

# 2017 International Conference on Policy towards Indigenous Peoples: Lessons to be Learned and corresponding Indigenous Workshop/Art Exhibition in Sapporo Japan

*Hiroshi Maruyama\**

Deep in me there exists a landscape,  
which in my youth became suppressed.  
Important memories, the connection to  
my ancestors,  
and deeply personal relations –  
like the lullaby of my grandmother  
Lovisa, and my native language –  
all of this was extinguished.  
Time took away the sense of presence  
and existence.  
My longing for origin has pushed me out  
into the wild and pristine Nature;  
only there I could feel the connection  
that links Time to my life.  
There, a new insight arises.  
The traces lead to other paths, further  
and further into the mind.

Within the womb of Nature's raw and  
continuous transformation,  
connections to the past and the future  
are born –  
my inner chains are brought into the  
light to finally dissolve.  
- Louise Fontain

Approximately 100  
researchers/artists/activists gathered in  
Sapporo from 30 November to 4  
December from all over the world. Their  
purpose was to participate in the  
International Conference on Policy  
towards Indigenous Peoples: Lessons to  
be Learned and corresponding  
Indigenous Workshop/Art Exhibition.  
At least in Japan, there had never been  
such an art and academic event of  
international standing before. In this  
essay, I describe why the event was  
planned, how it was prepared, and how  
it turned out to be. Additionally, I will  
omit honorific titles in the text.

## **A brief history of the organizing committee**

In the middle of 2015, I started to plan for  
an international conference on  
Indigenous policy in Sapporo in 2017  
with my international and Ainu friends.  
As 2017 marks the tenth anniversary of  
the historic adoption of the United  
Nations Declaration on the Rights of

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Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by the UN General Assembly, it occurred to me that it would be a perfect time to assess the impacts of the UNDRIP on Indigenous policies. I continued planning for more than two years with organizing committee members as Ryoko Tahara, then vice-president of the Sapporo Ainu Association; Kamrul Hossain, director of the Northern Institute of Environmental and Minority Law (NIEM), Arctic Centre, University of Lapland in Rovaniemi Finland; Anna Petr  tei, researcher at the NIEM; Leena Huss, Professor at the Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University in Sweden; Satu Gr  ndahl, Associate Professor at the Hugo Valentin Centre; and Masumi Tanaka, researcher at the Centre for Environmental and Minority Policy Studies (CEMiPoS), online center directed by me. The organizing committee was joined later by Tomas Colbengtson, lecturer at University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, and Maile Taulii, Assistant Professor, Native Hawaiian and Indigenous Health Office of Public Health Studies, Myron B Thompson School of Social Work Hawaiinuiakea, School of Hawaiian Knowledge, University of Hawai'i in M  noa.

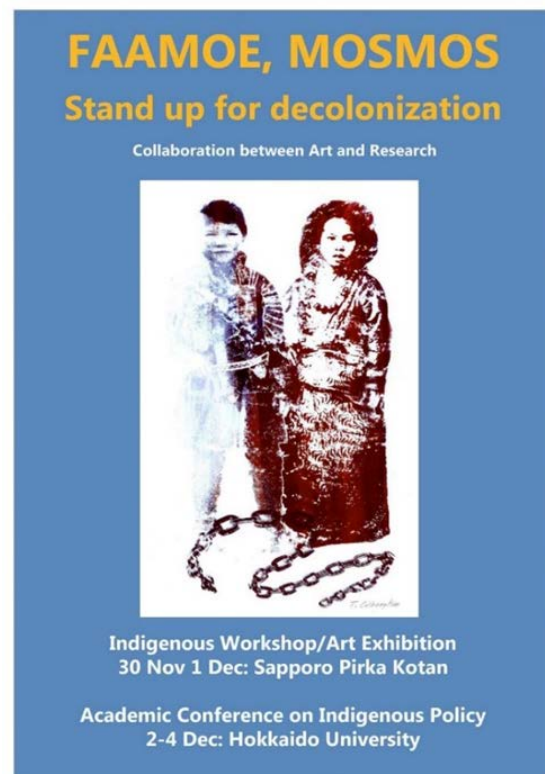


Photo 1. The poster designed by Tomas Colbengtson

In July 2016, Tomas Colbengtson joined the organising committee soon after Ryoko Tahara and I assisted him in launching a joint exhibition with Ainu artist Koji Yuki in Sapporo and Nibutani, Hokkaido, Japan. The exhibition was a first watershed, a big step for us. We then decided to combine the planned academic conference on Indigenous policy with a corresponding Indigenous workshop/art exhibition, the whole event lasting five days from November 30th to December 4th in Sapporo, Japan. The poster for the conference/art exhibition was designed by Colbengtson and bore the slogans "Stand up for Decolonisation" and "Collaboration between Art and Research" (Photo 1).

