PROBLEMS OF ETHNIC MINORTIES IN JAPAN

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "**Problems of Ethnic Minorities in Japan**", submitted by **Ngamjahao Kipgen** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy,** is the outcome of research done by him and has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university.

It is recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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July 14, 2004

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation titled, " "**Problems of Ethnic Minorities in Japan**", being submitted to the Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy**, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university. Further, analysis and interpretation are my own and I take responsibility for the same.

Ngamjahao Kipgen

Dedicated to....

My beloved grandma, (L) Ngaithem

My beloved only sister, (L) Themlenneng (Boinu)

" Who have departed for their heavenly abode;
may their soul rest in eternal peace"

... whom God love dies young

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ngamjahao Kipgen

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Minorities in Japan can be divided into three general categories: first, the native minorities, namely the Ainu (an indigenous group), the Burakumin (a caste − based group), the Okinawans (indigenous southern islanders); second, Koreans brought to Japan before and during the second world war and their descendants; and third, the migrant workers from other countries. Discrimination against many of these groups has its origin in the imperialist and feudal periods in Japan's history. In the eighth century, the Japanese expanded their territory into the lands of the Ainu and the Okinawans, the two indigenous groups whose lands have now been annexed into modern day Japan. Discrimination from Japan's feudal society also exists against the "Outcastes" called the Buraku.

There are other indigenous minority groups in Japan that might be called "ethnic" in the broadest cultural sense of this word, namely Chinese, Hibbakusha, Konketsuji, Nikkeijin and others. However, as their numbers are dwindling and amorphous, they are avoided in this discussion. This study is concerned primarily with ethnic groups' who are differentiated not only by their vocations but also by their caste, race or nationality.

The discussions on minorities have been placed in different chapters, each chapter covers the problems faced by the minorities in Japan. The study covers the period ranging from the early Tokugawa period up to the present era. In the first chapter an attempt has been made to clarify the conceptual frameworks, which will be used throughout the analysis and discussion. The work of Scholars involved in the study of ethnicity and minority has been mentioned so that our attempts to look into the minority groups of Japan are not clouded by confusion. The second chapter deals with the three groups– the Ainus, the Burakumin, and the Okinawan. The third chapter looks at the Koreans in Japan from the time of the colonial regime of Japan particularly after 1910 to the present times. The fourth chapter deals with foreign workers who have been migrating into Japan for many decades. Majority of the illegal foreign laborers posed a threat to the

homogeneous nature of the Japanese society. Furthermore because they were involved in criminal activities, their presence often brought disorder, chaos and disruption to society.

Korea had been under Japan till 1910. Migrant workers who had arrived in Japan in search of a better life faced a great deal of discrimination from Japanese employers, the Government and the Japanese nationals. *Doka Seisaka*, a policy by which a nation endeavors to make lifestyles and ideologies of the people in its colonies conform to its own, has affected many of these minority groups. Japan has also followed a peculiarly dual policy with regard to minority groups: forcing assimilation into a cultural mainstream on the one hand and developing measures to segregate them on the other hand.

Though Migrant workers do not form an ethnic group in Japan, they are included in this study. First in the present era of globalization, where the labor market plays a decisive role, to ignore the presence of foreign laborers while examining the problems of the minorities of a country would be incomplete because of Japan's status and role in the global world. Secondly, our endeavors to look at Japanese society would be incomplete without an in depth analysis of what outsiders face within Japan. Therefore our attempt will be to examine the impact the long-term presence of immigrants has had on Japanese society, or in particular Japanese notions of ethnic homogeneity. Furthermore we will examine the attitudes of the Japanese to outsiders and the problems faced by them. Also we will see how effective are the laws framed by the Japanese Government.

This analysis begins with an overview of ethnic minority populations in the past and present. Although there are different minorities in Japan, the main body of this study/analysis is devoted to the five nominally different but phenomenally overlapping minority groups in Japan. Starting with the 'indigenous Ainus', the analysis then proceeds to 'invisible outcasts', and the southern islanders. There will be further discussions on the Japanese born Koreans followed by the new foreign/migrant workers. The discussions of these groups might appear at this time disproportionate in this dissertation, yet all these group are equally important simply because their members face

ethnic discrimination and degradation in Japanese society in one form or another. The brief accounts even for groups receiving the most attention are necessary because they highlight the more salient historical and contemporary aspects while leaving undescribed many details that are nonetheless vital to a fuller understanding of minority status and discrimination in Japan.

This modest exercise concludes with an overview of the minority status and discrimination with reference to purity myths or myths of purity to ethnic pluralism. With regard to such purity myths and other aspects of discrimination discussed it is evident that discrimination in Japan results from cultural and psychological propensities that are uniquely Japanese.

Throughout this study attempts have been made to present the problems of ethnic groups and minorities in Japan for a period of more than a century. Questions that have been attempted to answer are: Why Japan even after all the process of liberalization is still unable to accept a multicultural identity? How does the process of globalization help the realization of one's identities? Is the policy of 'assimilation', willingly accepted in Japan by the different sections of society? Does the presence of minorities in Japan have an impact on general social change or serve as a basis for the development of a deviant culture? How effective are the laws in the constitution for the protection of the interest of minorities?

However, in dealing with the above-mentioned minorities and the issues faced by them, certain shortcomings may be noticeable. This is due to the non-availability of recent source material in same proportion on all issues. I take all responsibility for the mistakes and shortcomings that may be seen in the course of the dissertation.

GLOSSARY OF KEY JAPANESE TERMS

Aa-inu: Ah-a dog

Ainu: indigenous inhabitants of Japan, now confined to Hokkaido

Ainu no chi o hiku: possession of Ainu blood

Burakumin: 'hamlet people', social outcasts

chimei sa' kan: name books to identify backgrounds

dawa chiku: assimilated area

dōwa: 'integration', euphemistic reference to burakumin

doka Seisaka: a principle of assimilation

dobun doshu: same culture, same race

eta: great filth

futei seijin: rebellious Koreans

gaichijin: nationals of colonial origin

gaijin: outsiders

gengo: one language

hinin: 'non-person', nowadays burakumin

jinshuteki henken: racial prejudice

jinja: shrines

Jōmon: period name to c.300 BC

Kamakura: former shōgunal base, period name 1185-1333

Kami: shintō god (s)

Kamishima: homogeneous ethnic group

Kaikoku: openers

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kata: form, normative ideal

kawaii: cute

komin: subjects

kazoku koka: family state

kegare/kitanai: impurity/dirty

kikin: dangerous

kitsui: difficult

kichi hanzai: base crimes

kokka: one state

kokuga undo: national language movement

komin-ka: imperialization movement

konketsuji: foreign blood

kyiowa jisyo: project for the Japanization of Koreans

Meiji: period name 1868-1912

minzoku: ethnicity

minzokushugi: Okinawa nationalism

naichijin: Japanese nationals of the home territories such as Okinawans

naichi: mainland

naisenyuwa: conciliation of Japanese and Koreans

Nihonjiron: 'theories about the Japanese', type of self-congratulating and usually simplistic literature of 1970s and 1980s seeking to explain Japan's success, often stressing uniqueness and superiority

saisei ittchi: unified government and religion

sakoku: closedness

senmin: base people

shinheimin: new commoners

shiganhei seido: recruitment of military volunteers

soshi kamei: name changing campaign

Tan' itsu Minzoku shinwa: homogeneous nation

Tokugawa: shōgunal dynasty 1600-1868, name for same period

Uchi: home or inside or inner group

Yamato: old Japan, 'mainland' Japan, period name c.300-710

Yayoi: period name c.300 BC-AD 300

Ya'wa: assimilation and harmony

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Japan is conventionally seen as a mono-cultural society. Japanese are often thought to be an unusually homogeneous people. Not only is Japan frequently characterized as having fewer ethnic groups and minority problems than other nations, but the majority of the Japanese are typically described as a relatively "pure" people manifesting less physical variation than Europeans. The proposition that Japan is unique and mono-cultural seems plausible.

Looking at Japanese ethnicity empirically, however, both views of homogeneity and being mono-cultural are found to be substantially incorrect. Not only does Japan have many ethnic minority-groups defined both culturally and genetically, but also the majority of the population continues to exhibit considerable phenotypic evidence of its heterogeneous origins.

The constitution of Japan stipulates in Paragraph 1 of Article 14 states that all are equal under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Japan became a party in 1979. It also states there can be no discrimination on grounds of race or ethnicity. Japan acceded to the International Covenant Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination on 15th December 1955.

However, in practice, discrimination against minorities continues. The perceived homogeneity of the society, the high value placed on a collective identity, Japan's feudal history and modern war time have created an environment in which minorities suffer discrimination both directly and indirectly.

An ideology rooted in the myths of uniqueness and the "pure" blood tradition is still proclaimed, often stridently, by representatives of the tradition of centralized

authority. In 1986 Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro declared that Japan has no ethnicity (*minzoku*), one state (*kokka*), and one language (*gengo*). He also claimed, "Japan had a high intellectual level because it had no minorities", (Hicks, 1997; 3). In his ethnic allegory, ethnic and cultural homogeneity contributed to Japan's economic efflorescence. The Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, publicly claimed that Japanese had a higher level of intelligence than Americans and attributed this alleged difference to Japanese racial purity and American racial heterogeneity.

Discrimination in Japan has both historical and cultural roots. The ethnocentric nature of society, reinforced by a high degree of cultural and ethnic homogeneity and a history of isolation from other cultures, impedes the integration of minority groups. This is stronger than the influence of *Doka Seisaka*, a principle of assimiiation that persists to this day, which meant that the nation must endeavor to make its own lifestyles and ideologies of its colonized people. While assimilation is the overarching principle governing minorities in Japan, it co-existed with the policies of discrimination.

Each of the several ethnic minority groups presently recognizable in Japan are burdened with a distinctive history of separation and exploitation and each of the groups has its own heritage cultural and physical features that raise barriers of discrimination while in interaction with patterns of social acceptability found in the majority community. In a society, which remains wedded to the myths of racial and cultural homogeneity where access to economic, political and social opportunities restricted, it is difficult to offer generalizations about contemporary developments.

As the post-war myth of Japan as a mono-ethnic nation crumbles and ethnic pluralism takes its place, it is worth recalling that ethnic pluralism is not merely not compatible with Japanese and other imperialisms: it is the very stuff of imperial social orders. A move from mono-ethnic nationalism to multi-ethnic nationalism may simply reveal how difficult it remains to articulate social identity in Japan without recourse to the primacy of ethnicity that wartime ethnology so artfully enshrined in public discourse under the multi-ethnic empire

Japan has frequently been portrayed as a uniquely homogeneous society both racially and ethnically. Before the end of World War II, the Japanese leadership had inculcated in the populace the myths of Japanese racial purity and of the ethnic superiority, which was supposed to be guaranteed by the uninterrupted lineage of the imperial household over centuries. In post-war years, many observers have attributed Japan's economic success and political stability to its racial and ethnic homogeneity.[1]

Throughout history the minorities have been threatened by the power of the majority. All around the world, minorities struggle against attacks on their human rights. Some of these attacks are backed by government power, and others are merely the result of societal prejudice or discrimination.

At the very outset, it would be good to clearly define the term 'ethnicity' and 'minority'. Who are the ethnic minorities? What does it include? How is it constructed and defined? The meaning of the terms needs to be clarified in order to avoid confusion between the two.

What is an Ethnic Minority?

All writers who have dealt with minority problems for any length of time have recognized that the concept of 'ethnic minority' is itself problematic. It possesses no very precise or widely agreed upon meaning. Consequently, whether it is to specify the criteria of minority groups in general or to delineate the precise boundaries of one minority group in particular–it is almost certain to be exasperating.

The problem is in part semantic. One must decide for example, the upper and lower quantitative and qualitative limits to which the word 'minority' applies. And one must also decide, notwithstanding its extraordinary elasticity in recent social science

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[1] Sugimoto, Yoshio, *An introduction to Japanese Society: Gender, Margins and Mainstream*, Cambridge University, Press, 1997, p.169

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literature, what is embraced by the term "ethnicity".[2] The problem is also empirical. One must be prepared to stipulate the distinguishing characteristics of the minority groups (racial, ethno linguistic, religions, caste, tribal) inhabiting any particular social environment and to establish, on the basis of coherence, organization or permanence, which of them truly qualify as discreet cultural entities.

Like most societies, Japan is a nation that harbors certain ordinary paradoxes. Japan can be described as an open society composed of closed units. Japanese social organization is characterized by the small group, an intimate association carrying with it extensive obligations, hence a product for exclusivism.

Notwithstanding the functional problem within the Japanese society however, when one examines the political culture of the whole nation and its people, the features that predominate are those of homogeneity and exclusiveness. A homogenous society has certain very great psychological and political advantages. It is entirely possible that in the course of the coming decades, conflicts having ethnic, linguistic and religious roots will be the primary source of disruption at the nation-state level outweighing class conflicts by a very considerable measure. The advantages of Japanese homogeneity, however, have a reverse side. Tolerance towards the outsider is extremely limited.

Ethnic groups, long submerged socially in the multi-ethnic modern states comprising the contemporary world, have increasingly started to assert the significance of their own distinctiveness and identity. Although most minority groups have never sought total assimilation within a larger cultural and social milieu, today more than ever, ethnic identities have become vital, highly conscious forces for activating new modes of seeking political redress for past economic and social iniquities.

Among today's large nation-states, no society is totally free of conflict owing to ethnic differences. For instance, even though the social and ethnic identities of Koreans

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[2] Wirsing, G.Robert, (ed.), *Protection of ethnic minorities; comparative perspective*, New York, 1981, p.6

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and Japanese are historically intertwined, separate ethnic identity remains a source of inter-group conflict. No contemporary society can present itself as totally free from a karma or past social, political and economic injustice.

How did the Japanese state socialize its population? With this question in mind, at the very outset it seems obviously necessary to answer the question as to who the Japanese are? The Japanese law defines a Japanese as a person who holds Japanese nationality but the "*common sense*" reality of Japanese racial/ethnic notions turn out to be different: highly constructed and highly ideological. According to Sandra Wallman, "ethnicity is the recognition of significant differences between 'them' and 'us' ". It is "the process by which 'their' differences is used to enhance the sense of 'us' for purposes of organization or identification."[3]

In the case of Japan, this is reversed. Its racial/ethnic ideology has been constructed emphasizing 'our uniqueness' in order to draw individuals into the nation. In arguing about Japan's racial ideology, there are two important terms viz. '*jinshu*' and '*minzoku*', the first term '*jinshu*' which is usually translated as race. Race, in a narrower sense, refers to human groups as distinguished by pseudo-biological or physiological characteristics. In contrast, the second term, '*minzoku*' popularized by Shiga Shigetaka in the 1880s,[4] is used as equivalent to 'ethnicity', 'ethnos' and 'ethnic' that is defined by cultural criteria. While social scientists tend to make a semantic distinction between a biologically determined '*jinshu*' (race) and a culturally defined '*minzoku*' (ethnic group), these two groups are often used interchangeably in the common Japanese discourse.

In Japanese, the concepts of 'race', 'ethnic group' and 'nation' are virtually indistinguishable as embodied in the term '*Yamoto (Nihon) Minzoku*' (Japanese race), which, like the German *volk*, not only encompasses blood relationships but also broader

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[3] Wallman, Sandra, *Ethnicity at Work*, London, Macmillan, 1979, pp.203-205
[4] Weiner, Michael, "The invention of Identity": '*Self*' and '*Other*' in pre-war Japan, In Michael Weiner, *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p.5

cultural spheres, including institutional arrangements, religion, language and history.[5] As represented by *Nihonjinron* literature, the identification of *jinshu* and *minzoku* is very much a Japanese characteristic. For the substantial majority of the Japanese and the Japanese state, their conception of ethnicity is almost identical with that of race; therefore, descent, "blood", origins, genes and physical appearance come to be the defining characteristics of ethnicity, and in return, ethnicity, which is measured by cultural criteria, creates the identification of culture and race as prototype. As a principle, no one can become part of Japanese culture if he/she was not born of Japanese blood.

However, the equation of race, ethnicity, and culture is not the irrational conceptual confusion of race with ethnicity and of ethnicity with culture. Rather, it is a conscious effort of the Japanese state to manifest Japanese identity. Principally, the conflation of three variables - race, ethnicity, and culture determines the boundaries of the Japanese. But empirically, the three variables do not carry an equal weight. The state consciously changes the boundaries of the Japanese by controlling the variability, depth or symbolic qualities of each of these three distinct, but related phenomena. In the case of Japan, the ascendancy of race as Japanese blood over the other two phenomena is so evident that language adoption and culture assimilation do not qualify one as "perfect or first-class" Japanese, unless one has Japanese blood. On the contrary, manipulating Japanese-ness by expanding cultural spheres, the Japanese state can include a large population as the Japanese nation and establish its rule by making them "second–class" Japanese. In other words, the state legitimizes and expands its rule over colonized people by racializing them.

Ethnicity and Minority: The Conceptualization

'Ethnic' is an increasingly popular term in dealing with the subject of the minorities. It is often used as an adjective which is equivalent of the term minority. This is of course inaccurate. Ethnic is a term, which emphasizes the cultural ethos (values,

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[5] Yoshino, Kosaku, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A Sociological Enquiry*, London, Routledge, 1992, p.25

expectations, behavior) of a group and formerly quite properly, was limited in reference to groups whose cultural characteristics were their prime distinguishing factors. Dominants as well as minorities are members of an ethnic group.

The term 'ethnicity' has been used in various ways by social scientists. Etymologically derived from the Greek word 'ethnos' meaning thereby 'nation', this concept has undergone several modifications. Some have treated it as a biological concept and others as a cultural one. In the contemporary social science literature, however, ethnicity refers to a combination of both biological and cultural attributes.

Scholars like Shibutani and Kwan considered ethnic characteristics as derived from common descent and denied the role of culture in it.[6] Warner took a similar line when he viewed ethnicity as based on race relations.[7] In opposition to these views, socio-cultural anthropologists like Gluckman, Mitchell and Epstein put emphasis on culture as the basis of ethnicity. According to Parsons, "Ethnicity is a primary focus of a group identity, i.e., the organization of plural persons into distinctive groups solidarity and the loyalties of individual members of the group".[8] The members of the ethnic group have a distinctive identity of their own which is rooted in a distinctive sense of history. For Francis and Gordon, the sense of 'we-feeling' or 'people hood' that is shared by the members of a group is basic to the idea of ethnicity.[9]

In order to apply the concept of ethnicity to the complex modern society where a person is associated with various ethnic groups, Gordon formulated the competing models of ethnicity as concentric circles in which there is a competition among different ethnic groups for the allegiance of the individual.

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[6] As cited in Shibutani, T and Kwan, K.M, *Ethnic stratification*, Macmillan New York, 1965
[7] Quoted in Bhat, C.S, *Ethnicity and Mobility*, Concept publishing, co. New Delhi, 1984
[8] Parsons, T, "Theoretical Considerations in the nature and trends of change of ethnicity", in Glazer, N and Moynihan, D.P, (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, HUP, Cambridge, 1975, p.53
[9] Francis, E.K, "The Nature of the Ethnic Group," *American Journal of Sociology*, March, 1947, pp.393-400; Gordon, M.M, Assimilation in American Life, OUP, New York, 1964

Cohen analyzed ethnicity in a multi-ethnic social system. He defined it on the basis of the degree of conformity of its members to the values and norms in the process of social intercourse. It is a kind of social interaction among different cultural groups in a common social situation. It also showed the role of ethnicity as a means for political organization.[10]

In anthropological literature the term "ethnic group" is generally used to designate a population which (1) is largely biologically self-perpetuating; (2) shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms; (3) makes up a field of communication and interaction; (4) has a membership which identifies itself, and is defined by others as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.[11]

By ethnic group Sociologist generally meant a relatively stable socio-cultural unit performing an unspecified number of functions, bound together by a language, often linked to a territory, and derived actually or allegedly from a system of kinship.

The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defines an Ethnic group as "a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such a group feel themselves, or are thought to be bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture".[12]

In modern political usage, the term 'ethnic' is generally used as a designation of social unity based upon common and separate language or dialect, historical living in a defined area, occupation and mode of life, cultural and social traditions, customs and folklore. There are however differences with regard to emphasis. Some would include a religious denomination under the rubric, others not; some would identify a race as an ethnic group, whereas for others the latter is a smaller sub division of race and so on.

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[10] Quoted in Cohen. A, (eds.), *Urban Ethnicity*, Tavistock Publication, London, 1974

[11] Barth, Frederik, (ed.), *Ethnic groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural differences*, Bergen: Oslo universities Forlaget and London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969, pp.10-11

[12] Morris, H.S., 'Ethnic Groups', *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol.5, The Macmillan co. and the Free Press, 1968, p.167

Paul Brass, for instance says:

> "Any group of people dissimilar from other people in terms of objective cultural criteria and containing within its membership, either in principle or in practice, the elements for a complete division of labor and for production forms an ethnic category. The objective of cultural markers may be language, dialect, distinctive dress or diet, religion or race".[13]

Some of the known definitions of ethnic groups as mentioned above make it clear that there is no agreed meaning of the term 'ethnic'. However, each of them does refer to some characteristics. What is important is the self-defined and "other recognized" status. And it is this self-perception that is common in most of the definitions.

