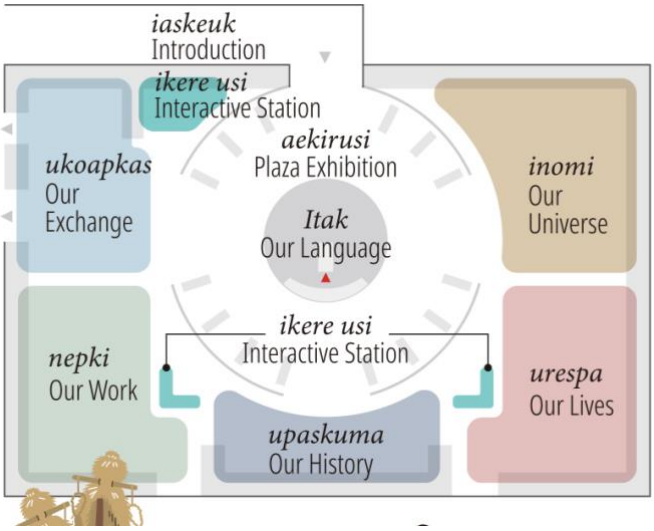
The layout of the park organically encourages visitors to visit the National Ainu Museum before heading into other areas of the park. The museum itself consists of two floors, with the second floor housing the actual exhibition hall, while the first floor is home to a movie theater, an information counter, the museum shop, the library, and visitor facilities such as lockers and bathrooms. Several curators and the director state that the museological practice underlying NAM is that of the "forum" and "place of discussion", meaning that the museum is supposed to be an active agent promoting cultural understanding, dialogue, and social change rather than being mere repositories of knowledge.[213] In a paper outlining the creation of the National Ainu Museum, director Sasaki Shiro also states that the museum, which acts as a tourism facility, social education facility, and research institute, was made with the knowledge that many visitors may have no prior knowledge of the Ainu.[214]

The actual exhibition space on the second floor is split into a permanent exhibition room and a special exhibition room, which usually hosts exhibitions "relating to studies and research into the culture of the Ainu and other indigenous peoples". The permanent exhibition is housed within a large room measuring 1,250 square meters. The main exhibition hall can be visited virtually via a special 3D tour created by the museum, though not all panel texts can be viewed easily.[215]

[213] Sasaki Shiro, "Anukokoro Ainu ikoromakenru: Shin kokuritsu hakubutsukan setsuritsu e no michi," (The road to establishing a new national museum) *Kikan minzoku-gaku* (Quarterly Ethnology) 44, No. 1 (2020): 3-10; Tateishi Shinichi, "A Practical Attempt to Create a Museum as a Forum: The Exhibition Spaces of the National Ainu Museum," *Japan Border Review* 12 (2022), https://doi.org/10.14943/jbr.12.107.
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] Find the virtual exhibition at https://nam-vm.jp/matterport/?language=english.

Similarly, the audio guide is available to download even if not on-site.[216] Because the exhibition is accessible online, I will not discuss the layout and the other sections in too much detail.

Overall, around 800 objects are usually displayed in the exhibition room, most behind glass cases, though specific areas for hands-on experiences (*Tempa Tempa*) are provided. The floor plan is very open and encourages the visitor to freely move between the six thematic areas ("Our Universe", "Our Lives", "Our Work", "Our Exchange", and "Our History"), which are clustered around the central topic of "Our Language". Though no official order of engaging with the thematic areas is suggested, the website and brochures list the different thematic areas in an order that translates to the visitor flow in the museum. In general, each area contains objects from the past and present, introducing visitors to both traditional and contemporary Ainu life.



24 Overview of the permanent exhibition

25 The exhibition room in March 2024

[216] The audio guide is available in Japanese, English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Russian and Thai on the Apple Store at https://apps.apple.com/jp/app/ウポポイ公式音声ガイドアプリ/id1503370916 and on the Google Play Store at https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.acoustiguidemobile.am_ainu.

Harmonizing Narratives: The Birth of the National Ainu Museum

The historical narrative of the National Ainu Museum is important because it presents its *raison d'etre*, beyond being a tourist hub, as promoting "correct knowledge and understanding concerning Ainu history and culture at home and abroad". Overall, the museum is primarily culture based, reflecting the larger ambitions of the Japanese government to specifically promote "Ainu culture" rather than Ainu existence and self-determination as a whole.[217] The Museum was tentatively named "National Ainu Culture Museum (*kokuritsu ainu bunka hakubutsukan* until relatively late in the establishment process, but is now named *Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan* in Japanese, with *minzoku* roughly meaning "ethnic group".[218] Both the term "national (*kokuritsu*)" and "museum (*hakubutsukan*)" are significant in a Japanese context. The designation as a "museum", rather than as a museum-like facility, comes with specific requirements that an institution must fulfill.[219] Other Ainu museums, such as the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum, also have the designation of *hakubutsukan*, though many of the community-run institutions are classified as *shiryōkan* (literally historical materials hall) or *kinenkan* (memorial hall). The designation of "national" means that the museum has been established by the state and is overseen by the Ministry for Cultural Affairs. There are only twelve national museums in Japan.[220] The National Ainu Museum is the northernmost national museum and the only one to be specifically dedicated to an Indigenous group. In the case of Upopoy, the Foundation for Ainu Culture, which

[217] Jeff Gayman, Kanako Uzawa, and Ryoko Nakamura, "The Indigenous World 2023: Japan," *The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA),* https://www.iwgia.org/en/japan/5121-iw-2023-japan.html.
[218] Supposedly, some newspapers have a rule that any reporting on the Ainu must use the phrase "*Ainu minzoku*" rather than simply using Ainu, which they consider rude. This rule has been met with mixed reactions from the Ainu community, with some considering it to be Othering. See Oki, "Calling Us Minzoku, an Ethnic Group," *Discuss Japan — Japan Foreign Policy Forum* 78 (2023), https://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/culture/pt20231019150005134 38.html; For a differing view see Grunow et al., "Hokkaido 150", 614.
[219] For a thorough explanation please refer to "Present Status of Museum in Japan," *Japanese Association of Museums,* https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bijutsukan_hakubutsukan/shinko/pamphlet/pdf/r1409436_02.pdf.
[220] For a list of National Museums in Japan see https://www.bunka.go.jp/nmportal/.

had first been established by the national government in the context of the 1997 Ainu Act, was designated as the sole cooperation to carry out the work stipulated in the 2019 law. As such, the Foundation is in charge of the operation and management of Upopoy. The Foundation is ultimately overseen by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. It is unclear how much direct control various government actors have over the narratives at Upopoy.

After their 2008 "Resolution to Recognize the Ainu as an Indigenous People", the Japanese government established an expert panel that should review Ainu history and their Indigeneity to make recommendations for future policy. After one year, the Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy published a formal report that suggested the government legally recognize the Ainu as Indigenous and build the Symbolic Space for Ethnic Harmony as a measure for revitalizing Ainu culture.[221] The version of history presented in this report is relatively uncritical and overall follows the grand narrative of "Hokkaido Development" by brave frontiers. For example, the report states that "Although such assimilation policies since the Meiji Period were basically introduced to civilize Ainu people, it must be admitted that the policies inflicted decisive damage on the distinctive Ainu culture", which acknowledges responsibility to some degree, but still suggests the Meiji government's goals were ultimately noble, as well as perpetuating the idea that the Ainu were somehow "uncivilized".[222] The loss of Ainu culture is naturalized as an inevitable consequence of becoming "modern", rhetorically absolving the Japanese government from any responsibility.[223]

[221] "Overview of Ainu Policy in Japan," Ainu Policy Promotion Headquarters, https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ainusuishin/index_e.html.
[222]Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy, *Final Report*, Provisional Translation, July 2009: 9. https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ainusuishin/pdf/siryou1_en.pdf.
[223] Michele Mason names this ability to recognize negative consequences of colonization but naturalizing them as inevitable as one of the strengths of the "k*aitaku* master narrative" in *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan*, 148.

Most importantly, the report does not recognize the history of Yaun Mosir as that of settler colonialism, instead stating that "the government also promoted the *mainlandization* and development of Hokkaido through a large-scale immigration of Wajin" (author's italics).[224] As some critics have pointed out, the version of history included in this report ultimately forms the basis of the National Ainu Museum's narrative.[225]

Establishing Upopoy as a national institution means that the National Ainu Museum is national first and Ainu second. There has been criticism as to the degree of Ainu involvement in the planning and realization of Upopoy.[226] Some critical voices argue that what the Japanese government values is not the Ainu itself, but rather their tourism potential.[227] From the beginning, Upopoy was planned as a symbol of multiculturalism for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The passing of the 2019 law and establishment of Upopoy itself clearly involved consideration of the 2020 Olympic games in Tokyo. The consultation process and drafting of the law were accelerated, as national media noted at the time, out of a "desire to present an appealing image of ethnic harmony [*minzoku no kyōsei*] to the world with an eye to next year's Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics".[228] This is reminiscent of the government's 2008 resolution to recognize the Ainu as Indigenous, which as ann-elise lewallen notes, was similarly rushed in consideration of the G8 Summit in Yaun Mosir

[224] Ibid., 8.
[225] Maruyama Hiroshi "Upopoi to wa nani ka" (What is Upopoy?) In *Upopoi ni tsuite kangaeyō* (Let's think about Upopoy), *The Citizens' Alliance for the Examination of Ainu Policy Annual Report 2019-2020* (Jan 15 2021), 4.
[226] Leni Charbonneau, Hiroshi Maruyama and Mashiyat Zaman, "Critiquing the Colonialist Origins of the New National Museum Upopoy," *Human Rights Osaka: Focus Japan* 107 (2022), https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section3/2022/03/critiquing-the-colonialist-origins-of-the-new-national-museum-upopoy.html#7.
[227] Leni Charbonneau and Hiroshi Maruyama, "A Critique on the New Ainu Policy: How Japan's Politics of Recognition Fails to Fulfill the Ainu's Indigenous Rights," *Human Rights Osaka: Focus Japan 96* (2019), https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section3/2019/06/a-critique-on-the-new-ainu-policy-how-japans-politics-of-recognition-fails-to-fulfill-the-ainus-indi.html.
[228] Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Indigenous Rights and the Harmony Olympics," *The Asia-Pacific Journal –Japan Focus* 18 (4), No. 6 (2020), https://apjjf.org/2020/4/morris-suzuki.

later that year.[229] Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide, who was highly involved in the drafting process of the 2019 law, poignantly exclaimed, "Having the world understand the splendid aspects of Ainu culture will contribute to international goodwill and lead to promotion of tourism".[230] The focus on ethnic harmony, often translated in the Olympic context as "unity in diversity", means that negative aspects of history may disrupt the narrative.