Max Weber, for instance, defines ethnic group as:

> "Those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities in physical types or of custom both, or because of colonization and migration in such a way that this belief is important for the continuation of non-kinship communal relations".[14]

Thus the case of the Korean born in Japan is quite relevant following the above statement. Further, the foreign migrants who had been staying in Japan for a period of many years conform to the host society by slowly assimilating with them. They form an ethnic group similar to the mainstream group but still lacking validity.

Similarly, according to Talcott Parsons:

> "Ethnic group is a group, the members of which have, both with respect to their own sentiments and those of non members, a distinctive identity which is rooted in some kind of a distinctive sense of its history. It is moreover, a diffusedly defined group, sociologically quite different from

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[13] Brass, Paul, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi, Sage, 1991, p.263
[14] Weber, Max, 'Ethnic Groups', in Dridger, Leo (ed.), *Ethnic Canada*, Toronto: Copp. Clark Pitman, 1987, p.306

collectivities with specific functions. For the members, it characterizes what the individual is rather than what he does."[15]

Drawing the boundaries of Ethnicity

In defining ethnicity, some contemporary writers state that everyone belongs to an ethnic group. In those rare instances where there is minimal ethnic variation, societies are described simply as being ethnically homogeneous.

Barth dealt with ethnicity as a method of boundary maintenance, the boundary here being a cultural one. The variations in culture are discontinuous in the sense that there are groups of individuals who have a common culture as well as interrelated differences that make each one of them distinct. Ethnic differentiations are not due to the absence of social interactions as social relations are based upon the dichotomized ethnic status. Behavioral dimensions have a major role to play in the boundary maintenance of the ethnic groups.

Ethnicity is a topic filled with so many assumptions, guided by such strong emotions that we often fail to see the culture-building process going on before our eyes. Although the definitions of "minority" have ethnic elements, they cannot be substituted as definitions of "ethnic group". A minority may mobilize or invent the rudiments of ethnicity in an effort to oppose discrimination. Thus minority status can lead to ethnicity as well as the other way round. In many instances, then, the boundaries of ethnicity and minority are coterminous.

The idea that ethnicity has been derived both from culture and descent has been propounded by social scientists like Glazer and Moynihan.[16] Morris felt that the self-definition of the ethnic groups or the others definition of it may be based on the criteria of

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[15] Parsons, Talcott, 'Some Theoretical Considerations on the Nature and Trends of Change of Ethnicity; in Glazer, Nathan and Moynihan, Daniel .P, (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Harvard University press, 1975, p.56

[16] Glazer, N, and Moynihan, Daniel. P, (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1975, p.4

race or culture or nationality.[17] Apart from listing down physical similarities and customs, Weber mentioned common experiences such as colonization and migration as the elements of ethnicity.[18]

Weiner analyzed ethnicity at two levels, viz., the national and the local. In his view, at the first level, the multiethnic societies possess as territorial-political identity that is different from ethnicity, whereas at the local level, the ethnic groups have an exclusive claim to a territory. According to him, whether a person is local in the cultural sense is defined by nativism. In other words the natives are identified in terms of their linguistic, religious, or tribal affinities rather than in terms of their birthplace.[19]

The encompassing ethnicity refers to a cluster of ethnic groups who are lumped together under a single label either by the state or by the majority community or by the ethnic groups themselves, for socio-political expediency. Oommen conceptualized 'ethnicity' as a "product of conquest, colonization and immigration", which has emerged through interaction between different peoples.[20]

While Japan is often described as an 'internally homogenous nation', it has never been a stable territorial unit with consistent cultural uniformity. As the ethnic boundaries of Japan expand and contract, the qualities that constitute Japanese homogeneity change. In reality, Japan has had fluctual national boundaries and changing constituent regions. The territorial boundary of Japan as we see it today is a post-world war II concept.

For centuries, Hokkaido remained outside the jurisdiction of the central Japanese regimes until its formal incorporation into Japan as a prefecture in the second half of the 19th century. The Ainu, who were its inhabitants, did not consider themselves to belong to the Japanese nation. Similarly, the independent Ryuku kingdom endured in Okinawa for

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[17] Morris, H.S, *Encyclopedia of Social Services*, Vol.5, p.167
[18] Weber, M, "Ethnic Groups" in Parsons, T, (ed.), *Theories of Society*, The Free Press, New York, p.306
[19] Weiner, M, *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India*, OUP, New Delhi, 1978, p.272
[20] Oommen, T.K, "Ethnicity, Immigration and Cultural Pluralism: India and the United States of America" in M.L. Kohn, (ed.), *Cross- National Research in Sociology*, Sage Publications, London and New York, 1988, p.335

about four centuries during Japan's feudal period, until the central government finally absorbed it as a prefecture a little over a century ago.

Further more, throughout Japanese history, many living in the area which is now known as Japan, did not have the consciousness that they were "Japanese" (*Nihonjin*). Even in Honshu this consciousness has fluctuated.

The historical and contextual nature if ethnicity seriously necessarily runs counter to any attempts to create a universal theory of social relations. Attention to historical and societal context requires us to entertain the contrary thought; that, in studying 'ethnicity' we are studying collective identity and organization, which differ significantly in accordance with their historically specific origins.

Race and Ethnicity

Japanese social scientists used the word *Jinshu* (race) to denote the physical characteristics of race such as blood type, skin color, hair texture etc. *Minzoku* (ethnicity/people/nation) had a looser connotation, roughly equivalent to ethnos, which included characteristics such as "common blood, culture, language, customs and religion".[21] Before the war period, social scientists were able to keep the two terms separate and in distinct contexts. However, during wartime, the lines between the meanings blurred, as concepts of nation and race became increasingly indistinguishable within the Japanese propaganda machine. The new definition of *Minzoku* came to represent "organic collectivities.... natural and spiritual communities which shared a common destiny".[22] An establishment of the criteria for "Japaneseness" emerged from the idea of a racialized Minzoku in the form of *Nihonjinron* and in partnership with terms such as *Kokusui* (national essence) and *Kokuminshugi* (civic nationalism) was critical to the rise of nationalism in Japan.

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[21] Weiner, Michael, "The Creation of Identity: Race and Nation in pre-war Japan", in Dikkoter, Frank, (ed.), *The construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary perspectives*, Honolulu; University of Hawaii Press, 1997, pp.96-117
[22] Dower, John, *War without mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, New York; Pantheon Books, 1986, p.267

The scientific word for biological 'race' in Japan, *Jinshu*, while often used to define the national community, came to be overshadowed around the turn of the century by the term *Minzoku*, a far more fluid and encompassing notion of both cultural and ancestral community. The two terms came to possess a functional equivalency, and there were some, mostly scholars, who continued to maintain a distinction; the historical record shows a gradual but increasing tendency for *Jinshu* and *Minzoku* to be used interchangeably at the level of common-sense understanding, blurring any real distinction between them. The word *Jinshu* appears less often in non-scientific discourse as it becomes subsumed within the semantic boundaries delineated by *Minzoku*. The Japanese 'nation' was increasingly defined not merely by cultural criteria but by 'blood'. The essence of Japanese identity lay in the ties of common ancestry. *Minzoku* encompassed this notion and indeed, was frequently translated as 'race' by the Japanese of the time.

According to Miles, Racism is an ideology that constructs (real or imagined) difference as natural not only in order to exclude, but additionally, in order to marginalize a social collectivity within a particular constellation of unequal power relations thus real or imagined biological difference can become the definitive criterion for categorization, exclusion and domination.[23]

Racialized subject populations like the Ainu were thus perceived as innately inferior, precisely because they were subordinate. For Hoizumi, and others like the staunch social Darwinist Kato Hiroyuki, the essence of the Japanese *Minzoku* lay primarily not in shared culture but in ties of blood due to common ancestry, an ancestry rooted in the divine origins of the imperial line. The notion of the *Yamato Minzoku* as a political community of common ancestry and blood, sharing unique historical and cultural characteristics was part of the ideological drive of the 1890's to establish the Emperor at the pinnacle of the nation.

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[23] Siddle, Richard, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, London, 1996, p.8

Although Japan suffered comprehensive military defeat and occupation in 1945, the dominant ideology of consanguineous family state continued, somewhat transformed, in hegemonic narratives of Japanese uniqueness as a *tan'itsu minzoku* or homogenous nation.

In *Nihonjinron* (discussions on the Japanese) in general, common sense Japanese concepts of a unique culture and society were and are, still ultimately predicated, upon the racialized understanding of self. Yoshino for instance, notes in his discussion of contemporary Nihonjinron that: A Japanese expresses the 'immutable' or 'natural' aspect of Japanese identity through the imagined concept of 'Japanese blood'. Since a scientifically founded 'racial' classification of the Japanese and non-Japanese is meaningless, Japanese blood is first and foremost, a case of social construction of the different.[24]

Minority/Minorities: The Conceptual Framework

The term 'minority' has attained different meanings in different contexts. Any attempt to define minorities meets with various problems. The central question that continues to color the discourse on minorities is 'who are the minorities?' 'What are the salient features through which one can identify them as minorities?' 'What could constitute minority rights?' 'What could be the boundary for praxis oriented minority rights discourse?'

According to the *Concise Oxford dictionary* 7th edition, minority is "...small groups of people differing from the others in race, religion, language, opinion on topic, etc...."

As understood in sociology, the minority group has the following features:

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[24] Ibid, p.19

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1. Its members are disadvantaged, as a result of discrimination against them by others. Discriminations exist when rights and opportunities open to one set of people are denied to another group.

2. Members of the minority have some sense of group solidarity of 'belonging together'. The experience of being the subject of prejudice and discrimination usually heightens feelings of common loyalty and interests. Members of minority groups often tend to see themselves as 'a people apart' from the majority.

3. Minorities are to some degree physically and socially isolated from the larger community. They tend to be concentrated in certain neighborhoods, cities or regions of a country. There are few inter-marriages between those in the majority and members of the minority group.[25].

Minority groups are always to some degree ethnically distinct from the majority. For instance, the Burakumin are a minority group in Japan, although the level of ethnic difference between them and the majority population is little. They look and act like other Japanese. Many minorities however, are both ethnically and physically distinct from the rest of the population of the societies in which they live.

A minority need not be a traditional group with long standing group identification. It can arise as a result of changing social definition in a process of economic and political differentiation. There can be linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic minorities. A minority's position involves exclusion or assignment to a lower status in one or more of four areas of life: the economic, the political, the legal and the anti-associational i.e. a minority will be assigned to lower ranking occupation or to lower compensated positions within each occupation; it will be prevented from exercising full political privileges had by majority citizens; it will not be given equal status with the majority in the application of law and justice; or it will be partially or completely excluded from both the formal and the informal associations found among the majority.

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[25] Giddens, Anthony, *Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1989, p.254

Wirth defines minority as "a group of people, who because of their physical or cultural characteristics are singled out from the others in the society in which they live, for differential and unequal treatment and who, therefore, regard themselves as objects of collective discriminations".[26] He holds the view that the presence of a minority group in a particular society has relevance in the context of the existence of a "dominant group" which enjoys a privileged status in the society.

Laponce makes a division of the minorities into two categories, viz. minorities by will and minorities by force. He defines minorities from a political viewpoint as "a group of people who, because of a common racial, linguistic or national heritage which singles them out from the politically dominant cultural group, fear that they may either be prevented from integrating themselves into a national community of their choice or be obliged to do so at the expense of their identity."[27]

In a recent publication of the United Nations it is stated that "an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority is a group numerically smaller than the rest of the population of the state to which it belongs and possessing physical or historical characteristics, a religion or language different from those of the rest of the population.[28] In a definition by the United Nations Sub-commission on Prevention and Protection of Minorities, minorities are "those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve stable ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics markedly different from those of the rest of the population."[29]

Anthropologists, Wagley and Harris use a similar definition of minorities, but they make explicit what "non-dominant" implies by listing five defining characteristics of minorities: (1) They are subordinate segments of complex state societies; (2) They have special physical or cultural traits that are held in low esteem by the dominant segments of

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[26] Wirth, L, "The problem of minority groups", in Linton, R, (ed.), *The science of man in the world crisis*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1945, p.347

[27] Laponce, J. A, "The protection of minorities by electoral system", *Western Political Quarterly*, 10, N.2, 1957, p.318

[28] *United Nations*, 1988

[29] *United Nations*, 1952: 490

the society; (3) They are self-conscious units, bound together by the special traits that their members share and by the special disabilities these brings; (4) Membership in a minority is transmitted by a rule of descent and (5) Minority peoples, by choice or by necessity, tend to marry within their groups.[30]

The chief limitation of the definition we have just quoted is its failure to stress discrimination. Minority status is an imposed status except for sectarian separatists groups, and has validity only as dominants possess the power and opportunity to sustain it.

Analysis of Dominant-Minority Relations

The dominant group in a society is one whose appearance and ways of behaving are considered as the "normal ones" of the society. Members of the dominant group share a common value system, a common language, and a common history. Dominant norms are historically derived, and their pre-eminence is established by custom and by law.[31]

Before the rise of nation-states, dominant-minority relations existed between kinship (tribes, clans, and "people") and religious groups, where varying patterns of subordination or "tolerance" of out-groups were to be found. In the modern world the secular state has the military and legal prerogative to determine the protection and participation of the people within its geographic borders and, in many instances, within its extended political hegemony.

Acculturation

Manifest behavioral culture traits of a minority may be markedly different from those of the host society. Broom and Kitsuse point out that the person who is taking on a

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[30] Wagley, Charles and Harris, Marvin, *Minorities in the New World: Six Case Studies*, New Yo k: Columbia University Press, 1958, p.10
[31] Marden, F, Charles & Meyer, Gladys, *Minorities in American Society*, Pub. By Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1952, p.22-23

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new culture must "validate" his acculturation by having qualified and been accepted in the major institutional patterns of the dominant society.[32] In order to do this, he must also give up any privileged protection of immunities, which he has enjoyed by virtue of being a member of a minority.

Frazier and others, who have described as "vested interests" the resistance to assimilation of certain status groups within the minority, where incorporation into equal competition with dominants might diminish their advantages, have recognized this. Dominants can equally short out minorities by patterns of over-protection, by making pets of individual minority members with whom they have some personal tie. Validation is the point at which the move to ultimate assimilation will or will not be made. If minority members reject participation in some forms of the dominant culture, they have made a choice for stabilized pluralism with the ensuing development of particular established patterns of interaction with dominants. There is often a generational battle over the choice of stabilized acculturation versus assimilation.

Assimilation

In a definition of assimilation, Park states, "an immigrant is ordinarily considered assimilated as soon as he has acquired the language and the social ritual of the native community and can participate, without encountering prejudice in the common life, economic and political". Assimilation may in some senses and to a certain degree be described as a function of visibility[33].

A problem arises here as to whether or not a minority person is assimilated if he participates only in the secular community institutions of economic and public life, and is debarred in the sphere of social invitation. Another point of view that has been stressed is

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[32] Ibid, p.24

[33] Park, E Robert, "Assimilation", *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. II, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930, p.281

the interactional aspect of assimilation. Thus Mack and Young define assimilation as the "fusion of divergent habits, attitudes and ideas".[34]

This definition stresses the blinding of mutual contributions to the common life. Contemporary sociologists stress the fact that, in the end, assimilation depends on the dominant acceptance of the minority individual. The question is not only in which spheres of social life a person is accepted; it is also a question of which traits, with what symbolic significance, a host culture will accept, physiognomic or ideological. This last may vary according to the host culture.

Another closely related problem is whether assimilation is the only goal for minority groups. Does assimilation create uniformity and destroy a valued diversity?

Monolithic Assimilation and Cultural Integration Policies

Often it is said that the Japanese empire adopted an assimilationist approach to integrate colonized people. Affinities of race and culture between the Japanese and its colonized peoples made possible the idea that the colonizer and the colonized ultimately would fuse and come to have the same identification within the Japanese colonial territories. This concept crystallized in the doctrine of *doka* (assimilation), which came to be the central agenda in Japanese colonial policies.[35]

According to Peattie, there are some assumptions that drove Japan to the idea of assimilation. The easiest formulation is the *dobun doshu* (same culture, same race); that represents cultural and racial affinities with Semitic areas. Japan's assimilation was formulated by "a strongly moralistic tone, derived from the Chinese Confucian tradition and expressed in the endlessly repeated phrase *isshi dojin*- impartiality and equal favor."[36]

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[34] "Sociology and Social Life", 4th edition, *Glossary*
[35] Peattie, Mark R, "Introduction" in *The Japanese Colonial Empire*, 1895-1945, (ed.), by Ramon H, Myers and Mark R. Peattie, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 96
[36] Ibid, p.97

The concept of *Kazoku Koka* (family state) is central in order to create inclusionary membership. This mythic linkage between the origin of the Japanese race and the imperial house could expand outward to include colonized peoples under Japanese dominion. Finally there was a belief, based on semi mythic and factual examples, that the Japanese people had a historic capacity for assimilating foreign people and ideas.

Generally speaking, 'assimilation' enables minority groups to enjoy the same institutional privilege as the dominant group at the cost of cultural assimilation. The distinct nature of the Japanese type of assimilation is the contrivance of a *janus*- faced assimilation policy. On the one hand, it makes a clear distinction between the first-class Japanese and the second class by mobilizing Japaneseness, which is measured by 'race', 'ethnicity', and 'culture', and legitimizes the hierarchy among it's subjects on the socio-structural level.

Minority Status

Explanations of why minorities exist often employ concepts such as prejudice and discrimination. Yet this often confuses the issue as much as it clarifies it. For one thing, these are negative terms, and most people deny that they are prejudiced or that they are discriminate. Basically, prejudice refers to negative beliefs, attitudes, and feelings while discrimination has reference to behavior, especially to unequal treatment of persons by virtue of their race or ethnicity.

The key to minority status is the capacity of one group to impose discrimination upon another. Discrimination in the economic sphere would mean a dominant group controlling jobs, land, credit and investment.

Does prejudice cause discrimination?

The folklore and common sense of our culture tells us that prejudice causes discrimination. To say that prejudice causes discrimination is to say that attitude causes behavior. There can be prejudice without discrimination and discrimination without prejudice. Prejudice without discrimination occurs when a prejudiced person cannot discriminate even if he wants to.

Effective discrimination in education relegates any minority to inferior positions in the class structure. Further, denial of political rights to a minority is denial of political power. And discrimination in housing is primarily a matter of residential segregation.

Discrimination is more than a legal matter; it is a social and cultural process as well, deeply rooted in basic assumptions and practices of the society. The act of removing the legal barriers to equal treatment, therefore, did not significantly change attitudes and practices. From the perspective of affirmative action, it is not sufficient to simply not discriminate; it is necessary to do something, to affirm equal opportunity by specific action.

Japan's strategy to obscure internal differences beneath the ideological veil of homogeneity denies not only the nations cultural and regional heterogeneity but also the reality of social discrimination directed at its own minorities.[37] Like the prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination to which it gives rise, this myopia is rooted in acquired ignorance.

True, Japan's indifference to its own minorities is due, in part, to the fact that its minority population has been, until recently, "invisible"; by virtue of it's being physically indistinguishable from the majority. But more significantly, this invisibility has also been fostered by social policies that have forced minorities to abandon and suppress their

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[37] Russell, G. John, "Narratives of Denial; Racial behavior and the Black other in Japan", *Japan Quarterly*, Oct.-Dec., 1991, pp., 416-17

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ethnic and cultural identities and to assimilate to escape the consequences of stigmatization as outsiders.

In suppressing differences and encouraging social conformity, Japan has created social mechanisms, such as the *Koseki* (family registry system), list of buraku and *Koshijo* (detective agencies), to render the invisible visible by ferreting out differences so as to more effectively control and exclude it. In such a vacuum, the myth of Japanese homogeneity requires the unyielding certainty of all unexamined ideologies.

Cultural Deprivation

According to this view, one of the significant inducements to ethnicity comes from the feeling of insecurity among the ethnic minorities of getting lost in the sea of the majority. This may be either because of the discrimination and oppression by the majority, the state identifying itself with the majority, or the homogenization process arising out of modernization leading to the creation of a synthetic state culture.

One has to bear in mind that all ethnic groups need not be 'minorities' if the term connotes deprivation. Nevertheless, the communities under the study are minorities in the sense that they are numerically less and that their participation in the socio-political activities of the wider society is minimal which gives them a sense of deprivation and a marginal position.

Building National Identity through deprivation

Some historians have focused on how powerful myths about Japan as a mono-ethnic nation influenced the earlier theoretical approaches to wartime Japan, obscuring the multi ethnic legacies imperialism has bequeathed to contemporary Japan. The disestablishment of the imperial state after World War II left many Japanese with a sense that the state was a thoroughly corrupt agent for social change. However, it did little to temper a broader, popular sense that national cultural identity, invested in the concept of

Plural Society

Van Den Berghe defines plural society as a compartmentalization into quasi-independent sub-systems on the basis of cultural and/or social segmentation.[39] According to him societies are pluralistic in so far as they are segmented into corporate groups that frequently although not necessarily, have different cultures or sub-cultures and in so far as their social structure, are compartmentalized into analogous, parallel, non-complementary but distinguishable sets of institutions.[40]

Further, according to him cultural pluralism springs from the coexistence of several ethnic groups or of the distinct types of the same culture. Structural pluralism is present when "a society is structurally compartmentalized into analogous and duplicatory but culturally alike sets of institutions and into corporate groups which are differentiated on a basis other than culture."

Over the last few years' scholars have been asking pertinent questions; what are the social, political-economic and cultural contexts that inspire ethnic revivalism in the modern world? The cultural pluralist approach evolved by Furnivall and Bocke and continued by Smith, Schimerhorn, Kuper and Van Den Berge has a similar framework. It sees ethnic groups and cultural communities as the principal social formation in contemporary status, or at least equivalent with and not reducible to any other kind of formation such as class or interest cultural pluralism encompasses within a single society the existence of various groups having institutional systems (e.g., social structures, value systems, belief patterns) which are mutually incompatible.

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[39] Van Den Berghe, P.L., *South Africa; A study of conflict*, University of California Press, 1965, pp.268-70

[40] ------------------, *Race and Racism: A comparative perspective*, J.Willey and Sons, New York, 1967, p.34

Minority Rights in Plural Society

What is the role of the law in helping to resolve the dilemma? It poses to explore the fundamental, implication of plural society. The dilemma arises when the rights of the individual are put at risk in the interest of the disadvantaged group. Is it acceptable to require an individual to make the sacrifice? If it is, how far is it reasonable to go?

When we speak of a plural society, we mean a society which is made up of a number of groups which willingly or unwillingly recognize themselves at least for the time being.

The purpose of the law must be not to extinguish the groups which make up society but to devise political, social and legal means of preventing them from falling apart and so destroying the plural society of which they are members very few plural societies have fulfilled the aspiration of all the groups within them

Thus, from the above-mentioned definition of the minority groups and the previously discussed views about ethnicity, it is clear that though this two concepts have many features in common, an ethnic group is not necessarily a minority group. The vital difference between the two is the deprived nature of the minority group. An ethnic group can be a deprived one or a privileged one. The deprived ethnics get transformed into minorities when ethnicity becomes a political for them. Thus there clearly exists a distinction between ethnicity of the deprived and the privileged.

Multiculturalism in Japan

One of the great difficulties in the concept of the 'multi-cultural' society is the incorporation of the idea that cultures are equal in worth as well as while existing side by side in mutual tolerance. John Maher and Kyoko Yoshiro disclosed that Japan has always been linguistically diverse, but to publicly admit this is to open the door to a more dangerous recognition of cultural diversity.[41] The ideology of monolingual–mono cultural

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[41] Mane, J, and Yashiro, K, (eds.), "Multilingual Japan", in Special issue of the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 16, pp. 1-2

homogeneity is also deconstructed as an invented tradition. The Meiji administration's drive to nationhood included standardizing the Tokyo dialect and devaluing all the others; the latter made more palatable by the notion of a 'common language' among legitimate dialects.

Nakasone's denial that the existence of minorities in Japan was an extreme symptom. Japanese has been linked to various language groups inconclusively perhaps with Chinese and Koreans languages. Any discussion of class stratification as influencing language variation is moreover taboo under the present egalitarian public opinion. It is as if racial and social equality have been achieved by not mentioning discrimination against minorities. The populous Burakumin about whom people only whisper were another exception, though they are physiologically identical to the mainstream.

This analysis begins with an overview of ethnic minority populations in Japan with respect to who and how many. Further this analysis concludes with an overview of minority status and discrimination in Japan with reference to the purity myths as impediments to ethnic pluralism. This study is conceived with ethnic groups composed of persons differentiable – apart from their vocations – on the basis of caste, race or nationality.

The historical context of multiethnic Japan and Mono-ethnic Ideology

Japan has been and remains a multi ethnic society. The presence of discriminated minority groups including the indigenous Ainu and Okinawan, Colonial-era immigrants from the Korean peninsula and the Chinese mainland, Burakumin (descendants of pre-modern outcasts), and others, readily refutes the claim of mono-ethnic Japan.

In the post World War II period, the pre-war era was widely criticized as un-democratic, and the new order sought to institute a true democracy. Ironically, the establishment of an American style democracy led to the exclusion of ethnic orders in the

name of a small democratic Japan. The establishment of a true democracy is, ironically, one of the sources of mono-ethnic Japan.

To be recognized as a group, inevitably, involves its differentiation from others. That is, the formation of minority groups implies the existence of a majority group or a dominant ethnic identity. It would have been obvious that people who have resided in Japan are Japanese, however, in the true sense of the term, it is certainly not the case. The formation of Japanese national or ethnic identity was crucial with the making of modern Japan. That is, the widespread sense of being Japanese among people living in Japan was the product of modern state making, with its infrastructural and ideological innovations.

Japanese national identity before the Meiji Restoration was not widely shared. There was an absence cf a widespread national identity before the late nineteenth century. This argument however, contradicts the common-sense pre-supposition that people who live in present-day Japan have always felt themselves to be Japanese.

Modern national identity requires the modern state infrastructural and ideological development. Further, a well-developed state infrastructural capacity, nation-wide systems of transformations, communication and education are necessary to transmit and reproduce an identity over a large territory.

On the other hand, equally significant is the ideological transformation of the modern state. In pre-modern Japan, as in all pre-modern, status-based societies, the ruling elite did not promote an inclusive political identity that was consonant with the polity. It is certain that this is because a rigidly stratified society is incompatible with an inclusive and inclusionary identity.

Japanese modern state making, with its infrastructural development and an inclusionary ideology, widely disseminated national identity and patriotic nationalism. Japan since its colonial days formed the emperor ideology that the nation was literally known as the children of the emperor, constituting the family state. The Japanese nation,

in other words, became the family-state. The Japanese nation, in other words, became one large family with the emperor as the divine patriarch. Nevertheless, simultaneous with the development of patriotic nationalism was the making of multi-ethnic Japan. Ironically, precisely when it became possible to talk of widespread Japanese national identity, the modern nation-state became irrefutably multiethnic. The fundamental mechanism is colonialism, or territorial expansion.

Beyond Hokkaido and Okinawa, Japan also colonized a series of territories in Asia. In doing so, not only did the territory of Japan expand fourfold, but Japanese polity also became irreducibly multiethnic. Owing especially to wartime labor shortages, the massive influx of colonial labor as well as the incorporation of Burakumin and Okinawan into the mainstream labor market rendered Japan as a profoundly multi-ethnic society. In other words, modern Japanese state making made Japan into a multi-ethnic society.

Imperial Japan occasionally featured arguments about mono-ethnic nationalism, but the dominant ideological tenor was to highlight the multiethnic constitution of Japan. For instance, Japan may be a family state, but Koreans and Chinese were also part of the extended family. Thus, the claim that Japan has been and remains mono-ethnic became dominant only after the collapse of the Japanese empire.

Postwar Japanese society was considerably less ethnically heterogeneous than it had been earlier. Along with the empire went the imperial ideology, including its presumption of mono-ethnic Japan. Postwar Japanese intellectuals thought and considered Japan to be mono-ethnic. By the 1960's the urban rural divides had nearly disappeared, and the status distinction largely withered away. Japan appeared to be a culturally integrated and homogenous society. In the following chapters the modest attempt would be the size, importance and academic uniformity in projecting Japanese society as it stands at the turn of the century.

CHAPTER II

THE AINU: Indigenous People of Japan

The AINU are the indigenous people of Northern Japan. The Ainu are an aboriginal people living in Hokkaido, Southern Sakhalin and the Southern part of Kurile Islands. Hokkaido is an island of about 77,900 square kilometers, situated north of Japanese mainland between circ. $40^{0}30$'N and $45^{0}30$'N and circ. 140^{0}E and 146^{0}E.[1] The Ainu exploited the resources of this island by hunting and fishing, and also collected wild plants.

The Ainu were dispossessed of their ancestral land and resources by the expansion of a vigorous colonial state. Traditional ways of life collapsed as hunting and fishing territories were settled by waves of immigrants and transformed into agricultural land.[2]

As a distinct minority group, ethnically, physically and culturally different from the Japanese norm, they form a contradiction, an obstacle to Japan's master narrative of a seamless national or racial homogeneity. The existence of the Ainu as an ethnic minority group is further denied by considering them as either totally assimilated or biologically extinct. In fact the Ainu's are marginalized by typical factors such as cultural or geographical separations from the mainstream.

However, a striking 'ethnic revival' is underway among the Ainu. The cultural symbols and rhetoric of Ainuness have become highly visible in recent decades as Ainu leaders press their claim for justice and rights as a separate and indigenous people.

The Ainu were not always a colonized people. It dates back even before the first historical chronicles of Japan, that the Ainu had already established sovereignty in the

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[1] Watanabe, Hitoshi, *The Ainu Ecosystem*, University of Tokyo Press, 1972, p.1
[2] Weiner, Michael, (ed.), *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p.17

Ezo area (now Hokkaido). Indeed, the fairly recent identification of the Ainu nation is at the crux of Ainu assertions of not simply being a passively dominated group "in need of social welfare, but a 'nation' desirous of decolonization".[3] Therein, historical identification of Ainu nationhood is not trivial. Even though severai attempts at "unification" up with through the Tokugawa era endeavored to submit the Ainu to Japanese rule, the Ainu were successfully able to offer resistance right up to the end of the tyrannical Nobunaga years.

Ainu-Wajin relations: A historical overview

Not until the Tokugawa government granted the Matsumae clan exclusive rights to trade with the Ainu, did official policy towards the Ainu begin to truly shift the power. The motivations of the "Ainu-Wajin" relationship oriented out of greed (what Matsumae Yoshiro perceived to be Ezo's "mountains of gold") and ended in ever-evolving trade (and power) disparities.[4] The exclusive policy not only restricted Ainu trade potential by routing them through a single resource, but also inhibited cultural exchange between Ainu and Japanese while granting the Ainu token protection from other aggressive Japanese. In reality, the Matsumae abused the Ainu both physically and psychologically. The Ainu practically lost all autonomy, lost all former land and lost all freedom.[5]

Then began the process of attempted Ainu assimilation. From the outset this was, however, only a limited form of assimilation, for the Ainu were not seen as proper human beings and were assimilated only in an underclass or slave capacity.

When the Tokugawa era government became interested in developing a strong presence in Hokkaido, as prompted by the impending Russian threat and the need to open a port for trade as demanded by western treaty, the Matsumae had already established rule over the area.[6] The state won Hokkaido after Shakushain's war; after which the Ainu

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[3] Siddle, Richard, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, London, 1996, p.171
[4] Henshall, G. Kenneth, *Dimensions of Japanese Society*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1999, p.57
[5] Ibid, p. 46
[6] Ibid, Siddle, Richard, p.39

were forced into a one way-assimilation into Japanese culture. Being coerced from a hunter – gatherer culture into an agrarian one subsequently made them heavily dependent on trade with the rest of Japan. Within this context, a vicious circle develops wherein the subjugated are seen as inferior for being conquered and their being inferior is reason enough for them to be conquered. Indeed, the first official history of Hokkaido in 1918 states that the "responsibility of colonization of Hokkaido" was placed upon the Japanese race was in contact with the Ezo. [7]

Ideas familiar to race in Japan developed prior to the introduction of social Darwinism within the realm of Confucianist beliefs in barbarians and were heavily prevalent prior to an inclusion of the Tokugawa era. Outsiders were deemed as polluted in the Japanese mind, and relegated to the Buraku class.[8] Even today, the term for outsider (*gaijin*) has a negative (and racialized) connotation in contrast with the "racially pure homogenous" Japanese.

Many of the pre-existing stereotypes of the Ainu people were incorporated, into the new racial theory of social Darwinism. Prior to Ainu racialization, the Ainu were often portrayed as hairy, aggressive, non-human.[9] It was commonly accepted by Japanese society that the Ainu were half-man and half-dog. The Japanese often perverted Ainu into the pejorative Aino - meaning half-breed. With the advent of social Darwinism, these stereotypes were merely exacerbated.

The Meiji period saw the establishment and consolidation of a colonial order in Hokkaido under the colonization commission (*Kaitukashi*) between 1869 and 1882 and the Hokkaido government (*Docho*) established in 1886. To exploit the strategic and economic potential of the regime for the benefit of the center, the Meiji government established specific administration and economic mechanisms quite different from those of the mainland (*naichi*). Besides the rich fisheries, the main resource of Hokkaido was

[7] Weiner, Michael, (ed.), *Japans Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p.113
[8] Ibid, p.27
[9] Ibid, Siddle, Richard, p.49

land. This land, which belonged to the Ainu through a system of both communal and private rights of use, was unilaterally annexed by the state. Dispossessed of their resources, the Ainu were forced into chronic destitution.

In the early days of colonial administration, the Ainu were perceived broadly through the inherited stereotypes of the Tokugawa period as ignorant, half-human barbarians. By the 1890's, Confucian stereotypes of civilized and barbarian races were undergoing transformations to conform to the new paradigms in order to explain difference and inequality, 'race' and 'survival of the fittest'.

The first proposal in the Diet for a Protection Act came from Kato Masanosuke in the fifth Imperial Diet in 1983. In his opening statement, Kato referred to the argument put forward by some that:

> "The survival of the fittest is a natural feature of the world. The
> Ainu race (Ainu *jinshu*) is an inferior race, while our Japanese race (*naichi*
> *jinshu*) is a superior race. The superior race says that the inferior Ainu race
> will naturally die out... and that there is no need to protect them."[10]

Within this Darwinian framework, a range of stereotypes existed characterized as ignorant, alcoholic, disease ridden, dirty and lazy. These stereotypes frequently occurred with reference to the agriculturisation policies of the authorities.

Contempt for the Ainu was, of course, nothing new. From Tokugawa times negative stereotypes had accompanied Ainu subordination, and these continued to be widely held among the rural lower classes. Many were struggling tenant farmers, and disputes were common with the powerful landlords who had established themselves in Hokkaido as a result of official encouragement after 1890. Economic considerations motivated many farmers and small traders who lived around the native villages, to employ unscrupulous methods to swindle the Ainu out of their land, and it is likely that in many cases negative stereotypes served to justify such acts in the eyes of their

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[10] Ibid, p.88

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perpetrators. The numerous Ainus who grew up in the early twentieth century are full of incidents of cheating and manifestations of an overt prejudice that was rife among the rural poor.

As John Batchelor pointed out in 1919, while Japanese were polite among themselves and to westerners, they treated the Ainu as 'outside the brotherhood of man', referring to the continued belief in the bestial origins of the Ainu.[11] The Ainu who are phenotypically distinct, found that their features, in particular hairiness, marked their inferiority and singled them out for abuse.

Physical mistreatment was common in both military and civilian life, often stemming from *Wajin* perceptions that Ainu were forgetting their inferior status. For Ainu children, school became a torment whenever they were a minority in numbers. This was a feature of Ainu life from the early days of mass immigration. One educator noted in 1982 that argument and fights were common, since Wajin children inherited negative attitudes from their parents:

> Because they are despised (Ainu children) tend to stay at home and hate
> starting school. Wajin complain that they are extremely dirty, terribly
> smelly, rude and incapable of speaking Japanese properly... their parents,
> especially those of higher status, detest these things. Further, Wajin
> parents would quieten crying children with the words 'we will give you to
> an Ainu' or 'An Ainu has come to get you', and that 'Ainu' was used as
> an insult that frequently led to physical confrontation between workmen.[12]

Common sense notions of Japanese uniqueness and homogeneity contributed to the continued marginalization of the Ainu population. While much has changed in rural Hokkaido over the last few decades, due to economic change and increased social mobility, the Ainu are still perceived as inferior within the deterministic parameters of the

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[11] Ibid, p.109
[12] Ibid, p.24

latest manifestation of the Japanese discourse of 'race'. The Japanese discourse of 'race' and the racialisation of the Ainu remains a feature of Japanese society in the 1990s.

The dominant view of the Ainu as a 'dying race' has come to be challenged by the rhetoric and symbolism of an 'Ainu nation'. In reacting to marginalization, Ainu activists in the postwar period are engaged in 'ethno politics'- what Stavenhagen summarizes as not the expression of some form of primordial attachments, but an instrument in the struggle for power, directly linked to the process of modernization.[13]

The need for identity is probably an essential human need. 'Private' ethnicity is without doubt extremely important for many individual Ainu, fostering feelings of self-worth in the face of prejudice, discrimination, and the denial of identity. Ethnic identities themselves can operate at different levels; an Ainu can be simultaneously a member of a local community, an Ainu, a Japanese citizen and an 'indigenous person' as part of the transnational indigenous movement. In situations of acculturation and assimilation, individuals can have experience of dual socialization at home and in the wider community since they consider themselves bicultural.

Ainu subjugation and development of racist ideology

At the very beginning of the Meiji period the Ainu were, like the Burakumin, theoretically given equal status with other Japanese. This was in line with a broader government policy to develop Hokkaido as a bonafide part of Japan.

The destitution and marginalization of the Ainu was a result of the colonization and economic development of Hokkaido after 1868. Inequality was attributed to innate inferiority that marked the Ainu as among those destined to lose in the 'struggle for survival'. Racialised understanding thus took root in Japanese society and shaped specific policy measures that furthered the subordination of the Ainu.

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[13] Ibid, p.110

Many Ainu had lost control of their lands, which were held in perpetual lease by Wajin. In some cases under earlier legislation, Ainu lands had even been incorporated into state lands or assigned to Wajin immigrants by 'forgetful' officials. In an attempt to remedy the situation, the *Docho* justified the decision by pointing out that the Ainu 'are almost all dissolute and lacking in managerial sense. These measures served to perpetuate the image of the Ainu as inferior and dependent wards of the state and so ensured their subordination.

Blood became essential in the definitions of this "imagined Japanese community". Yoshino emphasized that the idea of "Japanese blood" is also a social construction.[14] Indeed the creation of a Japanese bloodline can be viewed as the pivot from which the racialization of the Ainu took place. The logical consequences of adopting an ideology of Japanese genetic determinism and Asian subjugation would be that the wealth of the Ainu would quickly vanish.[15] Therein, measures to preserve the racial purity of the "Japanese" would even include the promotion of taboos against miscegenation, as "Ainu subjugation and inequality were in effect matters of blood".

This imagined blood community continues to shape societal definitions of exclusion and inclusion in present–day Japanese identity. When Nakasone remarked in 1986 that Japan has no racial minorities, many "Japanese" agreed and have continued to perpetuate the myth that even till today, living in a purportedly "homogenous society", Japanese do not believe in racism. The racism of many Japanese officials has not only colluded with American white racism, but also created its own dialogue of race in the exclusion of "the outsider" in Japan–who is more than often of a "conquered (but ignored) race". Nakasone's statement enraged the Ainu community and prompted them to elicit full recognition as Japanese members of society by the Japanese government. The idea of the forgotten Ainu is undoubtedly linked to the "dying race" theories that were prevalent at the time of the thrust of social Darwinism's popularity in Japan. In the

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[14] Yoshino, Kosaku, "The Discourse on Blood and Racial Identity in contemporary Japan", in Dikotter, Frank, (ed.), *The construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, '*Historical and Contemporary perspectives*, Honolulu; University of Hawaii Press, 1997, pp.199-202
[15] Op.Cit, Siddle, Richard, p.106

1880's, progressive Japanese social commentators such as Kita Masaaka remarked that the synonymity between "Ainu" and preconceptions of a "primitive, hairy, simpleton dying race" aggressively worked against Ainu assimilation into mainstream Japanese society.[16] The same ideas are integral to Japanese identity and compose the social forces of resistance to Ainu acceptance.

Discrimination and Prejudice: An Ainu alternative

Though the Ainu were treated nominally as Japanese from the early Meiji era, in practice they were treated differently from mainstream *Yamato* Japanese. Discrimination soon came to be justified not on the grounds that the Ainu were alien barbarians but on the grounds that they were primitives.[17] The concept of 'primitive' was applied in a derogatory sense to separate them from the more technologically advanced and therefore superior Yamato Japanese.

Centuries of oppression, racism, forced assimilation policies, intolerance and discrimination, social and political dominance of the majority ethnic Japanese have contributed heavily to the annihilation of the Ainu culture. Modern socialization and the fear of marginalization have led recent generations to regard their Ainu identity negatively. Many have abandoned the transmission of Ainu customs and traditions. Urban Ainu in particular face problems of alcoholism, homelessness, and violence and try to hide their Ainu heritage and deny their Ainu identity, even to themselves; their culture is precariously close to extinction. Only few elders speak the language.

The Meiji government also adopted a policy of forced assimilation, banning the Ainu from their traditional livelihoods of hunting and fishing and forcing them to take up farming. The Ainu language and daily customs were prohibited. Children were forced to attend Japanese schools where only Japanese was spoken.

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[16] Ibid, Siddle, Richard, pp.111-112
[17] Henshall, G. Kenneth, *Dimension of Japanese Society: Gender, Margins and Mainstream*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1999, p. 58

policy of showing loyalty to the emperor, it was a practical way to alleviate the suffering and destitution of their fellow *utari*.

The main motive for the formation of the Ainu *Kyokai* had been to gain revision of the Protection Act, and it was to this end that much of its activity was directed. Some of the other main focuses were - concrete welfare issues, discriminatory educatioı and Ainu efforts to become 'splendid Japanese'.

Ogawa Sasuke of Urakawa made a sling attack on 'racial prejudice' (*jinshuteki henken*) and the stereotypes of the 'dying race' and 'welfare people'. Addressing young Ainu like himself, he asked:

> Who has not been weakened by racial prejudice, despised and insulted, or wept with rage as a result of social discrimination? In the enterprises we undertake in order to engage in society and fight in the struggle for survival, in the indication for our children, the many tragedies that arise because we are natives, have they not brought us to tears? Have they not stirred us to action?[19]The Ainu must awaken, he urged, to abolish the Protection Act and raise their standards of living to eliminate such prejudice and discrimination.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the Ainu resurgence appeared in the form of groups of young Ainu activists who were sharply critical of the Ainu establishment and its link with the *Docho*, as represented by *uteri Kyokai*. Taking their cue from more radical currents in Japanese society, they bypassed the administrative structure of previous relations and sought instead to confront the social and administrative mechanisms that underlay Ainu marginalization. In a reversal of the flight of Ainu youth from Ainu identity, these young men and women rejected assimilation. Asserting pride in their Ainuness, they actively undertook a search for their roots.