Representing Difficult Histories: Upopoy in the Context of Memory Wars

Roslynn Ang suggests that "the difficulty of representing Ainu culture and history is not because Ainu heritage is a problematic or difficult heritage. This is a symptom of a larger and broader problem, that of interlocking settler relations, desires, and the lack of analysis on these connections".[231] The ongoing structure of settler colonialism in Yaun Mosir means that dominant narratives of history "(re)produce domination and appropriation" and legitimize claims to territory.[232] The logic of *terra nullius* germinates beyond the Japanese state's justification for declaring Yaun Mosir as unequivocally their territory, it permeates the realms of collective memory and becomes a "memory for forgetfulness" that eliminates claims for decolonization and memory for past wrongdoing. But as Kevin Bruyneel argues, settler memory does not merely mean that the Ainu are often forgotten, subsumed in the grand narrative of *kaitaku* (development), modernization, and civilization – rather it is the ability to know but disavow historical and current colonial violence

[229] ann-elise lewallen, "Indigenous At Last! Ainu Grassroots Organizing And The Indigenous Peoples Summit In Ainu Mosir," *The Asia-Pacific Journal –Japan Focus* 6, Iss. 11 (2008), https://apjjf.org/ann-elise-lewallen/2971/article.
[230] "Bill," *Asahi Shimbun*.
[231] Ang, "Whose Difficult Heritage," 60.
[232] Sabbagh-Khoury, "Memory for forgetfulness," 264.

against Indigenous peoples, that is a crucial element in the establishment and sustainment of settler-colonial states.[233]

When questioned about how the Museum intended to portray the historical discrimination against the Ainu, then-minister Hagiuda Koichi stated that

> There were supposedly different values between the Aborigines ["*genjūmin*", *sic*] and the Japanese. I maintain a distance from opinions that these different values should be recorded as discrimination against the ethnic minority by the majority. If there is a negative or sad history in the relationship between the Aborigines [*sic*] and the Japanese peoples, it is of importance that memorial keepers tell it or record it at Upopoy. I do not deny it and I will not close my eyes to it. However, the efforts of the Museum are to promote the positive aspects of the Ainu culture in a way that is future-oriented.[234]

The future-oriented, reconciliation (on terms set by the colonizer), ethnic harmony approach the Japanese government takes is itself a feature of settler colonial memory. As Sarah Maddison argues for the case of Australia, "the memory of historical colonial brutality feeds a sense of moral illegitimacy among contemporary policy actors, it in turn drives a desire to draw a line under the past—to pursue a moment of colonial 'completion'"[235]. Museums in such a context have transformative power as tools that can disrupt the dominant narrative – but if the museum's overarching goal itself is to achieve "ethnic harmony", reminders of past trauma are not ideal.

Moreover, the museum must be mindful of the right-wing factions that frequently target historical narratives in textbooks, scholarly works, and museums. Tozawa Emi writes that visiting museums that accurately portray the history of Japanese imperialism may "require bravery" as "those sites and visitors are sometimes monitored by right-wing citizens".[236] Although Ainu

[233] Bruyneel, *Settler Memory,* 37.
[234] Translated quote retrieved from Charbonneau, Maruyama, and Zaman, "Critiquing the Colonialist Origins of the New National Museum Upopoy". The term "*genjūmin*" as opposed to "*senjūmin*" is often seen as discriminatory because the kanji 原 (*gen*) can mean "primitive". Another problematic term used sometimes is *dojin*. The phrase translated as "Japanese" is "*atarashiku kaitaku-sareru minasan*" (the newly arrived people doing the development).
[235] Maddison, "The Limits of the Administration of Memory in Settler Colonial Societies", 181.
[236] Tozawa, "Can it be a Gamechanger?," 5.

discrimination was made illegal under the 2019 law, it is still extremely widespread on social media and in real life. In fact, Ainu denial has increased after the Diet resolution Calling for the Recognition of the Ainu people as an Indigenous People in June 2008, and escalated after the 2019 legal recognition.[237]

Indeed, as NAM curator Tamura Masato, who worked in the Hokkaido Museum for eight years prior, explains, there was much discourse on how to exhibit Ainu people's experience of discrimination. He writes, "This is because if we emphasized too much the experiences of discrimination, there was a risk that elementary school students in particular would come to think that the Ainu people are people who can easily be bullied".[238] He explains further that his fears stem from real-life cases in which children overhear their parents talking about Ainu and then reproduce these sentiments at school. This discourse seems to be in part influenced by the Burakumin[239] Dowa education debate, where the concept of "don't wake up a sleeping baby" (*neta ko wo okosuna*) refers to the idea that "Buraku discrimination will go away only if we don't make a fuss about it". [240] This method is highly controversial and is thought to increase discrimination. Tamura goes on to explain that "it goes without saying that there was a proviso that the exhibition should not hide the historical facts of the experiences of discrimination".[241] However, an article in the weekly *Bunshun* tabloid quotes an museum official at Upopoy as saying, "Regarding the exhibition policy of the National Ainu Museum, the Exhibition Review Committee requested that

[237] Winchester, "Backlash".
[238] Tamura Masato, "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan no kihon tenji de tsutaetaikoto," (What the National Ainu Museum's Basic Exhibition Wants to Communicate), *artscape*, https://artscape.jp/report/curator/10165945_1634.html.
[239] Burakumin are racialized Wajin that were 'outcastes' of the caste-like Tokugawa social system that continue to experience discrimination.
[240] Mori Minoru and Yasumasa Hirasawa, "DOWA Education and Human Rights," *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools Volume I* (1998) https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/human_rights_education_in_asian_schools/section2/1998/03/dowa-education-and-human-rights.html.
[241] Tamura, "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan," (The National Ainu Museum).

'we do not want to focus on dark aspects such as discrimination'".[242] It is in this delicate environment that the historical narrative of the National Ainu Museum is situated.

"Our" History at the National Ainu Museum

The section "Our History" is the smallest out of all the themes, although as curator Tamura Masato says, this is because the main objects on display here are informational panels and papers, which take up less space overall.[243] The audio guide presents the central theme of "Our History" as introducing

> the multi-faceted space of expanding exchange between the Ainu and the surrounding ethnic groups placed within a historical framework that stretches from the Stone Age […] to the present. We will focus on important figures as we present the history of the Ainu, and examine and explain the prejudice they continue to experience from several viewpoints and perspectives.

While this aligns overall with how difficult histories should be represented in museums, the actual exhibition falls short of achieving a multidimensional perspective.

27 "Our History" section in March 2024

26 Supplementary panels that introduce Ainu individuals and provide extra information

[242] Yasuda Minetoshi, "Abe seiken saidai no kōseki wa "Ainu hakubutsukan"datta? 200 Oku-en o buchi konda `upopoi' no kyojitsu," (Was the Ainu Museum the Abe administration's greatest achievement? The truth behind "Upopoy", which cost 20 billion yen) *Bunshun Online*, Oct 13 2020, https://bunshun.jp/articles/-/40841?page=4.
[243] Tamura, "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan" (The National Ainu Museum).

The section starts with "Ainu History as Seen through Archeological Sites" and stretches all the way to the post-war era, aligning with the museum's stated goal of presenting the Ainu as the culmination of a long history of inhabitation of Yaun Mosir. The explanatory texts at the National Ainu Museum consistently use the term "Hokkaido" to refer to Yaun Mosir, even when speaking of the entity before the term was invented, though the Ainu-language texts use "Yaun Mosir". The early history of Yaun Mosir is demonstrated by different types of pottery. The rest of the History section is structured by large information panels on the wall that introduce larger topics in a chronological order, while supplementary panels towards the bottom of the display case provide a more detailed timeline by citing actual dates and events. The texts are supplemented by paper materials such as maps and written contracts, while smaller panels scattered throughout introduce Ainu individuals connected to contemporaneous events. Some smaller panels are also used to give more in-depth explanations about certain developments, e.g. explaining certain laws that passed. It is of note that although the museum states that "Ainu is used as the first language for explanatory panels and signage throughout the museum", most of the smaller panels are in Japanese and English only, while some smaller labels are just in Japanese.[244] It seems that some of the smaller panels are available in the Ainu language in the audio guide.

An overarching theme that runs throughout the history exhibit (and indeed, the NAM at large), is that the information, while technically correct, lacks substance and the needed critical assessment. Rather than presenting difficult histories as Julia Rose recommends – in a multidimensional way, using the active voice, and challenging dominant narratives – at the National Ainu Museum, information is presented rather superficially, and negative history is

[244] "About the Museum."

rendered in a neutral voice.[245] The museum claims that history and culture are "presented from an Ainu point of view" by using phrases beginning with "our" when "Ainu themselves speak". The same is done in Japanese with the phrase "*watashitachi no*". The continuous narration from a "we" and "us" Ainu perspective works relatively well in the other, culture-focused sections, even when it sometimes leads to clumsy constructs in the Japanese texts (as Japanese rarely uses pronouns). In the history section however, it leads to lack of proper engagement with the meta narrative. In a certain sense, portraying history from a view that is supposed to speak for all Ainu simultaneously, including those from Yaun Mosir, Rutomu (the Kuril Islands), Yanke Mosir (Sakhalin), and the Amur River basin, means that individual narratives and regional specificities are neglected. Instead of making difficult history accessible and multidimensional by the inclusion of individuals that tell their personal stories, the use of passive voice makes histories of discrimination and oppression, even if mentioned, seem utterly distant. Talking about discrimination from supposedly personal experience while lacking any emotion when talking about it is incongruous. It also means that when certain problems are explicated, their origin (i.e. the Wajin) is not properly named. Ultimately, the individual or collective Ainu experience is only the end product.

The issue seems to have partially translated to the language used in both the panels and the audio guide, leading to sentences that are clearly written from a third person perspective such as "The Ainu crossed the seas to Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands, and Honshu where they freely traded", while others continue to use the we pronoun, such as "We were forced to learn Japanese, and live the same lives as the Japanese". Two staff members of Upopoy explain in an article that the original language of the exhibition design was Japanese, and that various staff members and experts translated them into Ainu. This prompted discussion on whether or not the Ainu-language texts

[245] Rose, *Difficult Histories*.

should be written from the point of view of the Ainu. The museum then decided that each Ainu translator should use the dialect and pronoun that they felt was best. The text was then re-translated into Japanese.[246] It seems that the English text, most likely having been translated from the Japanese, thus reflects the ambiguity in the Japanese text. Overall though, the switch between first and third person is sometimes unnoticeable, as either phrasing is ultimately rendered neutral and impersonal in the text.

Colonization, Modernization, Development – What's In a Name?