The period between 1968 and 1970, witnessed various events which highlighted the marginal status of the Asian and stimulated activity among the emerging Ainu groups.

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[19] Op.Cit, Siddle, Richard. p.136.

The year 1968 marked the centennial of the Meiji restoration and was also the hundredth year of Hokkaido 'history'. Almost no mention was made of Ainu history or their role in the colonization of Hokkaido. The Ainu were largely excluded from this narrative, or given marginal roles as guides or coolies for the early explorers, since as a 'dying race' of primitives they had claim to neither land nor civilization.

This denial of existence aroused much resentment among Ainu of all generations. In a letter to the *Hokkaido Shimbun*, one young Ainu from *Kushiro* called for wajin not to forget that the ground under the commemorative tower was 'soaked with Ainu blood'.[20]

The 'Ainu problem' received considerable national attention during the next few years, as terrorist incidents continued. Besides numerous defacements of monuments with paint and graffiti, more serious incidents included arson attacks and attempts to murder even the Mayor of Shiraoi, in protest against Ainu exploitation. The worst incident was the bombing of the Docho on 2 March 1976, on the anniversary of the promulgation of the Protection Act, in which two people were killed and over ninety injured.[21]

The *utari Taisaku* aimed to bring the problem firmly back within the sphere of social welfare. Welfare minister Saito Kuniyoshi made the governments' position clear in the diet in March 1973:

> Our basic attitude towards Ainu persons, or utari, is that we definitely do
> not take the standpoint that the Ainu are a separate people (*Minzoku*)
> within the citizenry of Japan. We strictly adhere to the view that they are
> equal Japanese citizens under the law.[22]

But contrary to government wishes, it was this very consciousness of being a separate people, indeed a nation, which was gaining strength among Ainu leaders, whether radical or moderate. One of the main motivations for the constructions of counter

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[20] Op.cit, Siddle, Richard, p.163
[21] Ibid, p.165
[22] Weiner, Michael, (ed.), *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity, Routledge*, (London and New York, 1997), p.34

Prime Minster Nakasone Yasuhiro on the absence of 'racial' minorities and his own possible Ainu ancestry aroused much resentment.

Despite the advances made by the organized Ainu movement, by no means are all the people socially and officially categorized as Ainu themselves convinced by the politics of Ainuness. While the imagined community of the Ainu nation clearly exists for Ainu leaders and activists, the articulation of Ainu identity at the individual level of everyday experiences vary widely. For some it may be largely instrumental and related to the pursuit of increased access to welfare or influence, while for others it is integral to their sense of self. Many undergo deeply felt experiences in which they 'discover' Ainu identity that introduces new pride and meaning into their lives.

Thus the Ainu are now in a promising situation with regard to format recognition. However, the struggle or battle is not over- the challenge is to now bring change to public attitudes. In spite of the difficulties they face, there has been a recent upsurge in Ainu consciousness. People who had been ashamed of being Ainu and had turned their backs on their heritage have once again begun to seek out an Ainu life.

BURAKUMIN: The Impure Outcasts

The 'Burakumin', which literally means 'hamlet people', are considered genetically polluted and treated by majorities as untouchables are treated in India and outcastes elsewhere in the world. They traditionally dwelled in hamlets on the edge of towns rather than in towns themselves – classic marginalization in the physical as well as social sense.[24] Even the names used to describe these groups varied greatly from one area to another with *eta, hinin, kawata* and *chosen* being the most common.

There have been numerous theories about the origin of the outcastes. A similar but pseudo-historic view argues that Japanese outcastes are in some sense the descendants of Koreans brought to Japan as captives and slaves from peninsula

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[24] Op.cit, Henshall, Kenneth G., p. 48

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campaigns during the Yamato period.[25] These people being non-Japanese were segregated and treated by native Japanese as inferiors. Some scholars have asserted that they were descendants of immigrants who came to Japan from Korea,[26] while others have held that they were descendants of the Ainus.

Burakumin are an unusual minority group in that they are not ethnically different from mainstream Japanese despite widespread belief or more exactly claimed beliefs among the latter that they are.[27] Nor are they different in their basic culture, though segregation from the mainstream has inevitably led to certain different patterns of thought and behavior.

The Burakumin present a vexing problem to anyone attempting an ethnic taxonomy of Japan because none of the usual 'objective' markers of ethnicity can be invoked to distinguish them from the surrounding population. The Burakumin are racially identical to the surrounding mainstream population, and yet discrimination against them in matters of employment and marriage persists. In that sense the Burakumin are akin to an untouchable caste; yet in other respects modern Japan does not function as caste society.[28]

One paradox of the Buraku problem is that, as the one minority in which 'ethnic' differences as they are commonly understood, do not exist, the Burakumin should both be easily assimilable and should themselves welcome assimilation. However, this has not seems to be the case.

This tendency to ascribe the origin of people who are considered inferior to some alien race indicates the strong ethnocentrism that has persisted in Japan. It evinces or

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[25] Hane, Mikiso, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: The Underside of Modern Japan*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1982, p. 139.
[26] Ibid.,Henshall, G. Kenneth, p. 419
[27] Sujinohara, J, *The Status discrimination in Japan: Buraku Problems*, Kobe, Japan, 1982, p. 9.
[28] weiner, Michael, Race, Ethnicity and Migration in Modern Japan, Routledge, London and New york, 2004, p.103

displays a way of thinking that condemns a person to near subhuman status if he/she is not Japanese.

Ritual purity and untouchability in Japanese history

Religion has probably been one of the main agents in the marginalization of the Burakumin. Shinto considered work with the dead or with some forms of physical dirt to be impure (*Kegare*). Buddhism similarly, considered work associated with killing animals to be unclean. One of the worst things was that this 'infectious impurity' was seen as hereditary. Once born into this particular outcaste class, there was no legitimate escape.

The term *eta* ('heavily polluted') and *hinin* (non human) came to be used in Japan towards the end of the Kamakura period as an appellation for those who made a living by slaughtering oxen and horses and skinning them, and therefore lived on river banks and received discriminative treatment.

When the Tokugawa established their authority over the land in the seventeenth century, they froze the social order, broadly dividing the population into four classes: Samurai, Peasants, Artisans and Merchants. Segregation and discrimination against the *eta* and *hinin* had been institutionalized by a number of feudal lords, on their own initiative, but with the Tokugawa, the emergence of the *eta* and *hinin* was made a nationwide institution. With the induction of this modern social status system the Burakumin were placed in the lowest position.

During the Tokugawa period the *eta* and *hinin* were theoretically separate classes in the social hierarchy, with the *hinin* taking precedence, but in practice the two ended up, merged as *senmin* ('base people').[29] It may be that the outcastes performed the important role of underclass for a class-conscious society, allowing the merchants – who in theory were at the bottom of 'accepted' social classes – to feel that they were not actually at the bottom.

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[29] Ibid, pp. 49-50

The Tokugawa period also saw the formalization of discrimination against the Burakumin. For instance, people who committed a crime or violated the laws and customs of the land could be relegated to the status of *eta* or *hinin*. Their settlements were omitted from the maps. When the Burakumin encountered people above them in the social hierarchy, they had to get on their hands and knees until the others passed by. They had to wear certain types of clothing and display identification marks, such as yellow color. They were banned from the shrines and temples of non-*eta* communities, and intermarriage with other classes was strictly forbidden. In 1859, an *eta* youth was beaten to death while trying to enter a normal Shinto shrine in Asakusa in Edo (Tokyo), and in the court hearing that followed it was ruled that the life of an *eta* was worth only one-seventh of that of an ordinary person.[30]

With the crumbling of the rigid Tokugawa social order under the modern feudalistic system, the status of *Eta* and *Hinin* were placed under even more strict restrictions not only on the basis of their occupations and dwelling places but also in every aspect of their daily life, and they were treated as "some thing far below human beings".

In 1871, the Meiji government issued an emancipation edict, which abolished the terms *eta* and *hinin* and announced that their status and occupation should be equal to that of farmers, artisans and merchants. Thus, the edict of 1871 officially abolished all outcaste status positions.[31]

The emancipation edict was no doubt a great step towards social democratization. With this edict the feudalistic system was done away with and all the legal and institutional discriminatory policies against the Burakumin disappeared. However, the edict was not enforced into practice; therefore, in actual social life, discrimination did not disappear. Although the Meiji rulers disorganized the feudalistic society of the Tokugawa government, the political, economic and social constructions of the pre-war capitalistic

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[30] Op.cit, Hane, Mikiso, p. 142.

[31] De Vos, George, A, *Japan Outcastes - The Problem of the Burakumin*, March, 1972, p.5

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society of Japan retained feudalistic discrimination against the Burakumin. Needless to say, the decree of 1871, did not end discrimination or put a stop to the abuses, indignities, and cruelties that had been inflicted on the Burakumin for centuries.

Legal changes as is often the case, do not effect a rapid change in a people's way of thinking. Moreover the emancipation edict had witnessed peasant riots, that were anti-Burakumin. Mention may be made of the 1875 riots in Okayama prefecture where 26,000 peasants demanded that the Burakumin be relegated to their former restrictive status. They insisted that the Burakumin bow and scrape before them as they had done in the past. Failing to comply with the demands led to a number of casualties.[32]

The Meiji government after 1872 introduced into Japanese society the new modern school system, which was open only for peers and Kozaku children. Besides this, the government established separate schools for the children of Burakumin. For the first time in Japan schools were established for Burakumin children exclusively. Thus, Meiji rulers attempted to solve the social discrimination through the education system. But the expenditure for maintaining schools was the responsibility of Burakus. This heavy burden not only oppressed the poor Buraku people further but also caused the deterioration of the facilities and educational conditions of the Buraku School. Therefore, all these aggravated the condition of the Burakumin.

The Meiji government incorporated the Burakumin community into the lowest stratum of the Emperor system after the discard of the words like *eta* and *hinin,* both now being redesignated *Shinheimin* (new commoners).[33] In effect, the once-redeemable *hinin* have now become absorbed into the Burakumin and share the same hereditary, irredeemable attributes.

The stigma attached to being a Burakumin was expected to disappear with the closure of 1871; however, discrimination still continues. For instance, many companies

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[32] De Vos, George, and Wagatsuma, *Japan's Invisible Race*, Tokyo, p.37
[33] Op.Cit, Henshall, Kenneth G., p. 50.

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purchase black lists to check that perspective employees are not Burakumin. Private detectives are hired by some families to check the background of the intended bride or groom. Despite legal restrictions since 1976, in realty checks still relied heavily though not exclusively on *Koseki* (family household Registers) which could indicate the likelihood of a Burakumin background by their mere location.

In economic terms, discrimination against Burakumin in employment has meant that they have a high unemployment rate. Burakumins were in a deprived economic situation under the capitalist society. Because of poverty, they were strictly pushed into peasantry and continued to remain the lowest class in Japan. The majority of people from the Burakumin community lived on the margin of poverty and there was little opportunity to break the cycle of their oppressed state of existence.

The Path towards Passing

The principle strategy of the Burakumin Liberation League after the postwar was to cease social stigmatization by claiming their essential Japaneseness. Rather than seek recognition politically, the Burakumin activists chose the path of assimilation.

The Burakumin claim of their essential Japaneseness needs to be placed in the prewar period. Although they became an essential recognized identity only after the Meiji Restoration, their newfound unity produced reactions regarding their racial origins from mainstream Japanese people.

In the early twentieth century popular notion, the Burakumin were said to have one rib-bone lacking one dog bone in them; they were also said to have distorted organs as well as distorted sexual organs; and defective excretory systems; it was believe that they walked in the moonlight their necks would not cast shadows; and as they were animals dirt would not stick to their feet when they walked barefooted.[34]

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[34] Ooms, Herman, *Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power, Law*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, p.303

The proximate origin of the Burakumin was the 1871 Emancipation Decree, which transformed the outcastes formally into new commoners (*Shin heimin*). Rather than rigid status distinctions that proscribed occupational mobility, residential freedom, the right to surnames and other features of formally egalitarian citizenship, the decree granted the new commoners the same rights as the commoners (*heimin*).

Thus, there was a transition from caste defined by customary or legal proscription on occupational mobility or exogamy to ethnicity. Social discrimination and cultural stigma did not disappear against the new commoners. The Meiji state was slow to expand schooling, transportation and communication to Burakumin villages. In short, the Burakumin held the worst jobs and housing of modern Japanese society.

The Japanese government engaged in a policy of repression and integration. Liberal social thinking and the fear of popular uprising symbolized by the 1918 Rice Riots, goaded the government to adopting the so called *ya'wa* (assimilation and harmony) policy.[35] The first state aid occurred in 1920, in the form of various improvement projects for the Burakumin villages. Poverty, geographical segregation and social stigmatization characterized most Burakumins. Further, the *Suiheisa* and *yawa* policy consolidated the Burakumin identity. On the one hand, the *Suiheisa* organized the Burakumin, thereby entrenching burakumin identity. On the other hand, the state, especially via the *yawa* policy, treated the Burakumin as a distinct group.

In the post-war period, the Burakumin continued to occupy a distinct niche in Japanese society. Although no longer called Buraku, but *dawa chiku* (assimilated area), many postwar Burakumin neighborhoods were socially segregated with inferior infrastructures. Poverty continued to mark Burakumin areas and the Burakumin

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[35] Neary, Ian, *Political Protest and Social Control in Pre-War Japan: The Origins of Buraku Liberation*, Atlantic highlands, N.J, Humanities Press, International, 1989, pp.130-132

themselves were characterized by low educational attainment and high welfare dependency.[36]

In spite of legal equality, the Burakumin continued to be excluded from prestigious corporate jobs and marriages with mainstream Japanese people. Many large corporates used name books (*chimei Sa' kan*) to identify individuals with Burakumin ancestry and not hire them.

In addition to residential and economic segregation, the Burakumin culture showed distinct characteristics and faced discrimination from the mainstream population. In the early 1960s, the Burakumin diet reflected a tradition of meat eating that included the consumption of internal organs. Many Japanese abhorred this as well as their wearing distinctive sandals. The Japanese people regarded the Burakumin as being rough in speech, crude or brutal in relations with each other, quarrelsome, highly sensitive to insult, born traders, and relatively much more cohesive than any other community. In the classic language of 'otherness', the Burakumin were darkly disreputable, mysterious, and substantially unknown.[37] The most common reason that Japanese gave for discrimination against the Burakumin is that they acted in unison. National and local governments had largely denied or neglected the condition of the Burakumin, and most Japanese people were indifferent to their plight.

In 1946, *Suiheisa* and the more moderate supporters of *yawa* policy consolidated to form what came to be known as Buraku *Kaiho Domei* (Burakumin Liberation League) after 1955. In response to Burakumin activism, the 1965 cabinet *dawa* policy pointed to the persistence of discrimination against them. Consequently, the Japanese government initiated special measures from 1969 to improve burakumin residences and neighborhoods.

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[36] Totten, George. O, and Hiroshi, Wagatsuma, "Emancipation: Growth and Transformation of a Political Movement," in George Devos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma, (eds.), *Japan Invisible Race: Caste in Culture and Personality,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, pp.125-128

[37] Cornell, John B, "Individual Mobility and Group Membership: The Case of the Burakumin," in R.P. Dore, (ed.), *Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1967, pp.347-348

Nonetheless, the conditions of the Burakumin in the 1990s had yet to reach the egalitarian ideal. Welfare dependency and discrimination still marked many Burakumin. However, significant improvements in educational attainment and employment opportunities have taken place. In particular, the BLL and other activist organizations have worked closely with International Human Rights Organizations. Their most important activity, however, remains the protest and denunciation of writers, publishers, and politicians who defame the Burakumin. The political tactics of the BLL conspire with the ideology of monoethnicity to maintain the silence on and the invisibility of ethnic differentiation and discrimination.

Only burakumin children living in small pockets in the midst of non - Burakumin school districts went to mixed schools. The rest attended schools separate from the others. For many burakumin, attending school with non - Burakumin children was a painful and traumatic experience. This was their first encounter with naked bigotry. They became the targets of insults, taunts and even physical attacks by their schoolmates. Children were picked on and abused in the classroom as well as on their way to and from school. This kind of unhappy life for the Buraku children continued throughout the "modern" century, up to and through World War II. A woman born in 1934 recalled:

> When I was old enough to become aware of things, I realized that I was a
> poor child dressed in dirty rags. My father was a day laborer without
> regular employment; he had no job security, we grew up in the midst of
> poverty.[38]

Attitudes/Response of the Burakumin

Response to discrimination has been varied. Some have accepted their lot of life and with a negative self-image have shunned relations with society. At large others have tried to 'pass' (*toru*) into general society by concealing their origins. However, this was an insult to fellow Burakumin.

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[38] Op.cit,Hane, Mikiso, p.157

Shimazaki Toson (1872-1943), in his novel "Broken commandment", depicts the life of a schoolteacher who "passed" for a while. But his conscience plagues him and HE makes a confession to his students about his *eta* background. Shimazaki's inspiration for the story came from a real teacher who kept getting fired whenever his Burakumin background was uncovered.[39]

Another response to discrimination has been the forming of various Burakumin associations that have assertively fought for Burakumin rights. The first significant association was the *Suiheisa* (Levelers Association) of 1922. They encouraged the younger Burakumin to consider ways in which their situation could be improved. This was affectively re-formed in 1955 as the Buraku *Kaiho Domei* (Buraku Liberation League). One of the BLL's favored methods is 'thorough denunciation' (*tetteiteki kyudan*), which entails forceful extraction of an apology from those who have been seen guilty of discrimination.

Situation in post — World War II period

With the passage of time, as Japan entered into the Post World War II period, a series of reform measures and industrial development programmes were introduced. The Burakumin started moving to nearby industrial areas where jobs were better and easier to get. At individual and family levels, the economic problems of the Buraku were more or less solved by individual efforts and economic opportunities. At the general social level discrimination problems continued to exist. Those who were unable to shift and utilize the opportunity were left behind in the process of the Buraku economic assimilation with mainstream Japanese.

From the mid-1960s, largely under BLL pressure, a number of laws have been passed and funds set aside to promote integration and reduce the number of Burakumin communities. Improvement of the quality of Buraku housing, displays ostensible

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[39] Ibid, p.147

deference to the Burakumin. However, to a large extent, the problem of discrimination still continues.

It is argued by the mainstream Japanese, that the ongoing discrimination is the fault of the Burakumin themselves, who prevent their own interpretation by maintaining a distance from society, as well as alienating sympathizers by their violence. However, despite improvement in the quality of Buraku housing and ostensible displays of deference to them, the problem of discrimination against the Burakumin still continues.

At a deeper socio-spiritual level, the Burakumin have been given a sort of license to enter a taboo world, to do 'dirty work' associated with ritual impurity. It is no longer the work itself, which is any real problem; it is the abstract association with impurity. They are the convenient embodiment of the undesirable, the threatening, and the impure. All societies have their scapegoats, but Japan's deep-rooted fear of impurity may mean that the existence of the Burakumin has become an indispensable part of its society.

Attitudes towards the Burakumin represent a deeply ingrained socio-spiritual mindset. This is not something that can be easily changed by mere legislation or the injection of funds. Rather, one should look to the continuation of *dowa kyoiku* (education about the 'integration problem'), in a contemporary context of slowly increasing acceptance and tolerance, as the most realistic path to a solution. This will, however, take time.

Borrowing metaphors from the domain of the kitchen, we may say that the assimilation of Japan's large outcaste population is not allowed to take place in 'the melting pot'; rather it takes place in the salad bowl where in spite of the touring 'pluralism' remains intact. The Burakumin are thus trying to bring about a multi-ethnic society, which would exist in spite of the acknowledgement of differences based on past separation and exploitation.

OKINAWAN: The Southern Islanders

Okinawans are the people of the Ryuku Archipelago (that extends between the main Japanese islands and Taiwan). The Ryukus are a chain of some seventy islands running southwest from Kyushu almost upto Taiwan. The population is in excess of 1 million. The main island, occupying more than half of all the land area, is the centrally located Okinawa, whose name is often used to refer to the island as a whole.[40] The island forms a long, continuous arc: voyagers through the islands from Kyushu to Okinawa are always within sight of land. The fact that the largest land mass lies in the middle of the area at the point of the greatest distance from the neighboring land-masses, was doubtless significant in the independent evolution of early Okinawan culture.[41]

Okinawa is separated from the Japanese mainland by a wide expanse of sea and it is this fact that is responsible for the independent Okinawa kingdom, which existed for many centuries. The Ryukus enjoyed an isolated and independent life under their own kings and chiefs, though occasionally they did come in contact with the Japanese and the Chinese.

While today Okinawans are Japanese nationals, recently they were not subjected to the strictness of the Japanese society. Throughout the first millennium of Japanese history, the Ryukyu Islands were generally independent of outside domination.