Ainu history proper (rather than pre-history in Yaun Mosir) is introduced with the second panel, entitled "Fluctuations in Ainu Trade". It explains that Ainu people had "engaged freely in trade with peoples from surrounding areas, and many Wajin (ethnic Japanese) relocated to Hokkaido to trade with them" until the Matsumae gained the monopoly. They "gradually restricted the Ainu's trading sphere" and later "contracted this commercial fishing industry out to Wajin merchants, who forced many Ainu to work for them catching herring, salmon, and other marine products". While this information is correct, it fails to clarify that exploitation at the fisheries basically amounted to slavery, and that the conditions were dehumanizing and horrible.[247] Supplementary panels give some extra information on the Japanization policies of the Tokugawa Shogunate, changes in trade, and the use of Ainu laborers, although they continue using overly

[246] Kobayashi Miki and Fukusawa Mika, "Daiichigengo o ainukotoba ni suru tame ni − kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan no chosen," (Making Ainu the First Language: The Challenge of the National Ainu Museum), *artscape*, https://artscape.jp/report/curator/10175513_1634.html.
[247] A Wajin visitor at such a fishery in 1808 describes the Ainu's treatment at the hands of the overseers as being like "the demon torturers at the court of the fiery king punishing sinners", see Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, 45.

neutral language. An extra full-size panel in this section also shows a map of Ainu Mosir and "interventions into Hokkaido by surrounding countries between the 17th and early 19th century".

The next section is arguably the most important and contentious, dedicated to the annexation and colonization of Yaun Mosir. This section is entitled "Great Changes in Our Lives" (*watshitachi no seikatsu ga ōkiku kawaru*). The panel reads as follows:

> The lands inhabited by the Ainu increasingly attracted Wajin (ethnic Japanese) from the south and Russians from the north. In the late 19th century, a border was drawn between Japan and Russia, dividing the areas in which we lived. Those of us in Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands who chose Japanese nationality were ordered to relocate to Hokkaido. Then, in Hokkaido, the Wajin forcibly relocated our Ainu ancestors, banning many of our customs. Prohibitions on traditional practices such as deer hunting and salmon fishing dealt an especially severe blow to our livelihoods.

The audio guide changes the phrasing from passive into active, saying that "The Japanese expanded north into those regions where the Ainu lived–Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands–while Russia expanded to its south". The language used in the audio guide in this section is stronger, more evocative, and more loaded, using phrasing such as "The Ainu peoples experienced incredible hardship" and "We were forced to learn Japanese, and live the same lives as the Japanese".

While many things introduced in this section, such as the shrinking Ainu population vs. the growing Wajin population, the gradual loss of the Ainu language as a first language, the prohibition of traditional customs, and unfair contracts, are critical in their content, the language throughout continues to be oddly detached and clinical. Facts are presented without emotional commentary, often resulting in a tone that fails to convey the full weight of the subject matter. While a certain degree of objectivity is desirable in museum exhibits, the National Ainu Museum often misses its mark by not engaging with the emotional or ethical dimensions of the subject matter. This is especially remarkable when considering that the panel texts continue using the "we" perspective. The discrimination experienced by Ainu is thus equally rendered utterly emotionless and extremely

brief. For example, when explaining why many Ainu referred to themselves as "*Utari*" in the post-War era, a supplementary panel merely states that

> Wajin (ethnic Japanese), who became the majority of residents in Hokkaido, began using the term 'Ainu' (aynu means "humans" in Ainu) with a discriminatory connotation, so the Ainu came to refer to themselves as 'Utari' (utari means 'relatives' or 'compatriots').

In a research paper about Native American representations in museums, Indigenous curator Nancy Mithlo and psychologist Aleksandra Sherman argue that non-Indigenous visitors most likely hold prejudiced views about Native Americans, and museums "being 'objective' and offering no context can make these biases stronger".[248] Speaking in the case of history education in Northern Ireland, where bias towards one side is extremer, Keith Barton and Alan McCully similarly write that

> The neutral and balanced approach to history education […] may not be enough to develop deep, complex, and resilient understandings of history. […] It may do little, that is, to challenge [students'] affective attachment to particular interpretations of the past—particularly when links to contemporary community identifications go unexamined.[249]

They suggest that to productively engage with history, interpretation needs to encourage emotional engagement, reflection of biases, and greater complexity.[250] The exhibition texts at the National Ainu Museum thus do little to challenge or subvert dominant understandings of Yaun Mosir's "development" in a way that inspires a more nuanced settler consciousness.

Perhaps echoing the sentiment that curators wanted to avoid portraying the Ainu as potential bullying victims, the final main panel contextualizes Ainu discrimination through Ainu resistance

[248] Nancy Mithlo and Aleksandra Sherman, "Perspective-Taking Can Lead to Increased Bias: A Call for 'Less Certain' Positions in American Indian Contexts," *Curator: The Museum Journ*al 63, No.3, (2020), 367, https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12373.
[249] Keith Barton and Alan McCully, "Trying to 'See Things Differently': Northern Ireland Students' Struggle to Understand Alternative Historical Perspectives," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 40, No. 4 (2012), 400, https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2012.710928. I would like to thank Carina Schröter for pointing me to this source.
[250] *Ibid.*

by describing that "We Ainu have stood up against discrimination directed against us by Wajin (ethnic Japanese) and have supported one another to help pull ourselves out of poverty and improve our livelihoods". While this may be a satisfying conclusion to the trials and tribulations of history from a narrative point of view, it does not accurately reflect reality. Many Ainu still live in poverty, as set up by racist colonial policies and continued discrimination. Strangely, this line of argument is completely absent from the audio guide, which instead declares that "At long last, many people remarked that this prejudice should be brought under control".

This section of the museum includes the introduction of many different Ainu leaders and figures like Kayano Shigeru, Chiri Mashiho, and Nomura Gi'ichi. The inclusion of these biographies is used to address negative aspects of Ainu history by reframing them through the fight against them. For example, Yamamoto Tasuke criticized "the attitude of Wajin (ethnic Japanese) researchers towards Ainu research", and in response "established an ethnological society of his own". Another small panel explains the issue further by saying that

> From the 1970s, Ainu raised vocal opposition to the attitudes of researchers – mainly Wajin (ethnic Japanese)– toward Ainu studies. They protested against physical anthropologists having taken Ainu human remains from graves from the late 19th century and against cultural anthropologists having viewed the Ainu as an uncivilized people.

It is important for the museum to have brought this up, and their efforts to center Ainu agency is certainly laudable. However, by placing all of the agency on the Ainu, it oftentimes remains unclear where certain problems stem from – specifically, that Wajin had the agency to cause these problems in the first place. Why, as Upopoy states, is Ainu culture "on the verge of extinction" and why does it "remain under threat"?[251] Trying to end the history exhibit on a more optimistic note makes sense if the goal is to achieve "ethnic harmony", but by doing so the museum paints a picture that does

[251] "About the Museum"; Zaman, Charbonneau and Maruyama, "Critiquing".

not accurately reflect Ainu existence. Furthermore, this framing suggests that these issues are now resolved, failing to characterize them as ongoing issues.

The terms "colonization" (*shokumin*) or "settler colonialism" (usually rendered in Japanese as a direct transcription of the English term, though the term *nyūshoku-sha shokuminchishugi* exists) are completely absent from the exhibition texts at the National Ainu Museum. The only time the term "colonization" is visible is on the exhibited transcript of Nomura Gi'ichi's 1992 speech in front of the UN General Assembly during the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. In this speech Gi'ichi says that

> In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the land of the Ainu people was unilaterally appropriated by the government of Japan under the auspices of a large-scale colonization and development project known as 'Hokkaido Kaitaku'.

However, the original Japanese version merely speaks of a large-scale development work (*daikibo kaihatsujigyō*).[252]

It seems significant that the 2016 exhibition plan alludes to colonial land division (specifically using 殖民地 *shokuminchi* to mean colony with a rarely used older kanji form), while this phrasing is no longer used in the finished exhibition.[253] Instead, the act is described using various, often euphemistic terms such as "internalization" (*naikoku-ka*) or "domestication" (*kachiku-ka*), or simply saying that "the lands inhabited by the Ainu increasingly attracted Wajin". Interestingly, a video projected above the history section that recounts major events in Japanese and world history, while relating it to Ainu events, speaks of the "Annexation of Ryukyu"

[252] I have noticed that *kaitaku* is frequently translated as "colonization" or "colonial" in English-language scholarship, even though the original Japanese term does not have the same connotations.
[253] "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan tenji keikaku." (National Ainu Museum Exhibition Plan), Agency for Cultural Affairs Japan, https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bunkazai/ainu/museum_tenjikeikaku/; Ueki gives an in-depth explanation on the semantic differences conveyed by the different kanji for this term, see Ueki, *Shokumin-gaku no kioku* (Memories of Colonial Studies), 129 et seqq.

(*Ryūkyūshobun*) in 1879.[254] Yaun Mosir "becomes a territory of Japan" (*Hokkaidō ga nihon no ryōdo ni naru)* in 1868 instead.

As Uemura Hideaki, a social activist and professor emeritus points out, "the modern Japanese state completely eliminated the possibility to talk about the true essence of [(settler) colonialism] by skillfully changing words".[255] Uemura argues that this is why continued Japanese colonialism cannot properly be discussed and confronted. Similarly, trying to understand the realities of Ainu discrimination without recognizing the situation of Yaun Mosir as a settler colony (neither as a structure nor as an event) ultimately downplays the systemic, structural, and eliminatory nature of Ainu oppression. It also misplaces the responsibility for the decline and change of Ainu culture. As many scholars argue, modern Ainu identity emerged out of the ongoing negotiation with the settler-colonial structure, and the confrontation with marginalization and racism this system mandates.[256] If the goal of the Japanese government had simply been "development", "modernization", and "domestication", the elimination of the Ainu through cultural genocide would not have been necessary.

It is perhaps the careful circumvention of terms that too strongly implicate the Japanese government (and Wajin settlers) in creating destructive and harmful structures that the museum fails to explain what it actually means for the Ainu to be "an indigenous people". The term "Indigenous" necessitates a situation of colonization, as this situation is what makes the distinction

[254] The *shobun* of *Ryūkyū shobun* technically means disposition or disposal, and its translation as "annexation" is not uncontroversial.
[255] Uemura Hideaki, "Shokuminchishugi wa naze kokufuku sa renai no ka? - Towa rerubeki Nihon shakai no arikata," (Why has colonialism not been overcome? - The state of Japanese society that must be questioned) *Kokusai jinken hiroba nanbā* (International Human Rights Forum) 173 (January 2024), https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/newsletter/section4/2024/01/post-201980.html.
[256] Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*.

between native inhabitants and invaders necessary. As the UN working definition of Indigenous states,

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them.[257]

This would further invite discussion of UNDRIP, Indigenous rights, and politics, and as such introduce many contentious issues. It would however be an important chance for contextualizing and counteracting the narratives of the right-wing Ainu deniers that inhabit many spaces in local and national governance.