The indigenous people of the Ryukyu Islands are ethnically distinct from the people of mainland Japan. Genetically, the Ryukyans have much in common with the Ainu, though they are a separate people, they too have close links to the Jomon inhabitants of Japan and have had limited input from the later Yayoi arrivals of around 2000 years ago. They are an ancient people with a history of 30,000 years.[42]

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[40] Op.cit, Henshall, Kenneth G., p. 73.
[41] Denoon, Donald, Hudson, Mark, and Suzuki, Morris-Tessa, (eds.), *Multicultural Japan: Paleolithic to Postmodern*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 99.
[42] Ibid, p. 95

Historically, this is an unusual development and its significance is still difficult to understand. Basically, it contradicts Japanese notions of political correctness based upon assumptions of 'racial' homogeneity and superiority. Their ancient lifestyle continued till recently. Even today elements of Okinawan cuisine, architecture, and religion and survived the homogeneity effects of acculturation policies and Japanese mass culture.

Okinawa being very poor in natural resources could hardly manage to provide itself with all the requirements and hence relied a great deal on trade.[43] This was probably the main reason why the islanders accepted the suzerainty of China. The island nation paid tribute to China, recognizing the Ming emperor as suzerain in the late fourteenth century.

National expansion and the assimilation

The Okinawans began to develop formal relations with Japan in the early 15th century, when gift bearing Okinawan representatives were sent to Kyoto through Satsuma (present Kagoshima prefecture). The Japanese government regarded these gifts as "tributes" and in 1941 conferred to the lord of Satsuma, rights of jurisdiction over the Ryukyus.[44] This jurisdiction, however, was only theoretical and no attempt was made by the Kyoto government to interfere in the internal affairs of the island kingdom.

The Lord of Satsuma proclaimed an expedition in 1609 with an excuse to 'punish' the Ryukyu kings and councilors who had failed to show respect to the Tokugawa government and its predecessors. Even though the Satsuma had brought the islands under its control by conquest in 1609, the Ryukyuans continued to pay tribute to China for the next 250 years. Hence it was not very clear as to who exercised sovereignty over the Ryukus - China or Japan.

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[43] Yanaga, Chitoshi, *Japan Since Perry*, London, 1949, p. 615.
[44] Mikio Higa, *Politics and Parties in Post-War Okinawa*, Canada, 1963, p. 2.

A Ryukyuan vessel was wrecked near Taiwan in 1871 and its crew was slain by aborigines. Taking advantage of the incident, Japan strengthened its position. With the main aim of solving the question of aborigines, in the spring of 1873, Soeshima, the foreign minister of Japan, escorted by General Le Gendre and two warships, arrived in China.

In 1874, Japan undertook a military expedition to Taiwan to punish its aborigines who had murdered Japanese subjects and harmed the Ryukyuan vessel. This was because the *Tsunghi Yamen* (the office in charge of Foreign Relations) had failed to give a definite reply to the question as to whether it exercised sovereignty over Taiwan or not. The same year, Japan passed the jurisdiction of the island from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to that of the Home Ministry. Finally in 1879, the Ryukyu king was forced to abdicate and the Ryukyus were incorporated into prefecture of Japan.

When these new imperial subjects migrated to Japan proper, they were incorporated only at the bottom of the Japanese social stratification and were equivalent in status to the Burakumin. Segregation and discrimination were the terms imposed on ethnic minorities in Japan.

The Okinawans, however, have never been happy as part of Japan – or Yamato as they still often refer to the mainland. From the very outset of their incorporation into the Prefectural system, they felt aggrieved that they had lost local political autonomy without any real compensating economic benefits.[45] They still feel the same today, pointing to facts such as the industrial development lays behind the progress in the mainland, and that the average wage is only around three-quarters of that on the main land.

Soon, Japan set about the task of implementing a policy of "assimilation" (*Doka Seisaka*). The educational system took the lead in the "*Japanization*" programme. Teachers were trained and educational activities expanded at a rigid space. The local

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[45] Sakai, R, and Sakihara, M., "Okinawa", in *Kodansa Encyclopedia of Japan*, 1983, Vol. 6, Kodansha, Tokyo, p. 87.

dialects, which have a common parentage with Japanese, were progressively discouraged and "standard Japanese" was extensively promoted.

The old system of periodic land distribution was replaced by distributing land permanently among farmers. Private titles to land were conferred for the first time in order to regularize the system of tax collection.

The end of World War II had overcome the major obstacles of assimilation. Strong attachment to local scenes and local customs remained, but with regards to economics and politics the younger generation thought of identifying with nationwide Japanese interests. However, the Japanese government could not do much to get rid of the Japanese sense of superiority towards the Okinawans, who were regarded as second-class country cousins.

The transition to Japanese rule was not easy. Okinawans were helpless and unable to prevent key posts in the new island government from being filled, predominantly, by Japanese from the main islands. The newcomers from the islands in terms of thousands formed the new elite. Main islanders who enjoyed income differences and other preferential treatment in their quasi–colonial post subjected Okinawans to both social and political discrimination. Japanese businessmen and bureaucrats visiting Okinawa brought back bizarre stories of the 'un-sophisticated' and the 'strange' speech and manners that set Okinawans apart as degraded 'country cousins' in the new Japanese family.[46]

The Period after the Post World War II

Post-war Okinawan experience indicates that Okinawa is not an 'inherently integral territory' of Japan (*Nihon Koyu no ryodo*), a description that some Japanese and Okinawans still prefer. The fact is that Okinawa is separable from Japan or integrable with it, depending on Japan's national interest and the international environment. The

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[46] Kerr, George H., *Okinawa: The History of an Island people*, Tokyo: Charles E, Tuttle Company, 1958, pp. 393-399.

Potsdam Declaration of 26 July 1945 does not mention the Ryukyu or Okinawa. Rather, Japanese sovereignty was to be 'limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoko and other minor islands'.

Tensions with both America and Japan never really subsided. They came to a head in 1995 with the rape of a schoolgirl by three American servicemen. This was the cue for a massive movement to remove American bases, and by extension to reassert the principle of Okinawan control of Okinawa.

The 1995 rape case was not the first serious crime committed by American service personnel. Since reversion to Japan in 1972, Americans have committed nearly 5000 serious offences, including more than ten murders of Okinawans. For fifty years Okinawans have endured injustice, and many still fear death unless current security arrangements are renegotiated they may be forced to endure for a further half century bases, troops and 'base crimes' (*Kichi hanzai*).

Extensive military bases were constructed here, and the appropriation of this land had no legitimacy under the Japanese constitution. The US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, whose cold war *raison de'être* had disappeared, also accorded a measure of extra-territorial privilege to the military bases; in effect, transforming them into a breeding ground and a sanctuary for criminal elements among service personnel.

Although Okinawans are Japanese nationals, as far as land use is concerned, the Japanese and U.S governments have colluded against Okinwan interests. From an Okinawan perspective, the injustice and inequalities fostered by the Mutual Security Treaty has acted as a structural constraint in a triangular relationship.

There is a widespread belief among Okinawans that one of the reasons why the US opposed the implementation of a Japanese prefectural level of democracy in Okinawa is due to 'racist' prejudices; i.e., the belief that Okinawans unlike Japanese were incapable of governing themselves. Okinawans as a thinly veiled 'racist' contempt also

Accepting reality and respecting diversity

Despite lingering prejudice among Yamato Japanese, there are signs that Okinawa's existence will loom larger in the general image of Japan as a whole. In recent years, Okinawan ethnic pop music has drawn a wide following around the country; in the summer tournament their high school base-captured national attention and admiration for its success while competing mainlanders; and Okinawa's tropical beaches and golf courses are attracting more and more mainland tourist. In 1992 the twentieth anniversary of Okinawa's reversions to Japan from US control stimulated extensive national media coverage of Okinawan themes. Increased interest in ethnicity among young people has also led to a greater awareness of Japan's own ethnic group of Okinawans. This new acceptance has instilled a fresh pride many Okinawan Japanese and resolves to expose the nation to their culture.

Ironically, Okinawans have felt so much pressure to assimilate over the years that the amount of distinctive Ryukyuan culture is questionable. Central aspects of Ryukyuan culture, such as its distinctive languages, are unfortunately lost past the point of widespread revival. However, Okinawan Japanese who have become much like other Japanese are attempting to hold on to such symbols of their heritage to maintain their ethnic identity.

Although many Okinawan Japanese would simply like to be seen as Japanese, there are those who are determined to reverse the assimilation trend and leader such as the eminent scholar and present governor Masahide Ota believe that the deep roots of Okinawan identity have not died out.

A marked intensification of negative feeling towards Japan appears during World War II, when Japanese main islanders were swept up in the mass hysteria that led Japan to war with America in 1941. Okinawans were reportedly unenthusiastic, having no tradition of glorifying the warrior in battle. Furthermore, after the surrender, Okinawans suffered the indignity of being separated from their new 'mother nation' Japan remaining

under foreign (American) occupation, till their formal return to Japan in 1972. Even after this formal return, Okinawa continued to be the major site of all American military bases in Japan. The Okinawans felt betrayed and mistreated by the Japanese, feeling that they had been sacrificed once again. Many were openly hostile towards Japan, staging periodic protests and snubbing the imperial family among other things and on at least one well-publicized occasion burning the Japanese flag.[47]

Further, looking at the Japanese closely, one can probably imagine how Japan repressed all things non-Yamato in Okinawa, until 1945. This general tendency continued well into the US occupation. So until relatively recently, feeling positive about being an "Okinawan" was frowned upon.

Now promoting Okinawan "culture" is in vogue. Although this form has come a bit late, what most Okinawans realize is that though they now have the freedom to be proud of their "heritage", everything has been so thoroughly Japanized that they have nothing of substance left to wax lyrical ascent. The Okinawan predicament and their ethnic identity complex is now completely Japanese, because they themselves are completely Japanese.

Historically, 'self-determination' has never been a controlling principle for resolving Okinawa's international political status. Okinawans have historically had to accommodate themselves to the shifting configuration of external forces for a temporary settlement of the status question. Okinawan's quest for a stable, satisfying sense of self-identity has never been allowed to achieve its desired natural solution.

Subject to the objective reality that Okinawa is part of Japan and that ethnic diversity is not an official Japanese value, the overriding question for Okinawans is how they can maintain a sense of personal integrity (the feeling of being true to themselves) under the challenge of a dual Okinawa - Japanese identity. Japan, in aspects of life such as culture, language, and social relations is not an easy country for Okinawans to adjust

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[47] Reingold, E., *Chrysanthemums and Thorns: The Unfold Story of Modern Japan*, St. Martin's press, New York, 1992, p. 21

to. Okinawans seeking a Japanese identity often despair of their ability to become fully Japanese.

Governor Nishime Junji of Okinawa is reported to have said that although he attempted to be Japanese, he eventually failed to assimilate himself to a Japanese identity. The governor attributed his failure to become Japanese to his Okinawa nationalism (*minzokushugi*).[48] He adds that history, tradition, climate, etc., which are the basic determinants of a national character are vastly different between Japan and Okinawa.

In the language of psycho-cultural analysis, this is a problem of 'passing', that is, an individual from a disadvantaged minority group rejects the stigmatized original identity and acquires the more acceptable majority group identity. Okinawans in mainland Japan, ashamed of their Okinawan identity and feeling that it stood in the way of their career opportunities, passed i.e. changed names, disguised their permanent domiciles, and cut off all connections with Okinawa and Okinawan family, kin and friends.

'Ethnicity' is definitely part of Governor Nishime's concept of Okinawan nationalism. He calls Okinawans *unchinanchu* and Japanese *Yamatunchu*. These are Okinawan words by which Okinawans established a boundary between the Japanese and themselves.

Okinawan ethnic pride has also been beyond interactions with overseas ethnic Okinawan communities all over the world. In August 1990, Okinawa hosted a convention/festival for overseas *uchinanchu* to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the beginning of Okinawan emigration. Home country Okinawans were impressed and pleased with the worldwide expansion of their kin. Feelings that 'we are not alone' but a part of the entire world boosted ethnic pride further.

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[48] Op.Cit, Weiner, Michael, p. 165

Despite a national consciousness that apparently prevents Okinawans from becoming fully Japanese, the price one has to pay for being Okinawan in terms of discrimination and blocked career opportunities is much lower today than it was before the war. But the question remains, will Okinawan nationalism ever see its fulfillment in the form of a fully independent Okinawan nation-state? Or will it remain a sub-national state of mind, subordinate to Japan?

Nishinos' final thought in this issue is: 'The only available choice that the people of Okinawa prefecture today can plan, for is a status within the framework of local autonomy.'[49] In addition he appears to be highly pessimistic about the nature and scope of 'local autonomy' in Japan. Ironically, there lies the last hope for Okinawan independence.

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[49] Ibid, p. 168

Historical background of the Colonial Experience; 1910-1945

The problem of citizenship for Koreans, whether in Japan or in their own homeland, started with the annexation of Korea in 1910. The Koreans by the act of annexation became Japanese subjects, but they did not receive full Japanese citizenship. The Japanese maintained a distinction between the "Japanese nationality" bestowed upon their colonial subjects and the "true" Japanese citizenship based on birth and a family lineage legally registered.[3] To the Japanese, citizenship remained a question of ethnic origin, something that only in very anomalous circumstances would be given to an individual of foreign ancestry.

Japan experienced an unprecedented economic boom and a rapid industrial expansion on the eve of World War 1 that eventually created a labor shortage. This resulted in the abundant importation of cheap labor from Korea. Initially, all Korean laborers were employed as simple manual laborers. Japanese employees were content with their Korean laborers, since they seemed willing to work for longer hours and to endure more adverse working conditions than the Japanese workers.

The net emigration to Japan from 1921 to 1931 showed over 400,000 Koreans drawn in most instances from what had become a surplus agricultural population.[4]This influx of unskilled Koreans depressed the wages of those Japanese workers who were unfortunate enough to be in the lower ranges of unskilled labor.

In competing with the Japanese for jobs, Koreans could utilize neither literacy nor any other form of special skills. Most found employment in mining, railroad construction, and stevedoring.

Japanese governmental policies were not effective in raising the educational level of Koreans, either in their native land or in Japan. Korean children in Japan were subject

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[3] Op.Cit, Lee, Changsoo, and Vos, De George, p. 31.
[4] Ibid, p.36.

to compulsory education, as were the Japanese, but little effort was made to enforce the applicability of this provision to Koreans.[5] A continuing source of discontent among Koreans was that Korean laborers received considerably smaller wages, sometimes little more than half of what was paid to the Japanese in similar jobs. This awareness created a bitterness that was often expressed toward their Japanese colleagues.

Many Koreans could not establish a stable place to live in. They floated from one job to another looking for better wages and security. The language barrier and their illiteracy often prevented them from learning skills and securing permanent positions.

Another preoccupation of the majority of the Japanese was the "criminal propensities" of Koreans. There was a tendency to attribute criminal behavior to Koreans; a stereotyping that was encouraged by the attitudes of the police. Moreover, labor brokers who extracted percentages of the pitiful daily income that the casual workers received exploited Koreans continually. The Korean population, for the main part illiterate and unskilled, had ample reason to feel deep hostility toward the socially dominant Japanese.

Under these circumstances, therefore, the image of Korean laborers was negative. They were characterized not only as rebellious and unruly, but also as being devoid of a sense of responsibility and being less efficient in comparison with the Japanese workers. The only assets of the Korean laborers were their physical endurance and their willingness to work at lower wages, which sustained their survival in hostile surroundings.

From the early 1920s, anti-Korean feeling was accentuated by the increased terrorist activities waged by a few Korean nationalists against Japanese officials. The derogatory epithet commonly used by the Japanese, characterizing Koreans as *Futei Seijin* (rebellious Koreans) is said to have originated during this period. In the eyes of many Japanese, the alienated behavior of Koreans supported the belief that Koreans were

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[5] Edward W. Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan: 1904-1950*, New York, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951, p. 11.

handful of the children of Koreans in Japan were enrolled in secondary or institution of higher levels.

Japanese Attitudes after 1919

The early Japanese government policy toward the Koreans was a vacillating one. The government made a sporadic attempt to limit the influx of Korean labor and to improve the legal status of Koreans. There was a promise of bringing about understanding and harmony, of "raising the Koreans to the level of the Japanese", but in actuality, all thoughts were directed toward taking advantage of the Koreans in the continued military effort that had been launched on the continent of Asia. Korean workers continued to be viewed, solely, from the point of their capacity to contribute unskilled labor, whereas the Japanese were recruited for armed services in ever increasing numbers.

An imperial prescript was issued after the Korean independence demonstration of 1 March 1919, in which the Koreans were promised equality with the Japanese. However, this promise remained a myth. The Japanese in general felt that the Koreans were dangerous and potentially disloyal. They therefore thought that granting equality to Koreans would serve to strengthen dissident elements. Further, if Koreans in Japan were given all the privileges of full Japanese citizenship, it would be difficult for the government to maintain a differential policy in Korea.

The Japanese were thus careful to never confer full citizenship status to the Koreans. Nevertheless, when a manhood suffrage act was passed in 1925, it became possible for Korean males in Japan to vote and also to be elected to public office. Through the middle of the 1930s, informal practices remained, so that Koreans did not effectively exercise their voting privilege.

continued more or less uninterrupted until 1945. Although wages in Japan were substantially higher than those available in Korea, migrant workers seldom enjoyed the same rates of pay as their Japanese counterparts. On an average, Koreans were paid a third less than indigenous workers and were regarded as inherently suited for tasks involving physical strength but little else.[8] In addition to their acceptance of inferior wages, there were undesirable working conditions, unsocial hours and low status. Their concentration in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations ensured that the Koreans were particularly vulnerable to lay-offs, dismissal and unemployment.

Very few Koreans were employed as permanent workers or factory operatives. In general, however, Koreans were over-represented in industrial sectors, which offered the lowest wages, the poorest working conditions and where housing and other benefits were either minimal or non-existent. Further, the basic alienness of the Korean worker, his disadvantaged position within the labor market and the almost visceral contempt in which he was held as a member of a subordinate 'race', perpetuated and 'naturalized' further exploitation'.[9] The presence of large numbers of Koreans in the mining and construction industries, for example, decreased the livelihoods that indigenous workers would seek employment in these dirty, dangerous and low status occupations, thereby reducing the possibility of improved wages and working conditions for the Koreans. The high visibility of Koreans, clustered in shantytowns or abandoned work sites, also continued Japanese perceptions of the immigrant as an unwelcome intruder.

The legal status of Koreans in Japan

The exclusion of Koreans from Japanese citizenry is often understood as a continuation of the Japanese state policy from the colonial period. The conception of the imperial community as an ethnically homogeneous 'family nation' with the emperor as the head, had no place for non-Japanese people except as assimilated imperial subjects

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[8] Op.Cit, Weiner, Michael, p. 84
[9] ibid, p.85

with complete loyalty to the emperor.[10] Similarly, postwar Japan maintains a strict naturalization system that demands from applicants a high degree of assimilation into Japanese society and culture. The continuity in the principle of "assimilation or exclusion", however, does not fully account for the postwar system of nationality regulation or the attitude of Koreans toward Japanese nationality.

The whole array of Korean problems in Japan has been complicated by legal discrimination against those with ascribed alien status despite their long years of residence in Japan. In effect, there is still no sufficient distinction in present Japanese legal thought between ethnicity and citizenship.

In both colonial and postwar periods, membership in the Japanese state was simultaneously linked with the issues of assimilation, the states comestic and international security concerns and loyalty to a specific political community.

According to a general accepted principle of international law, each state is the sole judge of the extent to which aliens may enjoy civil privileges and other substantive rights within its jurisdiction. For Koreans in Japan, however, legal status and subsequent privileges were determined formally by international agreement and informally by social attitudes.

Naturalization and intermarriage took place among the second and third generations and this was related to their assimilation, an indication that Korean organization in Japan could not confine the younger generation. In instances of marriage, a young Japanese who had developed an intimate relationships with a Koreans thought that their partners were different from the stereotyped image the Japanese held of Koreans. They believed that the Koreans with whom they were associating were basically "Japanese" in race and culture. Accordingly, the young Japanese who planned marriage with Koreans were not sensitive to the cultural, social and political differences that would be raised by their own families when they became aware of impending marriage.

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[10] Op.Cit, Ryang, Sonia, p.13

colonial people were forced to worship the Sun Goddess and to participate in Shinto ceremonies.

(2) The national language movement (*Kokugo undo*)

The imperialization movement strongly promoted the national language movement. The Japanese language was designated officially as *kokugo* (national language) in Japanese colonies. The national language movement played a critical role in the imperialization of Koreans. As a part of the modern educational system under the imperialization movement, learning *kokugo* was closely linked to political indoctrination to inculcate loyalty to the suzerain state. The Japanese authorities considered speaking 'the national language' a prerequisite for colonial peoples' becoming true Japanese and *kokugo* was regarded as "the womb that nurtures patriotism". The use of Japanese was regarded as the most important indicator of 'successful' assimilation.

The status of the Korean language was degraded under an extreme assimilation policy. In 1938 'Korean' became an optional subject and was eventually excluded from elementary school curricula. Sometimes young Koreans in Japan had experiences of being praised by Japanese who say to them, "your Japanese is good. Where did you learn Japanese?"

(3) The name-changing campaign (*Soshi Kaimei*)

The name-changing program (*Soshi Kaimei*) began in Korea on February 11, 1940. *Soshi Kaimei* means to "create family names and change one's given name". This name-changing programme was of a very coercive nature and forced Koreans to change their original names into Japanese ones within six months. Its primary objective was to transform the colonial people into "true Japanese". Those who refused to change their names or failed to register on time encountered overt discrimination such as denied

such as textiles, coal mining and construction. This labor "recruitment" started in June 1938, but it soon became insufficient to overcome a serious manpower shortage.[14] As a result it is estimated that 667,000 Koreans were forcibly conscripted for labor in Japan.[15]

These policies and campaigns show clearly that for Japanese authorities, assimilation meant a total subjugation of their colonial subjects, and therefore cultural assimilation or Japanization was unhesitatingly promoted without granting full equality in legal status to the subjects. Legal institutional assimilation proceeded in a gradual and selective manner for the interests of Japan.

As a result of all these factors, young Koreans have experienced negative self-images in the process of their growth. This is due to an inferiority complex in terms of ethnicity. From the above analysis, one of the factors which was most influential in the development of their inferiority complex was the experience of being exposed to discrimination. Many Japanese tended to think that Korean children were born with inferiority complexes.

Colonial Nationality

Upon Japan's colonization of Korea in 1910, the Koreans were attributed Japanese nationality, but remained second-class subjects in many respects and were differentiated from the Japanese with regard to citizenship rights and duties. Incompatibilities between indigenous customs and traditions and Japanese laws also slowed legal assimilation. Cultural assimilation was also useful for social control, because greater subjective identification with the empire made anti-colonial, independent movements among the Koreans throughout the colonial period.[16]

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[14] Chung, Young-Soo and Elise K. Lipton, "Problems of Assimilation: The Koreans" in Elise K. Lipton, *Society and the State in Interwar Japan*, London: Routledge1997, p. 177
[15] Ibid, p.187
[16] Op.cit, Michael Weiner, p.83.

separate from the law applied to Japan proper. Household registries were therefore useful in identifying eligibility in which they delineated "proper" Japanese from the rest.[19]

Prejudice and mistrust against the non-Japanese on the part of the Japanese, culminated in the massacre of Koreans and Chinese in the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. The incident prompted state officials to actively promote assimilation, particularly of cultural and spiritual kinds.

Under the slogan of *naisenyuwa*, or conciliation of the Japanese and the Koreans, the government in the 1920s provided financial assistance to mutual aid associations, the representative of which was *sonikai*, or mutual care association.[20] Official support for these associations was intended to counter the growth of radical political movements among Koreans.

In *soshikaimei* legal and cultural assimilation merged together. The need to unify Korean households under the imperial order, so as to turn the Koreans into full-fledged imperial subjects, was behind the program.

The place where a family registry was initially recorded was to be officially regarded, for purposes of identifying national origin, as a person's permanent address. Although the Japanese government undertook very extensive cultural assimilation politics to Japanize all its colonial subjects, it never intended to integrate them fully and accord them full-fledged citizenship.

Nationality and Citizenship: Negation of both rights as Japanese citizens and as foreigners

The original draft of the constitution, drawn up in 1946 by American Occupation officials, had made specific provision for the prevention of discrimination on the basis of

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[19] Ibid,Sonia Ryang, p. 18.
[20] Op.Cit, Michael Weiner, pp. 156-7.

nationality. However, in one of the few significant changes able to be made to the draft by the Japanese themselves, this was removed from the final document. Moreover, birth in Japan was no longer a factor in determining Japanese citizenship. Since then Koreans, along with other foreigners, have theoretically been able to apply for naturalization. But the rules for eligibility are so strict that relatively few Koreans qualify.[21] Despite these difficulties, in very recent years numbers obtaining naturalization have increased and in 1995 alone, more than 20,000 Koreans became naturalized Japanese.[22]

The legal status of the Koreans remaining in Japan was central to the postwar reorganization of Japanese nationality and citizenship. During the allied occupation of Japan between 1945 and 1952, the Koreans in Japan were technically still Japanese nationals in the absence of an international arrangement of their nationality status. The attitude of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) was to treat them as "liberated nationals", which served as a means to distinguish between the Japanese and their former colonial subjects, but at the same time to exclude the Koreans from the category of the most privileged United Nations nationals serving in the occupied country. The Koreans were not even mentioned as citizens of a "nation whose status had changed as a result of the war"[23].

From the beginning of 1946, the SCAP's intelligence section began to identify the Koreans as "illegal elements" or "disturbing elements". The Japanese Home Ministry and the police reported incidents that involved Koreans and reinforced the US agency's negative perception of them.

The situation of Koreans in Japan has been further complicated by the postwar geological situation in Korea. Following the splitting of the country in 1948, the Koreans in Japan of North and South affiliation have each claimed to represent the Korean community. The rivalry between these two groups has not necessarily been helpful to the cause of the Koreans as a whole in Japan.

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[21] Lee, C., "Koreans in Japan", *Kodansa Encyclopedia of Japan*, 1983, Vol. 4, pp. 291-2.
[22] *The Japan Times*, Weekly International Edition, 2-8 Dec. 1997, p.7.
[23] Op.Cit, Changsoo Lee and George De Vos, p. 137.

During the occupation period, an overall restrictive system of nationality regulation was instituted as a result of the combined effect of three legal arrangements; the creation of an immigration control system, the continuation of *jus sanguinus* and strict naturalization criteria and the uniform loss of Japanese nationality by ex-colonial subjects.[24]

The Immigration Control Law of 1952

The Alien Registration Law of 1947 stipulated that Koreans should be regarded as aliens for the purpose of the application of this law. A Japanese government report addressed to the SCAP in 1949 asserted, that forced repatriation of "undesirable foreigners" was applicable to the Koreans who violated provisions in the Alien Registration Law, regardless of the length of their stay in Japan.

Since restoration of Japan's full sovereignty by the San Francisco treaty of 1952, Japanese Immigration Control Law has regulated the legal status of the Koreans in Japan. The Koreans were required to establish their eligibility for continued residence and to designate the length of time they intended to stay.

Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Immigration Control Law states that "no one is permitted to land in Japan without having registered his passport for a specific category of legal status."[25] The condition of admission and the length of stay permitted in Japan vary according to the category under which an alien is admitted. Most Koreans, however, had already established their residence in Japan without having been issued passports. Therefore, most Koreans had no legal status. What the Japanese government intended to do was to classify Koreans under certain stipulated categories so as to control and restrict their activities as aliens in Japan. Further, a child born after 28 April 1952 to alien parents was required to obtain a legal determination of his or her permitted period of residence in Japan. Under the law, any parent who fails to renew a child's application on time is

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[24] Op.Cit, Sonia Ryang, p. 21.
[25] Ibid, Changsoo Lee, and George De Vos, p. 141.

subject to fine, imprisonment or deportation on the grounds of ".llegal presence" in Japan.

Furthermore, once an alien juvenile reaches the age of fourteen, he or she is required by law to appear in person to renew the alien registration (Art. 14, Par. 1). Korean aliens above fourteen years of age are required by law to carry a registration card at all times (Art. 13, Par. 1). Failure to carry the card makes one subject to arrest and subsequent indictment for prosecution and result in a criminal record. Therefore, the card has been nicknamed by some Koreans a *"Kae p'yo"* (Dog tag).

As permanent residents rather than citizens, the Koreans have been denied Japanese government support in form such as social welfare and pension programmes. Till recently, along with other foreign permanent residents, they too had to have their fingerprints recorded.

Naturalization

Koreans in Japan lost Japanese nationality with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty on 28 April, 1952. Under the old Japanese *Koseki* or family registry system, a woman marrying a Korean had to transfer her koseki to her husband's registry. When the Alien Registration Law of 1947 was enacted to classify Koreans as aliens, she was also subject to alien registration as she no longer retained her *Koseki* registry in Japan. Therefore, those who lost Japanese nationality and wanted to reacquire it, had to go through a naturalization process in accordance with the procedure prescribe by the law.[26]

Meanwhile in 1950, the revised Nationality Law came into effect, which retained the patrilineal *jus sanguinus* principle. This law recognized the acquisition of Japanese nationality on the basis of the principle of *jus sanguinus*; a child of Japanese citizen is also a Japanese citizen. Birth in Japan per se had no legal significance in determining Japanese nationality. Even under the present law, an alien man or woman marrying

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[26] Ibid, p. 152.

Japanese is not automatically entitled to Japanese citizenship, the alien must file intent of naturalization in person and the Ministry of Justice must approve it.

The decision reflected the Japanese government's contention that having ethnic minorities among Japanese nationals was problematic, and that many Koreans were anti-Japanese and should not be included as citizens without a test.

As a matter of fact, almost all Korean residents in Japan are technically eligible for naturalization. One of the major obstacles, however, that prevents Korean residents from being naturalized is the "good behavior" clause in the provisions. In the absence of a clear definition of what constitutes "good behavior", anyone with a simple police record is unlikely to pass the rigorous scrutiny by the Ministry of Justice.

If naturalized, a Korean is legally entitled to the rights and privileges accorded to a native born citizen of Japan, as are his minor children. Naturalization, however, does not guarantee that the Korean – Japanese will be socially accepted by the majority of Japanese people. A common rationale for naturalization seems to be a hope that naturalization will provide some means of escape from ethnic discrimination in business or employment.

Although the Koreans are physically indistinguishable from the Japanese, once they are recognized as Korean, whether naturalized or not, they are likely to be considered inferior. They seldom gain acceptance as "true Japanese". Naturalized Japanese are often socially stigmatized as *pan tchok ppali* (half-Japanese) and are alienated from both communities. They exist on the margins of both societies.

The current problems of the Korean minority in Japan have arisen from the legacy of Japanese colonialism and from the by-products of its modern nation-state system.The immediate disenfranchisement of Koreans in Japan after Japan's surrender was the most effective means of preventing any politically potent legal action on behalf of Koreans. By disenfranchisement, the Japanese government deprived Koreans of their fundamental

Most recently, there have been cases of reported harassment and assaults against Korean school girls wearing the traditional *Chogori-Chima* dress, and the pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (*Chongryun*) has recommended allowing female students who attend its high schools to wear non-national clothing for commuting to school to avoid such harassment.[27]

There are encouraging signs that life for ethnic Koreans in Japan is improving but the picture is not really a happy one yet. They are still not really accepted as a proper and legitimate part of the Japanese society. However, the Japanese authorities suppressed the Korean schools, stating that it was not appropriate for the Korean children to be educated as foreigners since they were Japanese citizens.

On 24th January 1948, the Japanese University of Education directed the local prefecture governors to accredit the Korean schools that complied with the legal standards of the school education law of 1947.[28] What irritated most Koreans about the ministry directive was the fact that Korean schools were also told to conduct classes in the Japanese language, teaching the Korean language only as an extracurricular subject. The Koreans were determined to resist the closings, insisting that it was an act of oppression to deprive them of the right of an autonomous Korean education in Japan.

As a result of stringent control by the Japanese government, the number of Korean schools and students began to dwindle. Obviously, the Japanese government intended to limit Korean ethnic studies to discourage further ferment. For many Japanese, ethnic diversity was intolerable in a land proud of its mythological founding as a homogenous culture.

Further, in an attempt to bring about more effective control over Korean schools, the Ministry of Education organized a special committee for Foreigners Education to study the problem. The ultimate objective of the Foreigners School Bill was doubtless to

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[27] Sellek, Yoko, *Migrant Labor in Japan*, Palgrave, New York, 2001, p.20
[28] Op.Cit, Changso Lee, and George De Vos, p. 164.

restrict the 'democratic ethnic education' provided by *chongryun.* In fact, the aim was clearly spelled out in a provision of the draft that foreign schools were to be forbidden to offer education considered prejudicial to the national interest of Japan.

Employment

The key question today concerning the education of Koreans in Japan is whether the future points toward gradual assimilation or revived ethnicity? The educational achievements of many Korean students have little significance if they are not recognized at the time of employment. As Korean students reach adolescence, their awareness of employment discrimination is likely to separate them from their dreams of a future career and their hopes of attaining structure in the Japanese society. There is a definite structure of employment discrimination and its resultant frustration patterns.

Employment for minority Koreans in the world of Japanese business is greatly influenced by laws of labor supply and demand, with the Koreans generally being given low priority within each educational skills category.[29] Public employment options for the Koreans are governed by an absolute prohibition against the hiring of non-Japanese citizens. The Japanese law is interpreted as prohibiting Koreans from being hired by national and local governments, including Japan's many public corporations, public schools and national and public universities.

In a way, the situation faced by the Koreans remaining in Japan in the beginning of the postwar era and thereafter can be seen as one shaped by a new form of colonialism. The right and desire to have legitimate ethnic schools to be part of formal education was denied. Formal education was clearly recognized as a mainstay of establishing and maintaining the hegemony of dominant ideologies of the state, thus the authorities attempted to control it.

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[29] Ibid, p. 200

Japanese society appears noticeably closed to the Koreans. However, this observation is not meant to obscure the fact that as a highly bureaucratized and democratic society, Japan has undergone a change by opening up, though it has been slow and unintentional.

Generation after generation, the minority is thus progressively dissociated from its parent culture (the gap between generations). Minorities may always have spoken of first, second and a third generations, but the degree of cultural differentiation between each generation is much greater now than in the pre-industrial past. Minorities lacking enduring qualities, such as racial or religious distinction, quickly become invisible behaviorally, unless fully accepted by the larger society. Japan of course has not accepted the Koreans cultural assimilation of the Koreans in a modern society. Japan is steadily pushing the Korean minority by reducing the cultural context of Korean ethnicity.

For many minorities, furthermore, cultural assimilation is not accompanied by as rapid a social assimilation. Typically, the early generations, despite their adoption of the majority culture, gain a toehold only at the bottom of the social ladder. Certainly, for the Koreans in Japan, becoming "Japanese" culturally has not been accompanied by equality in economic, legal or social status. Since they are still poor, the Japanese treats them as outsiders. Thus many Koreans of the second and third generations cannot count on a personal resilience that comes with a clear sense of belonging to a different, yet equally proud tradition.

Ethnic minorities experiencing assimilation in a foreign cultural environment, typically find their ethnicity passing along the scale, from "thick" to "thin", at first families, and later institutions belonging to the minority attempt to preserve the mother culture. It seems that as ethnicity becomes "thinner" and its expressive elements fewer, the elements that do remain become more important or stronger in their symbolic context because they mark the impending loss of all value associated with the ethnic heritage. Eventually a threshold is passed for many, beyond which the very question of ethnic identity is rarely important.

So far the assimilation has been largely cultural, not social. The next stage is likely to be marked by progress in gaining social acceptance and position. The opportunities provided by the Japanese public education, and the vision of a plural Japan held by some Japanese intellectuals may appear complementary ingredients in a formula that will combine slowly to open Japanese society to Koreans. Ethnicity will become increasingly an intellectual and symbolic gesture, its vitality being in reverse proportion to the degree that it is closed and hostile.

The Koreans are exposed to strong prejudice and institutionalized discrimination from many sectors of the Japanese society. Negative stereotyping of the Koreans is common and is frequently use against them. It has been amply proven that, in the socialization processes of a minority-group member, exposure to the majority society's negative attitudes and stereotypes may result in the formation of a negative self-image.[30] It is a widely recognized social and psychological phenomenon that stereotypical images of a minority group are eventually absorbed and believed by the member of that very group.

Japanization is not necessarily caused by over-identification. It may simply be an unavoidable consequence of growing up in Japan. The majority of the Korean children go to Japanese schools. It is only natural that they learnt Japanese as their first and often only language, when a child grows up in a society, enculturation in that society is a natural consequence.

Either through over-identification or natural enculturation, many Koreans have become more or less Japanized. Such Japanization may cause an individual to become less Korean as his or her Korean identity is internally eroded. Therefore, to develop a positive attitude toward oneself, one must undertake not only to de-Japanize oneself but, conversely, to oneself Koreanize inwardly.

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[30] Op.Cit, George De Vos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma, pp. 228-24 0

CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN WORKERS IN JAPAN

Japan emerged as an economic power after World War II and particularly after the 1980s. Japan became a popular destination for many workers all over the world as a result of its success in the economic sphere. A large number of South Asian and South East Asian workers migrated to Japan. Also, the number of Latin American workers of Japanese descent migrating to Japan has increased considerably.

Japan, posing as a homogeneous society is proud of its culture, social norms etc. however, the presence of a large number of foreigners as the Japanese perceive had a negative impact on their society. This poses a serious concern for Japan. Illegal foreign workers in particular are involved in various crimes. Many scholars have discussed on the problem of its social, political and economic implications. On the other hand, the human activists are concerned about the rights of the foreign workers. The United Nations and the International Labor Organization have made many legal provisions to safeguard the interest and rights of foreign workers all over the world. Japan is one of the signatory countries of those provisions. Therefore, the main aim of the study would be to answer the following questions: Does the presence of illegal foreign workers pose a threat to the homogeneous character of the Japanese society? Are illegal foreign workers entitled to some rights? What is their status in Japan? What kind of treatment is meted out to them in Japan? What are the attitudes towards outsiders in Japan?

A historical background of foreign workers in Japan

In contemporary Japan, the problem of the "foreign worker" is fast emerging as one of the most difficult challenges. This issue seems to be serious in the sense that it has economic, political and social dimensions and implications. The United Nations and the International Labor organization have adopted Charters to ensure the basic human rights of foreign workers. Despite this, the problem confronting the foreign worker is still very

acute all over the world. Many countries have signed these agreements to ensure their basic human rights. This issue thus is not only related to Japan but is of equally concern for other countries and organizations as well.

In Japan, there are two categories of foreign workers – legal and illegal. According to the Immigration Control Act of 1989, which became effective in 1990, the number of illegal workers is greater than the legal workers in Japan. This is mainly due to increasing labor shortages and high wages. A large section of the illegal workers are employed in unskilled work which is prohibited by the law, or jobs which the Japanese themselves avoid doing. According to a recent estimate, there are currently more than 600,000, unskilled foreign workers in Japan.[1]

There have been both immigrants and emigrants in Japan for a long time. The problem, however, has become more serious since the 1980s when Japan witnessed a heavy influx of foreign workers.[2] In order to understand the Japanese workers, in order to understand the Japanese attitude towards foreign workers in their country, the accounts of foreigners in Japan since the early period is necessary.

The Tokugawa period (1603-1868) is known for Japan's seclusion and sustained peace. The Tokugawa ruler' 'aim was to eliminate or at least limit influence from the west. Despite all their efforts, contact with the Dutch at Nagasaki continued. Dutch studies were introduced in the school curriculum. In 1673, the Shoguns Commissioner in Nagasaki ordered several young samurai to study from Dutch teachers. During the last phase of the Tokugawa period the Japanese employed about 200 language and technical advisors. The next lot of foreigners who entered Japan comprised mainly of engineers and doctors. The French constituted the largest percentage of hired foreigners prior to the Meiji Restoration. Edo rulers employed about 84 Frenchmen.[3]

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[1] Komai, Hiroshi, *Migrant Workers in Japan*, Kegan Paul International Limited, London and New York, 1995, p.1
[2] Sellek, Yoko, *Migrant Labour in Japan*, Palgrave, New York, 2001, p.15
[3] Burks, A.W, (ed.), *The Modernizers-Overseas Students, Foreign Employees and Meiji Japan*, Westview Press/Boulder and London, 1985, p.189

In fact, many of these foreign employees during this period were sponsored by their respective nations. They were also closely associated with the unequal treaties, extra-territorial and exclusive trade arrangements between Japan and their respective countries. Foreigners were mostly concentrated in Yokohama, Osaka, Nagasaki, Hyogo (now Kobe) and Edo.[4]

In the beginning of Meiji period (1868-1912), the leadership of Japan emphasized a policy of modernization along western lines and this is quite clear from the expression *Wakon Yosai* (Japanese spirit, western learning). The idea was adopted in the early years of the Meiji period. Many foreigners were hired to introduce western knowledge and technology to Japan. They were called *Yatoi*.[5] Several thousand foreign teachers, technologists and advisors were employed by the Japanese rulers to realize the idea of *Wakon Yosai*. The Meiji government was eager to catch up with the west in order to protect itself from potential economic and political exploitation. The primary function of the foreign employees was to assist Japan in its quest for modernity and equality and put it on par with western nations.[6]

In April 1868, the young Emperor Meiji promulgated the Charter Oath, which declared, "Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world". A large number of Japanese students were sent abroad to study and foreigners were invited to Japan to teach subjects like military sciences, engineering, foreign affairs, agriculture, surveying and medicine. This *Oyatoi Gaikokujin* together with many foreigners played a significant role in the rapid transformation of Japan from feudal backwardness into a world power in a very short period.[7]

Foreigners in Japan during the Inter-war period

After World War I there was a tremendous boost to Japanese industry and the demand for industrial laborers accelerated rapidly. The war boom encouraged the development of new industries to compensate for the loss of manufactured goods, which

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[4] Ibid, p.190
[5] Op.Cit, Yoko Sellek, p.18
[6] *Kodansa Encyclopedia of Japan*, Kodansa Ltd., Tokyo, 1983, p.30
[7] Ibid, p.310

could no longer be imported from Europe. It also stimulated production in established industries, such as coal mining, cotton spinning and silk manufacturing. Much of this industrial expansion was dependent upon the availability of cheap labor. A large number of cheap labors came from the rural areas of Japan. But the industrial expansion was so rapid that the supply of local labor in many areas was soon exhausted. Moreover, a number of Koreans were brought to Japan, to fulfill this requirement after the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910.[8]

Foreign workers in Japan: Nature of their Problems

The continuous influx of foreign workers in post world war II Japan, is a matter of serious concern for a homogeneous society like Japan. According to the Ministry of Justice reports, the number of illegal foreign residents in Japan was more than 28,000 at the end of 1986, 1,00,000 at the end of 1989 and 2, 78,872 in May 1992.[9] Foreigner residents of different countries have been shown in the table below:

Table: Foreign residents in Japan

	1990	1993	1996	1999	change from 1990(%)
N and S Korea	687,940	682,276	657,159	636,548	-7.5
China	150,339	210,138	234,264	294,201	+95.7
Brazil	56,429	154,650	201,795	224,299	+297.5.
Philippines	49,092	73,057	84,509	115,685	+135.6
U.S.A	38,364	42,639	44,168	42,802	+11.6
Peru	10,279	33,169	37,099	42,773	+316.1
Others	82,874	124,819	156,142	199,805	+141.1
Total	1,075,317	1,320,748	1,415,136	1,556,113	+44.7

Source: Ministry of Justice, *The Nikkei Weekly*, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc., 15 January 2001

[8] Op.Cit, Yoko Sellek, p.18
[9] Tezuka, Kazuaki, "The Foreign Worker Problem in Japan", *Japanese Economic Studies*, Vol. 21, no.1, fall 1992, p.3

The law sought to restrict and control the inflow of unskilled and semi skilled workers. For the first time, the law - imposed sanctions on those employing and contracting illegal workers. There are three categories of jobs for which foreigners are eligible to work in Japan and they are as follows:

(I) The first category covers diplomats, artist, religious personnel and journalist.