Historical Narrative in Other Sections

Though all sections of the museum are technically historical in their outlook, as they include both traditional and contemporary Ainu culture, there is little explicit explanation of what historical developments motivated the changes in Ainu lifestyles. In that regard, one of the most interesting parts is the "Our Work" section. The current exhibit is ideologically split into two parts. Ancestral Ainu work, such as hunting, farming, fishing, agriculture, and trade are illustrated by various tools and dioramas. Modern jobs are introduced through the stories of individual Ainu. Though the second area, structured by standees with individual stories, also include 19th and 20th century jobs such as surveyor and forester, the focus lies on modern jobs such as chef or office worker. What is intriguing about this exhibit is its difference to the one in the original 2016 exhibition plan. This thematic exhibit was planned to introduce three distinct time periods, "Ancestor's Work" (the late

[257] United Nations, "The Concept of Indigenous Peoples," *Background paper prepared by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues* (2004), https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop_data_background.doc.

Edo to Meiji periods), "During Turbulent Times" (*gekidō no shidai no naka de*) (the Meiji to Showa periods), and "Modern Jobs" (Heisei period onwards).[258]

While the first part envisioned in the plan is similar to the current "traditional" exhibit, the second and third eras are now combined into a single category of "modern". The original strategy had been to show explicitly how work changed during "modernization", explaining that Ainu survived by taking on new jobs despite "facing hardship and discrimination", with modernization-era jobs including fishery, livestock, and tourism among other things. The term *gekidō* (violent shock, turmoil), as used in the exhibition plan, would have emphasized the impact colonization had on traditional Ainu life. Though the Meiji period implicitly still serves as the dividing point between traditional and modern in the current exhibit, by not explicitly mentioning the start of formal colonization and its importance for the change in Ainu livelihoods, this traumatic era is effectively glossed over.

As with other changes made between the exhibition plan and the final museum exhibits, one can only speculate over the reasoning behind them. It is also notable that the audio guide still seems to be divided into three sections, "The Work of Our Ancestors", "A Time of Turmoil", and "Ainu Occupations Today". "A Time of Turmoil" does not exist as a written panel in the current exhibition, but a small label indicating its presence in the audio guide is hidden behind a touch screen showing videos instead. This is interesting, because the audio guide uses fairly strong language here, such as saying that "the assimilation policies of the Japanese government from the second half of the 19th century robbed the Ainu people of their lands, their language, and their mode

[258] "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan tenji keikaku" (National Ainu Museum Exhibition Plan).

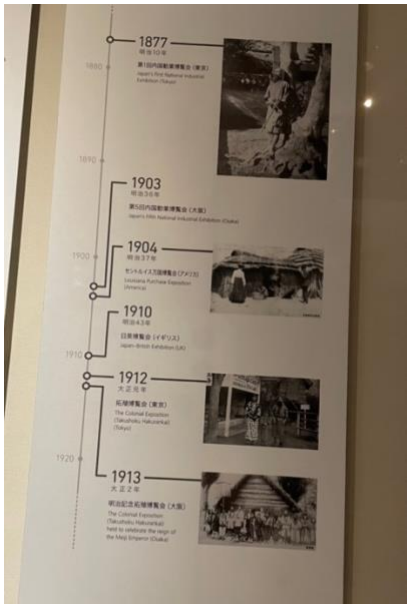
of life" or that "in the tumultuous times from the second half of the 19th century, the Ainu engaged with a variety of professions while encountering racial prejudice and hardship".

Another intriguing part is "Our Exchange", which juxtaposes different interactions between the Ainu and other cultures. This section also introduces the history of Ainu tourism and Ainu exhibitions briefly. A panel uncritically explains that "In the early 20th century, new tourist destinations were developed across Hokkaido. Some of us Ainu began earning our living by introducing our traditional culture to visitors". Next to that is a timeline of "major expositions/exhibitions in which Ainu have participated" in the early 20th century. A sign below neutrally explains that

> Expositions began in Europe in the 18th century. The first to be held in Japan was held in 1877. Subsequent expositions included 'live' exhibits. These featured indigenous peoples of Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and Taiwan living on their exposition sites to display their way of live.

There is no critical assessment of the Ainu involvement in these expositions and of the dehumanization experienced through participation in such "human zoos". This lack of critical engagement with the history of the Ainu as living exhibits represents a missed opportunity, as it could have served as a nuanced exploration of Ainu-Wajin relations in the Japanese empire.[259]

[259] For example, Ainu Fushine Kōzō used the Human Pavillion at the 1903 Osaka expo to raise funds for an Ainu school, while the idea of seeing fellow members of the imperial nation on display inspired critical discussions of the primitive/civilized dichotomy in the Japanese public sphere at the time, see Ziomek, "The 1903 Human Pavilion".



28 Panel in the "Our Exchange" section in March 2024

Telling the Ainu Story, or Telling the Nation's Story?

Overall, the National Ainu Museum falls short of its mission to promote "correct knowledge and understanding concerning Ainu history". Difficult history is narrated in a one-dimensional, unspecific, and overly neutral way. The museum fails to properly contextualize Ainu discrimination and oppression within the structure of settler colonialism in Yaun Mosir. As such, it also misses the opportunity to properly refute common misconceptions about Ainu indigeneity and history. The National Ainu Museum achieves many aspects that Indigenous people have been fighting for in museum representation – such as positioning Ainu in the present rather than as frozen-in-time remnants of the past, clearly stating that the Ainu are Indigenous, promoting the revival of Ainu language and culture, and spreading overall awareness of the Ainu. But is a true understanding of Ainu culture and history possible without addressing the past properly? As critics point out, true transformative action for the Ainu can only be accomplished through the inclusion of critical Ainu voices, which "the government is continuing to obscure through symbolic facades", and a "genuine

confrontation with colonial history".[260] Upopoy has the potential to be transformative if such a confrontation is present within its narratives – so far, this has not been the case. As Martin Luther King famously said, "true peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice".[261] In the same sense, true "ethnic harmony" cannot be achieved without the presence of justice for the Ainu.

The Ainu Remains Controversy and the Upopoy Memorial Facility

A highly contentious aspect of Upopoy is the addition of a "Memorial Site". Thousands of Ainu remains were stolen from gravesites across Ainu Mosir by researchers affiliated with universities and used for race science as recently as 2011.[262] Since then, many Ainu have sought to reclaim their relatives or community members (often referred to collectively as "ancestors") through legal procedures, but requests for returns are usually restricted by various means. In 2019, most of the Ainu remains that had been collected from various universities and temporarily kept at Hokkaido University were transferred to a specially built facility in Upopoy. Around 1600 "ancestors" are now kept at Upopoy, while hundreds more remain at universities across Japan. Though Upopoy, the government, and the Ainu Association claim that this is supposed to be an interim solution until new repatriation procedures are established, only a very small percentage of ancestors have been released to relatives and communities.[263] Especially Enciw, both in Japan and

[260] Charbonneau and Maruyama, "A Critique".
[261] Martin Luther King Jr., *A Martin Luther King Treasury* (Yonkers: Educational Heritage, 1964), 30.
[262] Simon Scott, "Ainu fight for return of plundered ancestral remains," *The Japan Times*, Aug 12, 2013, https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2013/08/12/issues/ainu-fight-for-return-of-plundered-ancestral-remains/.
[263]For a more detailed description of the difficulties Ainu face when trying to reclaim their remains see Centre for Environmental and Minority Policy Studies, "Joint Submission to the 13th session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", April 2020, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Reportrepatriation/submissions-indigenous-peoples-ngos/CEMIPOS.pdf.

in Russia, have not been able to petition the release of their "ancestors", although Japanese Enciw leaders were finally involved when Yanke Mosir Ainu remains were transferred from Australia to Upopoy in 2023.[264]

The memorial facility consists of a cemetery, a memorial service facility, and a monument. It is located around 1.2 kilometers away from the museum and park. The main facility is an unsightly grey concrete block, made more Ainu-like by its outside wall containing casts of traditional Ainu grave markers, which reflect the different communities that remains were taken from.[265] It is not advertised to visitors beyond being mentioned on the map, and though technically accessible to the public, seems to be for Ainu community members themselves. However, even Ainu are reportedly not always able to access the inside of the memorial facility.[266] Many Ainu see this as a continuation of past injustices. Elder Kimura Fumio, whose family was forcibly relocated from Anesar Kotan (now Asahi village in Niikappu-gun) to Biratori, has been involved with the repatriation of Biratori Ainu remains kept at Hokkaido University. He recounts that

> Our ancestors were forcibly relocated from Anesaru Niikappu to Nukibetsu Biratori. Their human remains were excavated and kept in universities without our consent. The planned transfer of Ainu human remains to the new repository would be the third forcible relocation of the Ainu. The Japanese government and universities concerned should make every effort to return those human remains to us. Why do they think they can relocate those remains to the repository at Shiraoi without our consent?[267]

[264] Chiba Norikazu, "Remains of Sakhalin Ainu, who faced troubled history, set to return to Japan for 1st time," *The Mainichi,* March 12, 2023, https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230309/p2a/00m/0na/027000c.
[265] ann-elise lewallen, "Anthropology of Japan Series: Stoking Academic Colonialism or Nurturing Indigenous Futures? Japan's Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Polarizing Conversations" (Online Lecture, University of Colorado Boulder, Center for Asian Studies, April 17, 2024).
[266] Maruyama Hiroshi, "A Closer Look at a Sign in Upopoy," Oct 18, 2020, https://cemipos.org/upopoy-sign/.
[267]Maruyama Hiroshi and Leni Charbonneau, "Resistance for Repatriation: The Enduring Legacy of the Colonial Robbery of Ainu Graves," In *Decolonizing Futures: Collaborations for New Indigenous Horizons*, edited by Maruyama Hiroshi et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2022), 56.

Overall, the memorial facility is implicitly treated as a definitive solution by the Japanese government, and many Ainu activists feel that the Ainu Association is complicit in maintaining the obstacles that hinder the return of remains. The return of 101 "ancestors" to communities and individuals as of 2019 was made possible only through the involvement of Ainu not affiliated with the Association.[268]

29 Cemetery and memorial service facility

Many Ainu activists believe that Upopoy does not properly contextualize the history of the theft of remains and the establishment of the memorial site. A plaque was installed in front of the facility by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in October 2020, nearly three months after the opening of Upopoy. The plaque states the following:

> The remains of Ainu people and the items buried with them have long been studied by anthropologists and other researchers. Research into the origins of the people of the Japanese archipelago increased markedly during the middle of the Meiji Era. The remains of Ainu people were excavated and collected by researchers as part of this work, which continued into the Showa era. As a result, Ainu remains were stored as research materials in several universities. **In some instances, the wishes of the Ainu may not have been considered when these remains were excavated and collected.** […] Fostering an understanding of this history among the many visitors to Upopoy is fundamental to a harmonious society now and in the future. (author's emphasis)[269]

The phrasing "In some instances, the wishes of the Ainu may not have been considered when these remains were excavated and collected" is deceptive. Consensus in recent scholarship is that

[268]Centre for Environmental and Minority Policy Studies, "Joint Submission".
[269] Maruyama, "A Closer Look".

virtually none of the remains were collected with consent from any Ainu.[270] In fact, most were secretly stolen at night, mostly with consent and help from the Japanese government. In some instances, the remains taken were buried so recently that they had to be washed of flesh and hair.[271] Compare the historical narrative of the sign to a summary that uses stronger language, such as that of Maruyama Hiroshi, Leni Charbonneau, and Mashiyat Zaman:

> In the late 19th and 20th centuries, growing ethno-nationalist sentiment in the early Japanese empire contributed to institutionalized pursuits of eugenics to define the Japanese race by differentiating other populations under its imperial reach. The 1930s saw the establishment of the Japan Society for Racial Hygiene, responsible for the systemic excavation of hundreds of Ainu bodies from their resting places. […] This period cast the foundation from which Ainu bodies were not only thoroughly racialized, but also classified as research objects, living or dead. In subsequent decades, researchers took it upon themselves to excavate Ainu graves without the free, prior or informed consent of Ainu residents or relatives.[272]

A text like this is much more effective in properly conveying why so many Ainu remains were stolen, and it properly highlights that this was done without Ainu consent. In addition to the insufficient contextualization of this historical background, many Ainu fear that the remains stored at Upopoy will be used for further research. Nonetheless, the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology issued an official apology for unethical research on the Ainu and excavation of remains in April 2024, as well as instating new guidelines for ethical research –though many individual universities such as Hokkaido University continue to refuse to officially apologize, supposedly in fear of legal consequences.[273]

[270] Shimizu Yuji, "Towards a Respectful Repatriation of Stolen Ainu Ancestral Remains", *In Indigenous Efflorescence –Beyond Revitalisation in Sapmi and Ainu Mosir*, ed. Gerald Roche et al., (Canberra: ANU Press, 2018), 117.
[271] Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*, 83.
[272] Zaman, Charbonneau, and Maruyama, "Critiquing".
[273] "Kako no Ainu no kenkyū shinshi ni hansei nipponbunka jinrui gakkai ga shazai seimei"(Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology issues apology, sincere reflection on past Ainu research), *NHK Hokkaido News Web*, April 8, 2024, https://www3.nhk.or.jp/sapporo-news/20240408/7000066144.html; Fukuda Yohei, "Hansei to shazai wa betsu? Ainu ikotsu to daigaku," (Are remorse and apology different? Ainu remains and universities), *NHK Hokkaido News Web*, Dec 13, 2019, Archived at the Wayback Machine, https://web.archive.org/web/20230727134416/https://www.nhk.or.jp/hokkaido/articles/slug-nc1a8fe28bf6e.

Ainu Involvement in Upopoy

Assuming that Upopoy constitutes a contact zone, it is useful to assess to what degree the present asymmetrical structures allow narrative collaboration with Ainu stakeholders, which is a fundamental principle for ethical representation. Beyond that, it is important to determine who ends up profiting from Ainu-centered tourism: the Japanese government or local Ainu. This is based on the principle of self-identification, though as activist and scholar Ishihara Mai, who self-identifies as having Ainu heritage, points out, many Ainu "remain silent not just because they are afraid of social and political discrimination, but because of how Japanese society and the legacy of Japanese settler colonialism have stolen the voices of peoples with Ainu heritage".[274] She describes further that "by becoming invisible and silent as an Ainu liminar, my history was stolen from me".[275]

ann-elise lewallen similarly suggests that many Ainu distinguish "being Ainu", which is based on genetic inheritance, from making an intentional choice to "identify" as Ainu, which recenters "individual agency and the process of self-determination".[276] Because this identification is so interwoven with the on-going structure of settler-colonialism, the numbers discussed here will be based on those who self-identify as Ainu, without disregarding those with Ainu heritage that may identify otherwise. lewallen further points out that engaging with material culture, especially cloth work, is a way through which many Ainu choose to embrace their identity and "forge a contemporary Ainu subjectivity".[277] Working at Upopoy may thus be a way for people with Ainu heritage to come to actively identify as Ainu. In return however, the culture-focus (largely

[274] Grunow et al., 614. Ishihara makes a distinction between the terms "Hidden Ainu" (people who do not disclose their Ainu heritage for a variety of reasons) and "Silent Ainu" (people who know they are Ainu but feel alienated by dominant categorizations, often due to mixed heritage and disconnect from Ainu epistemology and heritage).
[275] Ibid., 616.
[276] ann elise lewallen, *The Fabric of Indigeneity: Ainu Identity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism in Japan* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2016), 1.
[277] Ibid., 3.4.

influenced by the Japanese government's policies) makes many Ainu who lack "cultural fluency" hesitant to identify as such. This adds to the difficulty of assessing how many employees at Upopoy identify as Ainu. Upopoy's administration refuses to publicly disclose how many Ainu are employed at the museum and park due to potential discrimination against individual staff members.[278] However, several different sources, among them NAM curators, journalists, and scholars, have disclosed numbers on Ainu involvement in some aspects of Upopoy.

The Council for Ainu Policy Promotion established by the government after its 2007 resolution to "comprehensively and effectively promote Ainu policy, taking views and opinions of Ainu people into consideration" consisted mostly of Wajin members.[279] Its only Ainu input was via para-governmental organizations such as the widely criticized Ainu Association. This council's report acted as the catalyst for the creation of Upopoy. As discussed in detail later, some scholars draw a direct connection between the historical narrative of the report and that used in the exhibits at the museum.[280]

Ainu expert ann-elise lewallen suggests that around 100 to 150 Ainu are employed at Upopoy, most of these at the park, though it remains unclear whether these numbers include blue-collar workers, seasonal workers, and infrequent collaborators.[281] In any case, Sugimoto Ryu, who works at the park, states that Upopoy employees come from many diverse backgrounds, including Wajin, Ainu, and foreigners, and all performers choose Ainu aliases.[282] He writes that because it is hard for visitors to discern who is or is not Ainu, many Upopoy employees become victims of

[278] Franceso Bassetti and Mara Budgen, "Ainu culture at the heart of Hokkaido's mindful tourism pivot", *The Japan Times*, Apr 1, 2023, https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2023/04/01/lifestyle/ainu-culture-upopoy-museum-shiraoi/.
[279] Ainu Policy Promotion Headquarters, "Overview".
[280] Maruyama, "Upopoi to wa nani ka" (What is Upopoy).
[281] lewallen, "Stoking Academic Colonialism or Nurturing Indigenous Futures".
[282] Sugimoto Ryu, "A Case Study of Microaggression from Visitors to Staff in Upopoy : In the case of the National Ainu Park", *Journal of Ainu and Indigenous Studies* 3 (2023), 60, https://doi.org/10.14943/Jais.3.047.

microaggressions and racist behavior perpetuated by visitors. [283] Similarly, Tozawa Emi writes that some NAM curators have been harassed by right-wing groups.[284] Despite that, there is no support from Upopoy's administration for employees who become victims of racism and abusive behavior, neither through counselling nor through collaboration with experts or organizations that understand intercultural conflicts and mental health.[285]

31 Female employee at Upopoy playing the mukkuri

30 Male employee at Upopoy wearing traditional Ainu clothing

Upopoy rehired many of the people previously employed at the community-run Poroto Kotan Ainu Museum, including the former director, curators, performers, and other staff, seventy percent of which were Ainu.[286] Some of the Ainu working at Poroto Kotan and now Upopoy are graduates of the IWOR program, a three year long, government-funded program that trained young

[283] *Ibid.*
[284] Tozawa, "Can it be a Gamechanger," 5.
[285] Sugimoto, "A Case Study of Microaggression from Visitors to Staff in Upopoy".
[286] Murata, "Decolonizing Museums through Exhibits/Exhibitions".

Ainu in various aspects of Ainu heritage and history. [287] ann-elise lewallen has previously argued that such cultural programs can be a way to confront "issues of memory and historical authority", though the model promoted in government-funded programs often aims to "subsume Ainu culture into Japan's new scheme of multicultural patrimony […] as the shared inheritance of all Japanese citizens", which overall aligns with the ambition to erase the history of colonization in Yaun Mosir by promoting multiculturalism and ethnic harmony.[288]

Though the National Ainu Museum is modeled after the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C., Okasada Yuko points out that unlike the NMAI, where Native Americans were involved in all stages of development and curation, collaboration at NAM is more limited.[289] In 2019, *Asahi Shinbun* reported that five out of the twenty curators at the National Ainu Museum are Ainu. [290] Of the Exhibition Review Committee, which is composed of researchers of the Ainu language and culture, only one member is Ainu. [291] Yasuda Minetoshi of *Shukan Bunshun* writes that although the committee technically consists of third party experts, "it can be seen as an institution that essentially embodies the wishes of the government and the Agency for Cultural Affairs".[292] The Exhibition Working Council, a lower branch of the organization, consists of fourteen members, among them craftspeople, university teachers, curators, as well as researchers and practitioners of the Ainu language, culture, and history.[293] Of these, five identified as Ainu.[294]

[287] ann-elise lewallen, "Stoking Academic Colonialism or Nurturing Indigenous Futures?". Iwor is an Ainu term denoting traditional Ainu livelihood zones.
[288] lewallen, *The Fabric of Indigeneity*, 85; 88-89.
[289] "; Osakada Yuko, "The Development of Collaborative Exhibitions with Indigenous Peoples: A Comparative Analysis Between the National Ainu Museum and the National Museum of the American Indian," *Japan Border Review* 12 (2022), https://doi.org/10.14943/jbr.12.93.
[290] Asahi Shimbun, "Japan builds 'Ethnic Harmony' tribute to indigenous Ainu", October 29, 2019, https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13059978.
[291] Tamura, "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan" (The National Ainu Museum); Osakada Yuko, "The Development of Collaborative Exhibitions with Indigenous Peoples,"104.
[292] Yasuda, "Abe Seiken" (Abe Administration).
[293] Tamura, "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan" (National Ainu Museum).
[294] Osakada, "Development", 104.