(II) The second category includes professional and technical experts like engineers and highly skilled workers.

(III) The last category describes various specific forms of expertise. Temporary visitors, students and family visitors are all prohibited from working.

There is a provision of criminal penalties on those found to be indulging or facilitating illegal employment. Work researches and employment are not given in those areas and which violate the immigration law.[12]

Legal/ Skilled foreign workers

Since the 1980s, as Japan made rapid economic progress, it attracted more and more foreigners. Foreigners were employed in sectors like banking, investment, corporate management language training, engineering etc., which required high level skill or proper training. However, these workers face discrimination at the place of their work. Often they are not given equal wages. Their position in the system is usually lower than their Japanese counterparts. Generally they are not placed in higher positions. Apart from this, they do not actively participate in the decision making process.

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[12] Op.Cit, Yoko Sellek, p.18

Illegal/unskilled foreign workers

It is believed that the number of illegal foreign workers is greater than the number of legal foreign workers in Japan. As mentioned earlier, according to an estimate currently more than 600,000 laborers are currently living and working in Japan.[13] The Ministry of Justice, Japan Immigration Bureau, in its annual immigration statistics reports that there were 1434 apprehended illegal migrant workers in 1981, which increased to 40,535 in 1998.[14]

The illegal workers are mainly employed in construction, manufacturing and service industries such as waiters, hostesses etc. The condition in their work place is pathetic. They are confronted with numerous problems. According to a Labor Ministry Study, they receive at least 60 percent less wages then their Japanese co-workers for the same work. The working conditions provided to them are not very good. This is mainly because their status is illegal and fear of deportation by the authorities prevents them from filing complaints. They are also unable to demand compensation, better working conditions, medical benefits etc. They have to face hardships and insecurity in their day-to-day lives.

Nature of Employment

The external labor market includes part-time workers, seasonal workers and temporary workers. Foreign workers appear on the external labor market. They are often hired in jobs that the citizens of Japan dislike. Most of the well-educated young Japanese people do not want to join '3D' or '3k' jobs - dirty (Kitanai), dangerous (kikin) and difficult (kitsui). These workers lack technical skills, incentives promotions and pay increase, good working condition and job security. They are called "adjustment values of business fluctuations". Their number has been increasing rapidly, despite the fact that work visas are not being given in these areas and employment is considered a violation of

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[13] Op.Cit, Komai, Hiroshi, p.1
[14] Ibid,Yoko Sellek, p.32

workers flowing into Japan can thus be thought of as being part of the global stream of immigration.

Adjustment Problem and Ethnic Discrimination

Most Koreans and Chinese residents of Japan and many other foreigners who were born and raised in Japan are native speakers of Japanese and feel more at home in Japan than those who come to Japan as adolescent or adults. Lack of communication skill in Japanese is one of the biggest obstacles in this regard. In Japan, lineage or race is regarded as the primary determinant of being Japanese. Only those born in Japan can be regarded as Japanese. It is basically for this reason that the Koreans and the Chinese permanent residents are not fully incorporated into the Japanese Society.

The Japanese collective identity puts relatively strong emphasis on the maintenance of cultural uniformity, the importance of the group and an ethnic harmony. Often all these factors are regarded as contributing factors to Japan's post war economic success. Apart from this, the Japanese are apprehensive of any immigration policy that would dilute their homogeneity, collective spirit and group harmony.[15]

Marriage between Japanese and Foreigners

Marriage between the Japanese and foreigners have taken place for quite a long time. But the Immigration officials have not always granted visas to people in these situations and there have been many cases of married people, some even children, being deported. Foreigners lose their residency status when they are divorced.

From the Meiji period (1868-1912) till World War II the Japanese law did not recognize marriage between the Japanese and foreigners. With the amendment of the Nationality Law in 1950, the Japanese women are no longer compelled to change their nationality when marrying a foreigner.

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[15] Op.Cit, Yoko Sellek, p.223

Although these amendments represent a giant step forward for the children of international marriages, non-Japanese spouses still face great obstacles. For instance, under the Japanese immigration control law, the longest period for which non-Japanese spouses of Japanese nationals can receive permission to reside is three years, after which the permit must be renewed. Apart from the inconvenience involved the necessity of renewal implies the possibility of refusal and breeds feelings of insecurity. The right to acquire permanent residence status and eventually citizenship, in the country of one's spouse is a basic human right and a general rule in the international community.[16]

Illegal Labor and its Impact on Japanese Society

One aspect of globalization is freer employment across national borders, including Japan's borders. Although foreigners are increasingly becoming important members of a nation's labor force, by and large, the job market in Japan remains effectively closed to them. The International movement of labor has some disadvantages as well. The benefit inherent in the movement of labor is seldom fully realized. Movement of labor from one country to another, often creates numerous problems that have undesirable social, political, economic and international consequences. Some of the examples are:

I. Exploitation of foreign workers is almost certain.

II. Employment of illegal foreigners for lower salaries in Japan leads to denial of job to those Japanese who are prepared to do the jobs. Also, the availability of cheap labor in the form of illegal foreign workers has a negative effect on the wages and employment conditions for the Japanese marginal workers.

III. The presence of foreign labor could hinder the modernization of low wage, labor-intensive industries. Labor shortage is the most effective pressure for industrial modernization.

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[16] Hirotaka,Takeuchi , "Immigration Reform for an Open Society", *Japan Echo*, Tokyo, Vol.14, no.4, Winter 1987, p.23

IV. There is another possibility of a dual employment structure. If the discrimination against foreign workers persists for a long period of time, the result would be the formation of a dual labor market structure.

V. If the influx of illegal foreign workers continues without any restrictions, an increase in the number of ghettoes is likely in the future. This in turn gives rise to various social problems.

VI. Since foreign workers are generally exploited and denied other benefits _ like medical security and pension benefits etc. the chances of being accused of exploitation of workers is possible.

Foreign Workers and Crime in Japan

There is a section of Japanese whom are which is not in favor of too many foreigners entering Japan. One of the main reasons for the opposition is due to the involvement of foreigners in crimes like drug trafficking, robber etc,[17] as it is apparent from the white paper on police 1995 which states that:

"A surge in crime by foreign visitors to Japan and by the large number of foreigners illegally staying in this country is a matter of serious concern in terms of public security. The police therefore, intend to crack down thoroughly on crimes involving foreigners staying illegally and to control crimes that directly threaten the security of the nation". (Nation Police Agency, 1995, p.2)

In 1994, it was reported that the total number of foreign visitor arrested for various crimes like robbery, arson, rape, homicide was 230 and 63.9 % of these people were illegal workers in Japan. The 1998 white paper of the NPA showed the number of crimes committed by foreign visitors had reached 21,670 in that year which represented an 11.1 % increase on crimes committed in the previous year. In 2003, foreigners were arrested on criminal charges in more than 27,000 cases, according to the latest report from the National Police Agency.[18] The number of reported felony cases, such as robbery and murder, showed an increase. The percentage of foreigners or illegal residents in

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[17] Friman, Richard H., "Immigrants and Drugs in Contemporary Japan", *Asian Survey*, Berkeley, Vol-36, no.10, October, 1996, p. 964

[18] "Letting foreign workers past the gate", *The Japan Times*, March 29, 2004

Japan has not risen as rapidly over the past decade as the rate of increase in the total number of people including the Japanese arrested on criminal charges. In fact, it is a gross generalization to correct illegal residents directly with criminality.

After the revision of the Immigration Control Act in 1990, the number of offences for which a foreigner can be charged has increased. There is discrimination in terms of sentences given and the suspension rate between the Japanese citizens and foreigners. Foreigners in Japan face heavy and harsh sentences for minor crimes compared to those given to Japanese citizens. When a Japanese criminal is judged, reformatory measures are taken into account along with their rehabilitation in order to protect them. A 'peaceful' society becomes the motive only when foreigners are judged and therefore the punishment meted out to them is harsh.

Problems of Related Female Foreign Workers in Japan

During the 1970s, a large number of female foreigners came from the East and South-East Asia to work in the entertainment industry in Japan. Media in Japan called them *Japayuki-san* (Miss going – to – Japan). Young innocent women from poor countries went to Japan to work mainly in small bars as hostesses and prostitutes in sex industries. They were mainly controlled and directed by criminal syndicates. They treat these women like prisoners from the moment they entered the country.

Members of the '*yakuza*' (Japan's organized crime syndicate) offered these women lucrative career opportunities as singers, hostesses or waitresses but ultimately they were forced to work as prostitutes. Their economic and social condition was pathetic. They faced a lot of atrocities, sexual abuse, assaults and even murder. They could get police protection either.[19]

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[19] Kevin Yamaga Karns, "Pressing Japan, Illegal Foreign Workers and International Human Rights Law and the Role of Cultural Relativism", *Texas International Law Journal*, Austin, Vol.30, no.3, Summer 1995, p.562

The Stigma of Ethnic Difference: Prejudice and Discrimination towards Japan's Immigrant Minority

When a group migrates, it usually acquires a completely different ethnic status in the host society. In most cases, the migrant group is part of the majority society his country of origin but becomes an immigrant ethnic minority in the host country. In other instances, the migrants are already ethnic minorities in their country of origin. However, even for such groups, migration has a significant impact on their ethnic status. For example, unfavorable attitudes and ethnic prejudices about Japanese-Brazilians do exist and are based on negative evaluations of both their social and cultural characteristics.

Migrant workers, as well as women and indigenous minorities, are part of the solution for fluctuating demand for labor. Ethnic groups become part of a class after or before hierarchical division of labor, which is partly, if not always dominantly, defined by ethnic categories.

Migrant workers, identified as minority ethnicities, will commonly occupy positions within the labor force which have lower pay, poorer working conditions, less security of employment, and are concentrated in a number of industries and services.

Why is it likely that a modern state such as Japan must eventually learn to accommodate the abiding social situation, i.e. giving formal legal recognition to the ethnic pluralism? In a modern state, one must distinguish between the legal status of full citizenship and the discriminatory legal rights granted to ethnic minorities.

Psychocultural features of Japanese Prejudice

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierny describes a symbolic structure based on the Levi Straussian concept of binary opposition of "inside" and "outside" in which the "inside" is associated

with purity and the "outside" with impurity.[20] Although the "outside" can be a source of pollution, impurity and contamination, since its potentially dangerous power can also be harnessed and domesticated for beneficial uses, it has a dual, ambivalent meaning.

In Japan this cultural structure is best exemplified in the context of the Japanese home where shoes are removed at the entrance to prevent outside dirt and pollution from contaminating the house. It is also the basis for indigenous understanding of illness and germs. Ohnuki-Tierney claims that this type of historically developed, symbolic classification system has persisted for centuries in Japan and has been deeply internalized by the Japanese, structuring not only their concepts of dirt, illness, and germs, but also their classifications and reactions towards people, especially foreigners.

The function of foreign workers as being from "outside" Japan conforms to the dual and ambivalent symbolic meaning of beneficial and dangerous power: although they have revitalized Japan's economy with their much needed labor power, they have simultaneously introduced and imposed alien and cultural elements into Japan, thus threatening to contaminate and pollute Japan's distinctive culture. As argued by Ohnuki-Tierney, because of the potentially dangerous nature of outside power, it must be properly and constantly harnessed and controlled to avoid its polluting and disruptive effects.

However, the tolerance of pollution also has a lot to do with the spatial distance between the self and the contaminating agent. Even if foreign workers enter Japan in mass numbers and ultimately "contaminate" the nation's pure culture, individuals can keep their social distance from such foreigners and thus psychologically protect themselves from pollution. Such modes of psychological defense against impurity are evident among the Japanese. Even in a place like Oizumi where foreigners of all types have become a common sight in the streets, residents still actively avoid approaching or talking with them, especially at night.

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[20] Emiko, Ohnuki-Tierney, *Illness and Culture in Contemporary Japan: An Anthropological view*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, Ch. 2

This type of defensive behavior of avoidance is common in societies with low-caste groups that are regarded as impure, dirty and defiling. They are therefore avoided in interactions in everyday life as well as being socially segregated and excluded from the institutions of society. According to George De Vos and Marcelo Snarez-Orozeo, 'A caste barrier is constructed to maintain and preserve the relative purity of segments of the population from the danger of pollution and contamination that can result from indiscriminate contact with those of a less pure nature'.[21]

Therefore, when a protective spatial barrier is created through the social separation of immigrant workers, rationalizing their presence as an unavoidable consequence of domestic and international economic conditions can control the individuals' negative reaction toward their contaminating presence. However, when impure foreigners enter more private and personal domains, the physical proximity of and direct contact with the source of pollution makes the danger and threat of contamination much greater and the psychological reaction of revulsion stronger. In the Japanese case, this occurs when foreigners infiltrate private spaces or threaten Japan's "racial purity" by intermarriages.

The sense of impurity directed toward certain minority groups has such emotional force not only because natives subconsciously use such pre-existing cognitive systems of cultural classification, but also feelings of impurity are fundamentally a psychological reaction of disgust and cannot simply be explained by rational thought or the logics of structural classification.

The dreaded outside threat: Foreigners and Foreign-Tainted Groups

The Japanese have long believed themselves to be a pure race. This has extended to ideas of uniqueness and superiority. Certainly, it is indisputable that they are a highly homogeneous people. Foreigners in Japan present a threat to that homogeneity, that

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[21] De Vos, George A, and Marcelo M. Snarez-Orozeo, *Status Inequality: The Self in Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, p.167

purity that self-assumed superiority, that uniqueness. As one Japanese psychologist has observed, 'The Japanese identity is threatened when foreigners are to be accepted into our midst'.[22] The foreigners represent an interconnected mix of negatives–the outside, the unknown, the threatening, the disruptive, and the impure. In short, they are generally best avoided.

However, total avoidance has not always been possible or even desirable. Right from the Meiji period and mainly after Japan's defeat in World War II, Japan had no option but to endure a foreign presence during the occupation. Foreigners are still basically viewed as creatures best kept at a safe distance.

Japan's negativity towards the outside world drew international attention during the strong nationalist mood of the late 1980s, when the nation's economic power and at times arrogance was at its peak. Since the recession of the 1990s, overt expression of such sentiments has waned, along with much of the arrogance, but the basic negative feelings towards foreigners have not.

Many Japanese are inveterate stereotypes - so much so that they would find little to criticize in a westerner stereotyping the Japanese themselves. They apply simplistic stereotypes not only to individual races and nations, but also to broad categories of foreigners. The stereotypes then become normative, and the behavior of the foreigners is expected to conform to them. If it does not, then they are seen as particularly unpredictable and threatening.

It is not just foreigners themselves who represent the foreign threat. Those of mixed Japanese and foreign blood *(konketsuji)* are usually treated as un-Japanese, and suffers social rejection. Too much association with foreigners is also treated as *gaijin kusai* ('smelling like a foreigner' or 'foreign tainted').

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[22] Op.Cit, Henshall, Kenneth G., p. 78.

Illegal Migrant Workers under existing International Human Rights Law

Article 26 of ICCPR states that all persons are equal before the law without-discrimination of any kind based on race, color, sex or other status. It also talks about the right to legal recognition, the right to remedy for the violation of legally granted rights, the security of the person and so on. Despite this, the ICCPR maintains explicit distinctions in many areas between citizens and outsiders as well as between legal and illegal outsiders and thus, does not in fact, protect all of these people equally. The ICESR is generally even less favorable to outsiders than the ICCPR because of the nature of the rights granted. The illegal foreign workers are thus excluded from fundamental rights and freedom under existing international law which maintains their status as persons outside the protection of the law.[24]

The Convention on Migrant Workers

The International Labor Organization and the UN General Assembly's declaration have recognized the need to protect the basic human rights of migrant labor as well as illegal migrants. In the 1974 convention of the ILO, great emphasis was given to the damaging social consequences of illegal migration and included illegal foreign workers within its protective provisions.

The "International Convention of the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and their families" brought about the most significant breakthrough in the protection and recognition of illegal foreign worker's rights.[25] This convention is the outcome of the report of the UN Sub Commission on the prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities entitled "Exploitation of labor through Illicit and Clandestine Trafficking". This convention has granted many rights and protection to migrant workers

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[24] Kevin Yamaga Karns, "Pressing Japan: Illegal Foreign Workers Under International Human Rights Law and the Role of Cultural Relativism", *Texas International Law Journal*, Austin, Vol.30, no.3, Summer 1995, p.564

[25] "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, Opened for Signature", Dec.18, 1990, *Annex to UN Doc A/45/158 (191)*, p. 566

and their families, including domestic privacy, equality with citizens before the courts, respect of cultural identities and procedural rights in deportation and detention.

Haruo Shimada, a well known social scientist contended that the convention seems to be inadequate in the sense that it provides neither grant of amnesty to protect these laborers from deportation or exercising their rights, nor any recognition of the need to make the nature and extent of these rights known to the workers themselves. He further opines that in the case of Japan, it is futile to expect the illegal immigrants to exercise rights of which they are unaware or to enforce such rights once they have been deported. Shimada also contends that these foreign workers should be given the right of subsistence because this is a basic human right. They must be given social security including workers accident compensation, medical insurance and pensions.

Rights of Foreign Workers and the Japanese Constitution

There is no clear-cut definition regarding the status of foreign workers in the Japanese constitution. Consequently, whether provisions in the UN Covenant are applicable to them is a matter of confusion, debate and interpretation only. There is a Chapter entitled "Rights and Duties of the People" and under this chapter, there is provision of right to equality (Article 14) and right to subsistence (Article 25). But there is a debate and confusion about the applicability of these rights and duties - do the articles/laws framed cover the foreigners or are they only for Japanese citizens?

The law does not make any discrimination, between a citizen and a foreigner; even illegal workers are entitled to some benefits. But there are a number of inherent problems in actually implementing the system. For example: (i) Most of the legal foreign workers injured at work are often compelled to return home. When such an eventuality takes place they face many problems due to procedures related to applications, billing and payments. (ii) In case of the illegal workers who suffer injury, they do not demand compensation due to fear of deportation by the authorities. Even after the revision of the

Immigration law of 1990, the illegal workers are still more frightened to demand this compensation due to them. The new law is rather harsh.

Only the Japanese citizens are entitled to vote in local and national elections. It is only very recently that the Korean and other permanent residents have been granted the right to vote in local elections. Other foreigners have been denied this right.

The ongoing Japanese constitution revision debate in Japan does not seem to include in any proportion, the issue of rights of foreign workers. The entire focus of the debates seems to be on the issue of SDF and its overseas deployment. The media, the academia, lawmakers and the bureaucracy need to show some courage and include the question of foreigners and their rights in Japan in the broad revision debate.

The period starting from the 1950s until the mid 1980s was the period of Japan's economic boom. Japanese companies have managed to raise labor productivity by improving manufacturing techniques and by increasing direct investment in Southeast and East Asia in particular. Japanese companies generated huge trade surpluses, which helped Japan, achieved a higher per capita GNP in the world. Due to this remarkable success since the mid 1980s, Japan has attracted the attention of foreign workers throughout Asia, looking out for employment and decent living. Other factors responsible for this transformation are demographic forces, i.e., reduced fertility rates and rapid of the population.

The issue of foreign workers in Japan is not a new one. Before World War II Japan had brought foreign workers from the Korean peninsula, which it had colonized. They were eventually incorporated into the bottom strata of society - Zainichi' - the Koreans and Chinese. The harbinger of the present situation was the flow of trainees into Japan during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Japan has remained an isolated society for many years, especially between 1603-1868. However, if Japan wants to play a significant role in the world, it would be difficult

to neglect the rights of the foreign workers. Japan is considered an economic power and in the era of globalization it cannot isolate itself from the outside world.

Today's global labor market largely determines the flow of people despite the strict immigration rules of the government. In the growing global economy, when we are moving toward greater economic and cultural exchange, it is impossible to separate the free flow of people from the free flow of capital, goods and ideas all over the world. It is possible, that as part of the economic and financial globalization process, the flow of highly skilled workers employed in the international trade and investment sectors will also serve to encourage the flow of less skilled workers. Despite the attempts of the Japanese Government during the recession, the development of ethnic networks and ethnic entrepreneurship has continued. In the present circumstances it is very difficult to effectively control the influx of foreign workers in Japan.

Unlike political, social and civil rights which are based on the distinction between nationals and foreigners, human rights are not dependent on ones nationality and all residents, whether citizens or not, can claim their human rights. International human rights are a force that can undermine the exclusive authority of the state over its nationals and thereby contribute to transforming the interstate system and international legal order. However, Japan's image is not very good in terms of the application of the human rights.