NAM curator Tamura Masato, who served as a member of the Exhibition Review Committee, writes that "needless to say, each committee was made up of Ainu and Wajin. Although there was a good atmosphere as we interacted with each other on a daily basis, there was a sense of nervousness as the first national museum dedicated to Ainu culture was to be established".[295]

Overall, it is difficult to assess how the narrative at the exhibitions was impacted by the inclusion of some Ainu experts. As an Ainu man interviewed by Ishihara Mai points out, just because Ainu sit at the same table as researchers, does not mean that they are on equal footing.[296] Murata Mariko argues that even the previous Ainu Museum largely presented Ainu culture from a Wajin perspective, and with the shift to a national museum policy, the narrative changed significantly.[297] Similarly, Yahata Tomoe, a NAM curator that identifies as Ainu, writes that Japanese museums are generally expected to be politically and religiously neutral. She explains that even though she expected NAM, as an Indigenous museum, to reflect Ainu values and religion, its status as a national museum highly restricted these perspectives.[298] This gives the impression that, as Robin Boast wrote in his critique of the museum as a contact zone, control ultimately remains with the funding regimes, and with the museum as the institution that has "the power to stabilize and display".[299]

This ultimate inequality is also demonstrated by one of the instances of collaboration that the National Ainu Museum openly communicates. Part of the "Our Work" exhibition features Ainu musician Oki, who is famous for his creative use of Ainu elements in his work. According to curator Tateishi Shinichi, Oki fundamentally questioned both the intention behind the exhibition itself, as

[295] Tamura, "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan" (National Ainu Museum).
[296] Ishihara, "Akademikku sabarutan no koe to 'kenkyū'" (The voices of the academic subaltern and "research"), 17.
[297] Murata, "Decolonizing Museums through Exhibits/Exhibitions,".
[298] Grunow et al., "Hokkaidō 150," 624.
[299] Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration," 66.

well as the intended audience for the museum overall.[300] Tateishi recounts that "In the exhibition, we have tried to respect and express OKI's image and worldview as much as possible. However, curation ultimately is the responsibility of the museum".[301]

Upopoy and the Public Sphere

From the outset, public reception of Upopoy has been mixed. Even before its opening, a number of Ainu activists and their allies expressed critical opinions regarding the nature of Upopoy. Many pointed out that the symbolic recognition of the Ainu without granting fundamental Indigenous rights is merely a continuation of colonial assimilation policies.[302] Academics like Tessa Morris-Suzuki questioned the Japanese government's ulterior motives for opening Upopoy concurrently with the Olympic games in Tokyo.[303] Similarly, Ainu tattoo artist Hachiya Mai criticized the commercial aspect, saying that "I think it's possible it could end up becoming a theme park. People would come to see the dancing and other performances. It would be like a zoo".[304] The Centre for Environmental and Minority Policy Studies (CEMiPoS), a research center advocating for minority rights, published a statement on the opening of Upopoy in July 2020.[305] In it, they call out the establishment of Upopoy, saying that it "represents the continued infringement on the rights of the Ainu as an autonomous Indigenous community and maintains a history of exploitation unto their people, lands, and culture". They argue that the opening of the museum

[300] Tateishi Shinichi, "Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan 2020 − kaikan o mokuzen ni hikaete" (National Ainu Museum 2020 −Ahead of its opening), artscape, March 15, 2020, https://artscape.jp/report/curator/10161225_1634.html.
[301] *Ibid.*
[302] Francesco Bassetti, "Japan opens the Upopoy Museum, the first dedicated to Ainu indigenous identity," *Lifegate Daily*, July 22, 2020, https://www.lifegate.com/upopoy-museum-ainu-japan.
[303] Morris-Suzuki, "Indigenous Rights".
[304] Kelly, "Japan".
[305] Centre for Environmental and Minority Policy Studies, "CEMiPoS Statement on the Opening of the Upopoy", Last Modified July 13, 2020, https://cemiposhome.wordpress.com/2020/07/13/upopoy-statement/.

should be seen as "a bleak moment in which the historical trajectory of Japanese colonialism and exploitation of the Ainu has been allowed to continue". While they view the establishment of Upopoy in the larger context of revisionism of Ainu history, they put forward that the museum distracts from the fact that Japanese Ainu policy largely sidesteps political rights to self-determination.

Some Ainu welcome the establishment of Upopoy as a step in the right direction and appreciate the increased interest in Ainu culture.[306] People associated with Upopoy have also been enjoying the opportunities to deepen their knowledge of Ainu culture and their Ainu language skills.[307] The importance of Upopoy for the visibility of Ainu in the Japanese public sphere, at least in Yaun Mosir, cannot be overstated. Ainu musician Oki writes that

> We are in the midst of an ongoing Ainu boom now. […] There are Ainu articles in regional Hokkaido newspapers every day, so everyone knows about Upopoy. The museum even came up in conversation with the farmer next door. Even while Upopoy has been criticized from all directions, I sense that Ainu status within Hokkaido has been elevated a little now that a national museum has been built. It feels like something hidden in plain sight has now been exposed by the light.[308]

Though Upopoy is far away from its intended goal of achieving one million visitors per year, it finally passed the milestone of one million visitors overall in September 2023 – many of these visitors coming on school trips from all over Japan.[309] Now that the Covid-19 pandemic no longer restricts mobility, visitor numbers are steadily increasing, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure,

[306] Bassetti, "Japan opens".
[307] lewallen, "Stoking Academic Colonialism".
[308] Oki, "Calling Us Minzoku".
[309] Matsumoto Hidehito, "Upopoi nobe 100 man hitome wa Maebashi-shi no shōgaku 4-nen – kaigyō 3-nen yōyaku tatsunari," (The 1 millionth visitor to Upopoy was a fourth grader from Maebashi City, finally achieved three years after the facility opened), *Asahi Shimbun*, Sept 29, 2023, https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASR9Y5559R9YIIPE00C.html.

Transport and Tourism set up a an expert panel to discuss further promotion of Upopoy.[310] The construction of Upopoy cost the Japanese government over 182 million USD, and the considerable running costs likely mean that there is yet to be any profit gained by the government – at least financially.[311]

Critical voices from Ainu activists have continued to be published in local newspapers, blogs, and have circulated in Ainu spaces. A nationwide survey by a citizen's group found that over 70% of Ainu residents are unhappy with the social impact of Upopoy.[312] The report explains this specifically means that the museum had done nothing to improve their Indigenous rights while the exhibition further obfuscates the historical suffering under colonization. Ainu Elder Shimizu Yuuji called Upopoy purely a tourist facility, explaining that he feels that "the state of the museum's exhibitions minimizes or ignores the 150 years of tragic history suffered by the Ainu people. I was continually shocked by the explanations for each milestone in the historical exhibition".[313] Similarly, Ainu Elder Kimura Fumio expressed that he believes that the history at NAM is taught from a Japanese point of view.[314] The opinion that the negative aspects of history are neglected in Upopoy is expressed by many, including scholar Sakata Minako, who questioned if "since it is a 'national' museum, I wonder if there are restrictions on the content of historical exhibits".[315] In an

[310] Bassetti and Budgen, "Ainu culture".
[311] Bassetti, "Japan opens"; The Foundation for Ainu Culture, "Overview of the Foundation for Ainu Culture," 2022, https://www.ff-ainu.or.jp/web/overview/files/aramashi_EN.pdf.
[312] Gayman, Uzawa, and Nakamura, "Japan".
[313] Shimizu Yuji, "'minzoku kyōsei shōchō kūkan' kenbunki ('Symbolic Space for Ethnic Coexistence' Observation Notes)," Fujiwara Shoten, *Ki* No. 324 (September 2020), 4, http://www.fujiwara-shoten.co.jp/whatsnew/ki_202009/.
[314] Kimura Fumio, "Ainu e no rekishi ninshiki no ketsujo (Lack of Historical Awareness towards Ainu)," Fujiwara Shoten, *Ki* No. 324 (September 2020), 5.
[315] Sakata Minako, "Nihon no Ainu seisaku no mujun: Kokuritsu Ainu minzoku hakubutsukan no kihon tenji ga tsutaeru koto," (Contradictions in Japan's Ainu Policy: What the National Ainu Museum's Basic Exhibition Tells Us), *The Japanese Journal of Contemporary History* 14 (2021), 78.

article for *Bijutsu Techo* magazine, sculptor Odawara Nodoka expresses that she feels the "'historical background' is concealed by introducing the perspective of 'us' the Ainu people".[316]

The Citizens' Alliance for the Examination of Ainu Policy, a non-profit citizens' group that regularly meets to discuss the future of Ainu policy, oftentimes from an explicitly more critical standpoint than the Ainu Association, held a symposium on Upopoy in 2020. In a booklet published the following year, they collect various opinions by their members.[317] Tazawa Mamoru, the representative of the Karafuto Ainu Association, complained that Enciw are not properly represented at the museum, and that they were not involved in any of the historical writing on Sakhalin Ainu. Because they are not legally allowed to become members of the Ainu association, they were unable to provide input for the museum – a fact that surprised both the museum and the Ainu association itself.[318] Tazawa's comment demonstrates that the Ainu Association can hardly speak on behalf of all Ainu. It is perhaps because of this non-inclusion of non-Yaun Mosir Ainu voices that Upopoy positions all Ainu as national subjects: Ainu in Russia are completely disregarded. In one of the videos shown at the movie room at the museum, the collection of Ainu materials in Russia, the largest in the world, is introduced by saying that Russia compares Ainu "to their own Indigenous peoples", even though the Ainu *are* one of their Indigenous peoples.

A very interesting comment is that of Maruyama Hiroshi, who besides being one of the founders of the Citizens' Alliance is also the director of CEMiPoS. He argues that since the Report of the Expert Panel on Ainu Policy does not recognize the history of the Ainu as that of colonization,

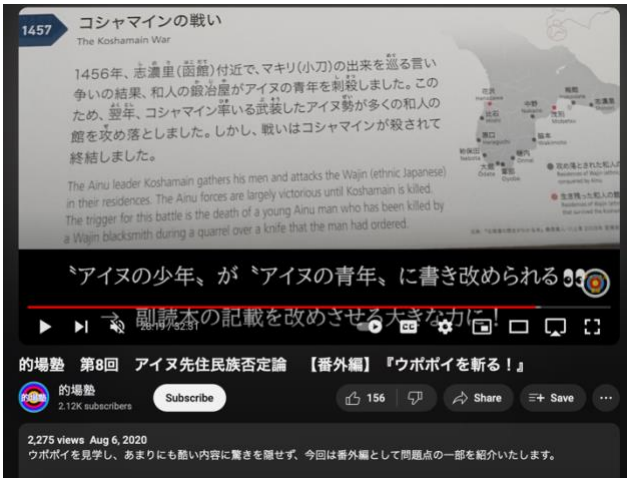
[316] Odawara Nodoka, "'Watashi wa anata no Ainu de wanai': Odawara nodoka ga mita `upopoi (minzoku kyōsei shōchō kūkan)," ('I am not your Ainu': Odawara Nodoka's view of 'Upopoy' (Symbolic Space for Ethnic Coexistence)), *Bijutsu Techo*, Aug 30, 2020, https://bijutsutecho.com/magazine/insight/22558.
[317] The Citizens' Alliance "Upopoi ni tsuite kangaeyō," (Let's think about Upopoy).
[318] Tazawa Mamoru, "Enciw kara no igi mōshitate," (Objection from Enciw), In *Upopoi ni tsuite kangaeyō*, (Let's think about Upopoy), 6.

this historical perspective is absent from the exhibits at NAM as well. Thus, "the Japanese government's historical revisionism is transmitted to the world". Maruyama gives several recommendations to the Japanese government. First, he calls for the removal of the historical revisionism at Upopoy and to instead use historical writings by people such as Ainu leader Kaizawa Tadashi. Second, he calls for the return of Ainu remains. Third, he calls for the government to officially recognize Japan's "centuries long colonization of Ainu Mosir" and apologize for all injustices. Finally, he requests that the government ensure that free, prior, and concerned consent is obtained for any decisions concerning Ainu.[319] Sasaki Shiro, the executive director of the National Ainu Museum, apparently watched a live broadcast of the panel discussion of the Citizens' Alliance and later shared some thoughts and opinions via email. He comments that he found the exchange very interesting and would like to use it as a reference for future exhibitions and procedures.[320]

On the other hand, Upopoy is increasingly becoming the target of right-wing hate speech and harassment. A large number of posts on social media and blogs criticize Upopoy for representing "fake Ainu", the "fabricated Ainu culture", and criticize the development of Upopoy as "Ainu interests".[321] A big point of contention is the fact that as a national institution, Upopoy runs on taxpayer money. These comments are becoming so widespread that several newspapers have reported on it. But this hate is not limited to the internet – Matoba Mitsuaki, a relatively prominent "Ainu denier" and member of Japan Conference, has published a 192-page book titled

[319] Maruyama Hiroshi "Upopoi to wa nani ka," (What is Upopoy) In *Upopoi ni tsuite kangaeyō* (Let's think about Upopoy), 8.
[320] "Shinpojiumu no hankyō kara" (The Symposium's Response), In *Upopoi ni tsuite kangaeyō. kangaeyō* (Let's think about Upopoy), 12-13.
[321] "Upopoi hihan konkyo naki wa mitome rarenu," (Unfounded criticism of Upopoy cannot be accepted), *Hokkaido Shimbun*, Sept 3, 2020, Archived on the Wayback Machine at https://web.archive.org/web/20201101075509/https://www.hokkaido-np.co.jp/article/456452.

"Tear Down Upopoy, the Museum of Anti-Japanese Fabrications" (*Netsuzō to han'nichi no yakata upopoi o kiru*) in 2021. In it, he promises to "reveal the horrifying reality of Upopoy" which was built with "a huge investment of 20 billion yen", claiming that "the exhibits are full of lies and nonsense" and that it is an "anti-Japanese museum".[322] Right-wing criticism has also been given a stage in real life through events like that of Japan Conference, though those are usually met with protest by local residents.[323]



33 Youtube video by Matoba Mitsuaki dissecting Upopoy

32 Flyer promoting the Upopoy-symposium by the Citizen's Alliance

The management of Upopoy is aware of the discourse on both sides. In 2022, NAM curator Tateishi Shinichi published a paper in which he reflected on some of the received criticisms. Though he does not directly address any of the claims and opinions, he writes that NAM sees itself as a "forum" and "place of discussion", and that the museum has published a Frequently Asked

[322] Matoba Mitsuaki, *Netsuzō to han'nichi no yakata upopoi o kiru* (Tear Down Upopoy, the Museum of Anti-Japanese Fabrications), (Tokyo: Tentensha, 2021) http://tendensha.co.jp/syoseki/518.html; Title translated by Yitong Xu.
[323] Uwabo Kohei, "Heitosupīchi' ni shimin dantai kōgi, Ainu minzoku tēma no shinpo meguri," (Civic groups protest against 'hate speech' surrounding symposium on Ainu people), *Asahi Shimbun*, March 10, 2024 https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASS3B5HW9S3BIIPE002.html.

Questions section on their website.[324] This section is not only a response to the slander and Ainu denial, but a "supplementary measure for the historical exhibits", meant to show the negative aspects of Ainu history in detail.[325] Furthermore, additional panels prefacing the exhibition at the museum were installed in response to some common questions, though those mostly contain basic information. It goes without saying that merely providing more context on the website rather than updating the actual exhibit is little more than a gesture. The fifteen item FAQ addresses questions like "What kind of museum is the National Ainu Museum", "What kind of history did the Ainu people have", "Why are the Ainu recognized as indigenous people", "How was the life of the Ainu people affected by the assimilation policy", et cetera. Each answer also cites and links sources. The FAQ is fairly hard to find on the website and only available in Japanese.

Unlike the exhibits themselves, the language used here is consistently written from a third-person perspective. While the intention behind the FAQ is commendable, the content continues to fall short in some aspects. For example, they explain that the transmission of Ainu culture was impacted from "the latter half of the 19th century, when many immigrants came to Hokkaido". Then, "traditional Ainu customs were banned and Ainu were encouraged to learn Japanese, making it difficult for them to live the way they had before. Amid such major social changes, discrimination has made it difficult for parents to pass on their culture". While this text certainly is a lot clearer than the panels in the museum, the FAQ continues to be vague, and disregards that social changes were not merely because of immigrants, but because of colonization. Colonization is once again circumscribed in creative, unspecific terms, such as "the political situation at that time after the Meiji period" or "the process of forming a modern state". The FAQ section gives more information

[324] The FAQ can be found at https://nam.go.jp/inquiry/.
[325] Tateishi,"A Practical Attempt," 114-115.

on what the assimilation measures actually entailed, and describes the discrimination by the majority Japanese population in more detail, explaining that it continues to this day.

An extremely interesting answer is that to the question why the Ainu are recognized as Indigenous. The museum cites the Expert Meeting Report on Ainu Policy, which goes through a lot of effort to avoid the term "colonization". As a reminder, the UN working definition, which the report seems to implicitly refer to, specifically recognizes colonization and invasion as the processes that create "Indigenous" as a political category. The report however states that

> Indigenous peoples are people who have historically lived in an area even before the establishment of state control, as people with a culture and identity that are different from the majority ethnic group that makes up the nation, and who have subsequently lived under the rule of this majority group regardless of their will.[326]

This definition is very vague in its phrasing, and as such is closer to the definition for "minority", which the UN defines as "a national or ethnic, religious or linguistic group, fewer in number than the rest of the population, whose members share a common identity. Usually, minorities are non-dominant in comparison with majorities in the economic and political spheres of their country".[327] The difference between these two terms is specifically the process of colonization and invasion. Because the Japanese definition lacks this distinction, it requires a leap of logic. It follows then that the report states that the Ainu are Indigenous because they lived in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago "even before it came under the control of our country" (*wagakuni no tōchi ga oyobu mae*).The report further states that "in the process of forming Japan into a modern nation, the Ainu people were subjugated regardless of their will, and as a result of the government's land policy and

[326] Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy. Final Report, Provisional Translation. July 2009. https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ainusuishin/pdf/siryou1_en.pdf.
[327] "Minorities and indigenous peoples," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/safeguarding-individuals/minorities-and-indigenous-peoples.

assimilation policy, their connection with nature was severed and their livelihoods were cut off"[328] The museum's FAQ paraphrases the findings of the report, and as such does very little to demonstrate why the Ainu are Indigenous, and thus probably does little to counteract the voices that deny Ainu Indigeneity.

Overall, the museum shows willingness to engage with criticism and differing opinions – a sign that the stated goal of the "museum as a forum" seems to be in practice. But if the Japanese government is unwilling to recognize the history of settler colonialism in Yaun Mosir, it will be impossible to properly convey Ainu history and culture to a larger audience. As a director of the Ainu Association stated in a meeting about the opening of Upopoy and future Ainu policy, "I believe that the easiest way for the people to understand the history and culture of the Indigenous Ainu people is for them to reflect and apologize for the assimilation policies and human rights violations suffered by the Ainu people".[329]

It seems that the various complaints about the historical narrative at the National Ainu Museum are all contingent on the fact that without understanding Ainu history as a history of subjection to colonialism, any descriptions of Ainu discrimination and suffering fall short of actually reflecting the systemic dimensions of their reality. It is unclear how much freedom curators have in their phrasing, but considering the statements by various stakeholders, especially those of government officials, the reason for the shortcomings of the museum seems to be the government's policies. Although the museum certainly could take measures to improve the exhibits without going against the intentions of the state, such as updating the panels to reflect the more in-depth

[328]Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy "Hōkoku-sho" (Report), July 2009, https://nam.go.jp/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/siryou1.pdf.
[329] Council for Ainu Policy Promotion, "Ainu seisaku suishin kaigi (dai 13-kai) giji gaiyō" (Summary of the 13th Ainu Policy Promotion Council Meeting), July 14, 2020, 8, https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ainusuishin/dai13/gijigaiyou.pdf.

explanations of the FAQ, if the Japanese government continues to refuse to come to terms with their colonial past, the museum cannot live up to its goal of establishing "proper recognition and understanding of Ainu history" and achieving "ethnic harmony".

Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis, I posed several questions. I questioned how the establishment of Upopoy reflects the historical relationship between Ainu and Wajin. Furthermore, I called into question whether the historical narrative at the National Ainu Museum reflects Ainu perspectives or National perspectives. By analyzing the narratives transmitted in Ainu tourism, (community-run) museums, and the National Ainu Museum, I was able to link different ways of representing Ainu culture and history to the structure of settler colonialism, settler memory, and Ainu resistance.