Haruo Shimada, a social scientist has suggested some possible solutions: -

a) Foreign nationals with advanced knowledge and skill should be welcome in Japan.

b) The use of illegal workers for '3D' jobs should be stopped.

c) Work and learn program should be set up to offer foreigners a chance to acquire skills and knowledge while working in Japan.

d) The employment patterns should be restructured to solve the domestic labor shortage.

e) Jobs for the nation's citizens should be provided within the country.

Hiroshi Komai, a Japanese sociologist has suggested three types of policy proposals. The first is an 'urgent proposal' and ought to be implemented immediately, the second is a 'middle term program' while the third a 'long term plan'. In the immediate term plan; he talks about the protection of human rights of the 600,000 or more foreign workers now living in Japan. He also suggests the review of the revised Immigration Act, of trainee category, a review of the immigration policy, which is extremely harsh to foreigners. He is also in favor of offering Japanese language education to third world countries. There are some NGOs, which are working to safeguard the interest of the foreign nationals in Japan. These NGOs include *'Klabaw no kai'* in Yokohama, *'ALS no kai'* in Nagoya and the *'HELP women shelter'* and *'CALL Network'* in Tokyo. These organizations should be given rights and institutional status - the following are some of the suggestion:

1) It is very difficult to expel working people who are illegal residents. It is almost impossible to stop the further flow of such people in the country. Trying to stop this flow will surely enhance human rights violations against illegal or undocumented workers in Japan.

2) The Illegal residents in Japan are supposed to be incorporated into the Japanese society. It will transform Japanese society into a multicultural society. The myth of mono-ethnic and mono-cultural belief should be falsified.

3) Japan must sign the "International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination". This treaty prohibits employment and housing discrimination as well as racial hatred and violence.

4) Japan would also be required to sign the "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all migrant workers and members of their families". This treaty is concerned with labor conditions, social security and cultural autonomy and gives attention to the needs of the undocumented workers and their families.

5) The contents of alien registration have to be simplified. Carrying this card all the time should not be mandatory. The re-entry permit system must be reviewed. Public servants as well as foreigners should have opportunities to

work. Voting and election rights should be granted at the local government level at least.

6) Under the Japanese Law, the Korean residents who have been in Japan for over three generation are eligible for citizenship. Therefore, the Laws should be properly applied.

7) The schools founded by ethnic groups (like Koreans) should be promoted; ethnic education should be given to children and foreigners.

There should be global accords on the international migration of people. If Japan continues to neglect their basic rights, it could be accused of international exploitation of labor. This seriously hampers its image and interest all over the world. However difficulty it may be opening the labor market, is considered a necessary condition for this nation to play a role in the economic development of Asia, which is one of the world's fastest-growing regions. In principle, the Government welcomes foreigners who possess a high level of knowledge and experience, but it is opposed to the entry of unskilled workers.

It is definite that accepting foreign workers at a time of high unemployment is not an easy task. But in the long run, increased foreign employment seems inevitable, given the future prospect of chronic labor shortages resulting from the rapid aging of the population.

The basic lesson is that Japan should be more receptive to foreign workers. The door needs to be opened gradually, though, in ways that do not cause serious problems. One should also take a broader view of foreign employment; it would add diversity to the Japanese society. This would enable Japan to be one of the constituents of the multi-polar world.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Summary and Assessment

Japan's Mono-ethnic Myth

Japan is a society with many ethnic and social minority groups and a large majority population of heterogeneous origin. All levels of society in Japan and abroad believe Japan's mono-ethnic myth. The myth is so pervasive that even obvious evidences are often blatantly ignored while discussing Japanese minorities. Thus most people continue to talk of the homogeneous society of Japan. This image is so strong that the language commonly and used to define the "Japanese" as a race and society is mono-ethnic.

The Japanese political leaders have believed for sometime that Japan should be a mono-ethnic society and have used force to try and make it one, both on the surface and at a much deeper level. The Ainus and the Ryukyuans were subjected to assimilation policies that destroyed their language and culture. Around the turn of twentieth century, these policies were extended to Japan's colonial minorities, first in Taiwan and then in Korea. Denial of the right to use ethnic names and language, were used, as a method of destruction of ethnic identities, was an integral part of Japan's imperial policy of assimilation, following territorial expansion.

The root of this myth of homogeneity seems to go back to the beginning of the Yamato state, around the fifth century. Written records replaced oral transmission, the commonality of origin with the people of the mainland was denied and a legend of a single, unmixed Yamato people, of unique indigenous origin was developed. The people were said to be of divine ancestry and the imperial line was directly traced to the sun goddess. From its inception, Yamato identity implied uniqueness from the rest of mankind.

The *kokutai* ideology that dominated from the mid-eighteenth century till the end of World War II also stated that the ancient racial qualities that had made Japan a great and harmonious society were derived from the unbroken imperial line. Ironically, during the pre-war period, while the superiority of the state and the Yamato people was emphasized, it was not taught that the Japanese were a single, homogenous ethnic group (*Kamishima*). Because the Japanese empire included *gaichijin* (nationals of colonial origin) like the Taiwanese and the Koreans, and non–Yamato *naichijin* Japanese nationals of the home territories such as Okinawans, it was accepted that the Japanese were an ethnically mixed people. Korea was officially viewed neither as a possession nor as a colony but as a dominion and therefore simply an extension of Japan. Assimilating and incorporating Japanese minorities into the Yamato people was considered an important national task.

In post war Japan, this ideology of superiority was transformed into a more acceptable form by emphasizing the uniqueness of the people. The unquestioned description of Japan as a *tan'itsu minzoku kokka* (mono-ethnic state) is another expression of this ideology.

Rather than a reality, the mono-ethnic state is a modern state ideology. The myth is made realistic by the laws of the colonies but contradicted by the remains of indigenous minorities of the colonial period. Japan's leaders insisted on the mono-ethnic myth because they believed in its power to unite the Japanese majority. They also believed that it helped the Japanese people to forget the recent past of imperialistic Japan, by denying the existence of remaining colonial subjects of Korean and Taiwanese ancestry, who lived among them.

Depicting Japan as a mono-ethnic country also functions as a cover for its discrimination and prejudices. If there are no minorities, there can be no discrimination. Of course, discrimination does exist, but its open acknowledgement is thought to be troublesome in a society that prizes external harmony. Thus discrimination is either

denied or is labeled as something less insidious. The very word "minority" is often reserved for other, supposedly less fortunate societies.

Discrimination in the land of homogeneity

The Japanese archipelago has often been depicted as a homogeneous and harmonious society. Until the middle of the 19th century, Japanese society was divided into about 250 semi-independent political units (*han*), and people were subordinate to the feudal lord of each *han*. After the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1867, the struggles of the weaker segments of society against the political and economic injustices suffered, emerged in various forms.

Why do the Buraku issues remain unsettled even in modern Japan? Ian Neary seems to believe that the greatest cause of continuing discrimination against the Buraku members was the new elite that toppled the Tokugawa Shogunate and established the Meiji government. They failed to take a positive attitude and in fact, took a negative stance towards emancipation of the *Eta* and *Hinin*. The new government, like many preceding regimes fin earlier centuries had dare used religion, both Buddhism and the indigenous Shinto, as a basis for government. In both religions it was taught that anything related to the death of humans or animals was defiling, and this thinking lay behind the discrimination against people engaged in butchering livestock, in conducting burials and in other similar work that was considered "unclean".

Japan has experienced both the sending and receiving of migrants has served to influence government policy against contemporary foreign workers. The government perceives that the country is over-populated to the extent that it had to encourage emigration in the past. It also recognizes that, based on the idea of the nation as a consanguineous entity, the social, political and economic underpinnings of Japanese society give rise to a highly specific set of beliefs that defines Japanese culture, which through its strength and cohesiveness, provides a fertile breeding ground for discrimination against other Asian nationals.

The Japanese people 'tend to believe that their "unique" cultural heritage and high degree of ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural homogeneity poses barriers to the migration of people into Japan from different cultures and value systems'. Although their homogeneity is not unique in any way, when the case of Japan is compared with the case of Germany. For example, it is important to recognize the hegemonic narratives of Japanese uniqueness as a homogeneous nation still remain predominate in the country.

As stated earlier, Japan grants citizenship according to the principle of *jus sanguinis*, the 'law of blood' or parental nationality. This is in contrast to the option of granting citizenship on the basis of *jus soli,* the 'law of soil' whereby citizenship is the right of everyone born within boundaries of the state. The latter embodies inclusionary concept of the nation. The immigration policy allows one to be a member of the society, and then the citizenship policy permits that individual to become a member of state and of the nation.

If Japan had adopted the principle of *jus soli* the majority of the Korean immigrants for example, could have obtained Japanese nationality. From its inception, the discussion of the issue of foreign workers has assumed the existence of an absolute distinction between Japanese and foreigners.

Why is it likely that a modern state such as Japan must eventually learn to accommodate the abiding social situation, i.e. giving formal legal recognition to the ethnic pluralism? In a modern state, one must distinguish between the legal status of full citizenship and the discriminatory legal rights granted to ethnic minorities.

Why is it likely that a process of cultural assimilation is inevitable in most instances? Not to mention the degree of social assimilation that occurs within the various ethnic segments of any modern state. Citing an example of the Korean case, the Korean naturalized aliens consider themselves to be of minority.

The problem of Korean minority states in Japan is still rooted in a deep-seated social conviction that the "Japanese" are and should remain ethnically homogeneous. The Japanese still pride themselves on their uniqueness and resist the idea of assimilating or accommodating any ethnic minority fully, within a concept of citizenship that remains almost identical with a concept of social purity.

The Koreans in Japan today, are still under constraint to use Japanese names and to deny their origins to obtain even marginal acceptability as "Japanese" citizens. In effect, many Japanese would not mind that Koreans passes and assimilate themselves by becoming invisible. However, in the real sense, this form of assimilation is impossible.

The Korean problem is part of a greater issue not faced by Japanese society. To become a leading industrial state with true international perspective, the Japanese social structure must develop some mechanism for absorbing talented individuals from outside the traditional society. Every other modern culture reaching preeminence has found a means of assimilating foreign-born talent. The Japanese, so far, have found no means of crossing what is conceptually racial as well as a cultural barrier to social assimilation.

Although most Koreans are physically indistinguishable from the Japanese, they nevertheless continue to be racially discriminated by the Japanese. Whether they admit it openly or not many Japanese consider Koreans biologically inferior to themselves. Although intermarriage with Koreans is legally tolerated, most Japanese do not like it. The children of marriages between Koreans and Japanese are called "mixed-blood children". The Koreans living in Japan, therefore, are faced with insoluble dilemma.

The Japanese policy no doubt advocates assimilation. On the other hand, many officials as well as the ordinary public continue to convey the message that Koreans can never become true Japanese. Today, those of Korean background are reinforced in their separate identity by awareness that the Japanese are reluctant to acknowledge their cultural debt to Korea. Before the tenth century, the Japanese were appreciative of the

Koreans who came to Japan, but in subsequent centuries they attributed cultural superiority to china and political inferiority to Korea.

In the late twentieth century, there were still significant barriers in terms of employment, marriage, and civic participation for the Korean Japanese. However, they did not constitute a uniformly inferior group. Though the Koreans are not an inferior race of people, even till the late 20th century there were barriers in terms of employment, marriage and civic participation for the Koreans in Japan.

Needless to say, given the pervasive prejudice and discrimination against the people of Korean descent in Japan, the fact of Korean descent has had a significant impact on Korean Japanese identity. The fact of Korean descent, in other words, no longer determines or dominates the individual identity of the Korean peninsula.[1]

Thus, ethnicity in and by itself cannot in any sense predict the concrete contours of individual identity. And the sense of identity may change dramatically for any individual over the course of life. We should therefore not expect a great degree of homogeneity among the Korean Japanese.

Conventionally, Japan's colonial rule over Korea from 1910 to 1945 has been most covered among the issues regarding Japan's treatment of Korea. However, the Japanese government in fact continues to deny the human rights of the Koreans who remained in Japan even in the post-war, so-called "democratic" period. Theoretically, Koreans possessed Japanese nationality until the San Francisco Treaty came into effect in 1952. The Japanese government did not respect their rights as foreigners; instead they continued to oppress Korean human rights even after 1952, declaring "post-war democracy" while hiding the truth. The Japanese should recognize that not only the Japanese government but also Japanese individuals have to take responsibility for the difficulties imposed on the Koreans in Japan.

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[1] Ryang, Sonia, "Resident Koreans in Japan", in Sonia Ryang, (ed.), Koreans in Japan: Critical voices from the margin, Routledge, London, 2000, p. 201.

The appearance of foreign laborers, as "new comers" is remarkable in Japanese society today. They are in the streets, on the transit system and especially apparent in restaurant where they are engaged in customer service. However, Koreans in Japan are virtually indistinguishable in physical appearance. Most of them were born and brought up in Japan, and their mother tongue is Japanese. However, the main reason for their invisibility in Japanese society is that most of them use Japanese names, not Korean names, to pass as Japanese.

It has been said that it is inevitable that the Korean residents use Japanese names in order to avoid discrimination. However, the reason that the Koreans in Japan use Japanese names can be further explained by a hypothetical process consisting of three steps. Firstly, it was the enforcement of Japanese names on them during the colonial period. Secondly, the Koreans voluntarily use Japanese names to avoid discrimination, despite the fact that they recognize their Korean names as being the real ones. Thirdly, today's young Koreans in Japan are more accustomed to the Japanese names than their original Korean ones.

One's name is a significant component that forms the core of one's ethnic identity. Thus, it seems and appears that the Koreans in Japan should enthusiastically advance to encourage the use of Koreans names in order to establish a society in which the Koreans and the Japanese can live together by respecting the differences between them, it is necessary for Koreans to use their Korean name. On the other hand, it is vital on the part of the Japanese to adopt a proper attitude and respond positively to those who use their Korean names.

The Japanese myths of homogeneity are not unique and are "simply a more virulent form of nationalism, which is a powerful and ubiquitous ideology of modernity".[2] The Japanese society is also in a process of continual change, though the precise nature of these measures is not spelled out in any detail. One of the most striking

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[2] Lie, John, *Multiethnic Japan*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 2001, p.178

signs of change in Japan since the early 1990s has precisely been the rediscovery of diversity.

A variety of factors account for the increasing visibility of minorities in contemporary Japan, but one factor has undoubtedly been the prolonged struggle for recognition by the Ainus, the Okinawans, the Burakumins, the Koreans, and the Chinese. Yet, analyzing the myth of ethnic homogeneity, Lie writes: "What allowed so many Japanese to believe that they have lived and continue to live in a mono-ethnic society is the silence of the actually existing minority group". It is also true that a notable minority among the "minorities" have striven for decades to make their voices of protest heard within the muffling structures of the Japanese media and public discourse.

One of the encouraging changes in Japan in the past decade has been the increasing presence of "minority" voices in various sections of the media and public debate. Social transformations are certainly underway in Japan, and these include encouraging signs of increasing acceptance of diversity in some quarters. The rapid changes and uncertainties that accompany globalization create a climate in which xenophobic sentiments can readily thrive.

Societal attitudes, which lie at the root of discrimination, need not be altered through educational control. At the same time, domestic and international legal provisions need to be implemented if discrimination is to be eliminated in Japan. As the CERD (Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination) noted in 1998, although the constitution provides that treaties ratified by the State Party are part of domestic law, "the provisions of the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination have been ratified and referred to by national courts".

One would ask why Japan even after the process of modernization, has failed to accept the heterogeneity of culture? Why Japan is still unwilling to accept the presence of minorities and the fact that they are discriminated against?

The construction of purportedly, homogeneous nation-states has never been perfect. The project of cultural homogenization, which Gellner regards as a necessary adjustment of modernization, is never fully achieved, both because subsequent cultural migrations have interrupted the process and because cultural minorities within the wider embrace of a nation-state do not wholly lose or give up their distinctiveness. If ethnic ideologies define nations, ethnicity may define citizenship within nation-states.

Japan should recognize and wrestle with the reality of its invidious variety of racial and social discrimination and begin to disassemble the formidable walls of social and institutional discrimination it erects against its own minority population.

Given Japan's growing international presence, it is in the interest of the global community as well as that Japan take concrete steps to eliminate social discrimination and to hold those who discriminate, legally accountable for their actions. More importantly, if Japan is truly ever to live up to premature pronouncements that position it as a society on the cutting edge of the "Information age", it must acknowledge the moral dilemma posed by the existence of such discrimination. It must make a serious commitment to educational reforms that cultivate not only an appreciation of the variegated canvas of world civilization free of distortion and petty chauvinisms but of the contributions of its own social and ethnic minorities as well. If Japan cannot hold its own internal diversity, how can it come to terms with that of a dynamic, pluralistic, multicultural world of which it has for so long endeavored to become a part?

Japan's internalized contradiction in its assimilation policy is due to the two opposing factors. One is the use of inclusionary means by homogenizing its population, and the other is the use of exclusionary means by differentiating particular groups of people. In both means, internal minorities are used to unite the nation and racial signifiers such as phenotype, blood image and culture are maximally exploited by the state for its own purposes. Here it is quite apparent that 'forced inclusion' within a national collectivity is no necessary protection against racialization and discrimination.

hundred years of forced assimilation policies imposing direct rule and Yamato education, language, and culture, many Okinawans still maintain a distinct ethnic identity. Although most Koreans are largely acculturated into mainstream society, many still continue to cling to emblems of their identity such as their Korean passport and Korean name. Despite more than a century of legal liberation the Burakumin are still subjected to investigative efforts to identify their origins and encounters subsequent discrimination in employment and marriage. Although all minorities suffer less oppression and enjoy more freedom in modern Japan, as do minorities in other relatively free countries, the elimination of most legal barriers to equality does not protect them from prejudice and discrimination in society at large.

George De Vos, an exponent of the mono-ethnic myth through his study of Japanese minorities observed that modern societies around the world move from an insistence on assimilation to a recognition of ethnic diversity: Japan has been an extreme of one polarity of collective social illusion that still insists on mythic homogeneity as the essence of citizenship. Minorities are still denied separate recognition within a truly multiethnic Japan. Past forms of coercion are no longer attempted, but necessary dignity cannot be accorded properly as long as there remains a social insistence that homogeneity is the ideal, if not the actuality, of today's Japan.

Myths are powerful, as they distort and conceal reality in their extreme simplifications and falsifications. By ignoring a great mass of information, they identify essential order, purity and blessed simplicity. Myths can be elevating to nation, enabling people to energized and compelling them to defy rational limits. Yet myths can also be disastrous, causing a nation to lose touch with reality and its shared humanity with others. Japan's myth of mono-ethnicity has both these powers, destructive and constructive.

The mono-ethnic myth has served the national state as an ideology, uniting the Yamato majority in a common illusion of oneness. However, it is disrespectful to minorities and denies their essential contribution to the development of Japanese society. Belief in the myths impedes acceptance of the diversity that exist among majority

Japanese, among all members of Japanese society and among all world citizens. The monoethnic myth is a patriotic hymn dissonant with the often-heard romantic rhapsodies of internationalization and globalism; the realization that demands both a tolerance for differences and an understanding of shared humanity.

Ethnic minorities in Japan remain like 'pariahs' lacking what Arendt calls a 'public life', and are therefore denied a footing in the human world. How can one possibly find a way out of this situation in which so many people lack even the basic 'human condition' and are without public secured human relations in general? It could be said that an infringement of human rights occurs not only 'when at least one of the rights listed as a human right is violated', but also 'when people lose their footing in the human world' – if this is so, it will be necessary to create even a more open public sphere in order to guarantee human right. As a first step, the rights of citizenship must be made more accessible by having them accrue not only to a single exclusive state community, but also to multiple communities. In concrete terms this means the establishment of a system and a form of citizenship, which positively guarantees 'plural nationalities'.

One may very well wonder whether it would not be more sensible to ignore ethnic diversity altogether. Would it not be more sensible, as postwar modernization theorists and Marxist did, to assume that particularistic identities would wither away in favor of more universalistic ones? Should we not take Article 14 of the Japanese Constitution for granted: All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations on grounds of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin? Do we not risk reifying the ethnic categories, thereby fomenting interethnic conflict and suppressing intra-ethnic differences? Although the present century is profoundly sympathetic to universalistic ideals and cosmopolitan concerns, it is quite apparent that abstract universals cannot emerge without concrete struggles for recognition and inclusion.

The pursuit of abstract universals carries the danger of empty formalism, thereby reproducing the discourse of mono-ethnicity and the phenomena of passive racism and

passing. For instance, when Japanese students were asked whether they would marry the Burakumins, most claimed that they would. Very few, however were willing to do so after they were shown a video on Burakumin discrimination. The converse of passive racism is the prevalence of passing. Many Korean Japanese who have become Japanese citizens nonetheless continue to hide the fact of naturalization and live in fear of exposure of their Korean ancestry. In the meantime, well-meaning Japanese, steeped as they may be in the ideology of universal human rights and democracy, reiterate the ideology of monoethnic Japan.

Abstract universals must be achieved through concrete particulars. As alienated and particularistic as ethnic categories may be, one cannot wish them away. Nevertheless, the ethnic minorities need to struggle through concrete concerns of prejudice, discrimination and denial in order to address them in the hopes of overcoming them. The case of Japan may not be much different in kind, though it may vary in the degree of importance attached, whether to the issue of ethnic minorities or foreigners in Japan.

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