Building on Huang et al.'s idea of the "frontier of memory" and Pratt's "contact zone" concept, I proposed that Ainu-related tourism and museums should be understood as contact zones – asymmetrical spaces in which Wajin and Ainu negotiate different narratives, representations, and memories of Yaun Mosir's history.[330] By understanding "Hokkaido" as a settler colony, I argued that the dominant "development" (*kaitaku*) narrative is a symptom of settler memory, which attempts to whitewash the violent structure upon which the polity is built. The Japanese logic of "*terra nullius*" that disregards the Ainu's historical presence in the land thus inspires historical amnesia that actively obfuscates and disavows the status of "Hokkaido" as a settler-colony and the Ainu's legal right of self-determination in their Indigenous homelands. I suggested that this logic still constitutes the frame for contemporary interactions between the Japanese government and the Ainu, arguing that future-oriented reconciliation in the name of "ethnic harmony" pursued by the government presents yet another facet of settler memory and the desire to whitewash difficult

[330] Huang et al., "Introduction"; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

histories. I argued that what makes Ainu history "difficult history" is its inherent clash with dominant narratives that redefine Yaun Mosir as "Japanese homeland".

One of the goals of my thesis was to show how tourism and museums in Yaun Mosir are entangled with the process of colonization, settler memory, Ainu erasure, and nation-building. I showed that not only do these modes of representation constitute sites in which different narratives clash – they are in themselves tools that legitimized Japanese claim to Yaun Mosir and the cultural genocide perpetrated by the Japanese government. I borrowed Johan Edelheim's concept of the touristic *terra nullius* to argue that Yaun Mosir's history is imagined to begin with the arrival of Wajin settlers, who bravely tamed the land's wilderness and turned it into a beacon of modernity, progress, and civilization.[331] The Ainu became invisible, on the one hand, as the people with a legitimate claim to the land, but on the other hand, they became hyper-visible as tourist attractions. This is not as paradoxical as it appears to be, as they were part of the same strategy to legitimize colonialization, and represent interconnected processes of settler memory.

I suggested that Ainu-related tourism divides into four distinct phases. In the pre-war era, the narratives of tourism and anthropology emphasized Ainu primitivity and Otherness. This boosted the Japanese government's ambition to appear as civilized, progressive, and modern, while legitimizing the colonization of Yaun Mosir and the dispossession and forced assimilation of the Ainu. I analyzed a 1930s tourist ad to demonstrate how tourist narratives functioned as a way to subvert undesirable imaginations of Hokkaido as harsh wilderness, and instead promoted the "development" narrative of Hokkaido as a Japanese space of modernity and progress. The end of World War II gave rise to the first Ainu boom, an era characterized by historical amnesia of the Japanese colonial empire. I proposed understanding the Ainu boom through the framework of

[331] Edelheim, "A Touristic Terra Nullius."

salvage tourism – nostalgic heritage tourism inspired by the idea of the Ainu as a "vanishing race", with Wajin constructing an anachronistic version of Ainu history and culture based on settler memory and conflation with stereotypes of the American Wild West.[332] Partially in response to the "development" narrative becoming hegemonic through the centennial of "the naming of Hokkaido" in 1968, Ainu started transmitting counternarratives through community-run museums, giving rise to a third phase. They employed "strategic essentialism", using visual aspects of Ainu Otherness to subvert dominant narratives of Japanese homogeneity. I suggested that the current popularity of Ainu culture should be understood as a second "Ainu boom", caused by an initial uptick in interest in the late 1990s and fully consolidated by the popularity of *Golden Kamuy* from the 2010s and the opening of Upopoy in 2020. I argued that there is an immense potential for disrupting dynamics of settler memory that promote historical amnesia, and that the National Ainu Museum (NAM) may make or break the needed avenue for counternarratives.

My analysis of the National Ainu Museum showed that from the outset, the government's refusal to acknowledge the history of settler colonialism in Yaun Mosir impacted the historical narrative at the museum. I argued that because NAM is "national" first and "Ainu" second, its goal to "promote a correct understanding of Ainu history" is unrealistic, as it cannot properly engage with difficult histories that challenge the predominant "development" narrative. Statements by government officials make clear that the museum is expected to follow the government's strategy of future-oriented "ethnic harmony" as a means to de-politicize the Ainu and obfuscate past wrongdoing. Its representation of the Ainu is thus limited to the sanitized, de-politicized image the government wishes to achieve.

[332] Phillips, *Staging Indigeneity*.

I determined that though a large number of Ainu are employed at the National Ainu Museum and Park, few of those appear to be in decision-making positions. Overall, the potential for critical Ainu perspectives to find a platform at the National Ainu Museum is limited by the asymmetrical nature of the museum as a contact zone, in which the settler institution retains the power.

I found that though the museum engages with contentious histories such as discrimination, it uses overly objective, neutral language that does not critically engage with the subject matter, and overall is unlikely to deconstruct visitors' potential biases and dominant understandings of history. Although the museum claims to present history from an Ainu perspective, the narrative likely reinforces settler memory. The museum never uses the words "colonization" or "settler colonialism", rather using a variety of established euphemisms. This furthers the inability to properly deconstruct the root of Ainu oppression, as it disregards the connection between the eliminatory logic of settler colonialism and the structural nature of Ainu disenfranchisement. The exhibition further reflects the "ethnic harmony" strategy by presenting other issues, like unethical research practices, only if they deem them to be "resolved". By being forced to operate within the framework offered by the government, the museum is unsuccessful in effectively challenging historical amnesia.

Furthermore, I highlighted the Upopoy memorial facility as a site that epitomizes the Japanese government's tendency to view certain issues of the "Ainu problem" as completely resolved through Upopoy. By comparing the narrative of a plaque installed by the government with a more critical one, I was able to demonstrate how the government uses deceptive language to whitewash their complicity in the theft of Ainu remains.

Lastly, by analyzing public discourse surrounding Upopoy, I was able to determine how the museum's narrative is received by different stakeholders. I found that public criticisms cluster around those representing the most ideologically-opposed interpretations of history. While Ainu-deniers target Upopoy for being "anti-Japanese" and supposedly wasting taxpayer money, Ainu activists and their allies call out what they perceive to be historical revisionism. These disparate opinions reflect that even though the museum makes few attempts to subvert dominant narratives, its existence as an institution that affirms Ainu Indigeneity is an inherently contentious issue for the mechanisms of settler memory that attempt to erase Ainu existence. The reactions by Ainu on the other hand reflect that the museum ultimately is a manifestation of the settler tendency to reproduce their own memory of Indigenous people's history, restricting Ainu agency over their own narratives.

34 Ainu activists in 2008

The findings of this thesis echo the voices of Ainu activists that recommend the Japanese government officially recognize the structure of settler colonialism in Yaun Mosir. My thesis showed how the idea of *terra nullius* remains unchallenged in political discourse. Current Ainu policy in Japan reflects the historical ambition to promote a "non-contentious" idea of narrowly defined Ainu culture separated from the more contentious realms of difficult histories, collective rights, and reparations. By focusing on marketing "ethnic harmony", the government exhibits

settler memory, which will ultimately always reproduce its own memory of Indigenous history, rather than grant Indigenous peoples agency over their representation. The National Ainu Museum seems unable to represent Ainu history properly because as a national institution under government guidance, it ultimately has to portray the difficult history of colonization as harmonious and resolved.

My thesis was limited by having to rely on publicly available discourse to analyze the reception of narratives at the National Ainu Museum, so more research is needed that directly investigates the impact that a visit to the museum and park might have on Ainu (especially Ainu not engaged in activism or those disconnected from the culture), Wajin, or foreigners through surveys or semi-structured interviews. It is also important to properly investigate the influence government policy has on the museum's narrative by interviewing staff members. I was also limited in my research by not analyzing many primary sources like historical travel guides, travelogues, magazines, or exhibition catalogues due to a lack of access and space, so more research into these materials may be fruitful. Furthermore, the main focus of this thesis was Ainu-related tourism in Yaun Mosir, but analysis of Yanke Mosir and Rutomu may reveal different dynamics, especially since Ainu in Russia have plans to construct a tourist village.[333]

Avenues for future research could include an analysis of the discourse of Yaun Mosir as an "internal colony" in Japanese historiography in regards to settler memory and self-indigenization. This could also invite comparative discussion of other settler colonial structures in which competing claims of Indigeneity produce unique dynamics of settler memory, such as Sápmi or Israel/Palestine. Interesting is also an analysis of Uilta and Nikvh-related tourism in Yaun Mosir

[333] Tanaka Takayuki, "Russian Ainu leader calls for greater respect," *Nikkei Asia*, March 3, 2017, https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Russian-Ainu-leader-calls-for-greater-respect/.

and beyond. I have also found possible connections between the *mingei* movement, Jōmon-related primitivism in the context of *nihonjinron,* and salvage tourism which I could not explore in this thesis due to lack of space, but may be worth further investigating. Lack of space also prevented me from including research I did into pre-Meiji travel and performance of ethnic difference in Yaun Mosir. Lastly, I visited several other museums and tourist sites in Yaun Mosir such as Akan, Nibutani, Abashiri, Asahikawa, Noboribetsu, and Sapporo which I could not closely analyze in this thesis, but which make for very interesting case studies. Overall, the topic of Ainu-related tourism and museums is incredibly interesting and complex, and offers many potential areas and approaches for future study. The concept of settler memory too remains understudied, and its connection to museum narrative, discourse, and memory politics invites further research.

Ultimately, this exploration of Ainu tourism and museums through the lenses of settler colonialism and settler memory invites a reevaluation of how cultural heritage is curated and consumed. In recognizing the complex dynamics within Ainu tourism and museums, especially at the National Ainu Museum, this thesis underscores the importance to not only preserve but also critically engage with Indigenous narratives. By doing so, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and truthful representation of history that challenges and dismantles colonial legacies, fostering a deeper, more respectful understanding between cultures.

Appendix

Translation of the tourist ad:

The Imagined Hokkaido

The crescent, shaped like a sharp sickle, leaves grumpy shadows on the ground. The wolves howling raucously from afar can be heard everywhere in the forest, as a giant bear lumbers close. You must be really cautious with this one. Ewww! And here's a snake. Well well, and here comes the Ainu, pointing his poisoned arrow at us, he must be trying to kill us – this is definitely not a demeaning way of thinking of Hokkaido [?], because [rest omitted due to not being written in Standard Japanese]

The Actual Hokkaido

[...] I'm going to Hokkaido to eat herring. I'll go to Asahikawa to eat apples, and I'm sure I'll receive an Ainu *menoko* as a souvenir. What is *menoko*? Does it mean a mushroom like *menako*, or is it something sweet like a dessert like *kanoko*? Then I understood. But I didn't understand anything, because *menoko* is a word for an Ainu girl, by the way Hokkaido is becoming more advanced, and there are some beautiful women here. I'm heading out with a group of women [?]

Some words are illegible or not Standard Japanese and as such omitted. Translation kindly provided by Yitong Xu.

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