Shortly afterward, Colbengtson personally encouraged more than ten Indigenous artists of his acquaintance in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Greenland to apply for funding to join the Indigenous workshop/art exhibition together with Ainu artists in Sapporo. In December 2016 when our call for papers was announced, Kamrul Hossain came to Sapporo to undertake preliminary discussions on the International Conference on Policy towards Indigenous peoples with Masumi Tanaka and me. This conference followed as an extension of my ongoing collaboration with him dating back to 2009. He also recommended several young researchers of his team at the NIEM to take part in the conference.

In January 2017, Ryoko Tahara convened the last preparatory committee meeting for the establishment of the Ainu Women's Association. Its primary aim was to empower Ainu women to take back their Indigenous rights. The programme of their activities in 2017 included the co-hosting of the International Conference on Policy towards Indigenous Peoples and corresponding Indigenous Workshop/Art Exhibition in Sapporo from 30 November to 4 December with the CEMiPoS in collaboration with the Hugo Valentin Centre and the NIEM. In February 2017, the Hokkaido Shimbun Press, the most influential newspaper in Hokkaido, reported Hossain's

involvement in the international conference as a series of its reports on the international conference (Photo 2). In March 2017, Colbengtson visited Sapporo again for the purpose of having preliminary discussions concerning the Indigenous workshop/art exhibition with three directors of the Ainu Women's Association: Ryoko Tahara, Tomoko Mitsuno, and Yoko Sasaki, (Photo 3), along with Masumi Tanaka and me.



Photo 2. The Hokkaido Shimbun Press published its interview with Kamrul Hossain on 8 February 2017



Photo 3. Tomas Colbengtson speaking with three directors of the Ainu Women's Association with interpreting by Masumi Tanaka in Sapporo

The second watershed for us came with Maile Taualii. In May 2017, she proposed a session of Indigenous health issues to be included in the international conference just before the call for papers was over. The organizing committee immediately accepted her proposal and extended the call for papers to the middle of June. The inclusion of a session of Indigenous health issues made the conference much more comprehensive. Taualii was also planning to bring a number of her students to Sapporo to highlight their work at her session. In September, she confirmed she and her students were preparing to travel to Sapporo. Furthermore, in the middle of November, I had the last preliminary discussions with Leena Huss, Satu Gröndahl, Tomas Colbengtson, and Kamrul Hossain at the Hugo Valentin Centre in Uppsala regarding the five-day art and academic event (Photo 4). At that time, they were confident that the event would be successful, though I still had a vague feeling of anxiety. At about that time in Rovaniemi, Anna Petrétei was finalizing the 120-page abstract book. In Sapporo, steering committee members—in particular, Jeff Gayman, associate Professor at Hokkaido University, Hiroyuki Domon, vice president at Takushoku University Hokkaido College, and core volunteer interpreters: Ritsuko Hirose, Kazuko Backhouse, Misao Matsumura and Makoto Shimizu were working on the

organizing of the venues along with members of the Ainu women's Association. Additionally, it should be noted that Leena Huss had immediately responded to my frequent requests for consultation all the time throughout the two-year period of preparation.



Photo 4. Satu Gröndahl, Leena Huss, Hiroshi Maruyama, Kamrul Hossain, and Tomas Colbengtson (from left to right) at the Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University

### **Key areas of the International Conference**

The international conference aimed to assess the existing policies towards Indigenous peoples at local, regional, and global levels in light of the UNDRIP and with a view to decolonizing those policies. Given that the purpose of the UNDRIP is to remedy the historical denial of the right of self-determination and related human rights (Anaya 2009: 191), and that special measures are required to safeguard the right of Indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources which they have

traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired (Anaya 2009: 193), discussion was to focus on two key areas:

1. Redress for historical injustices imposed on Indigenous peoples and their struggle for Indigenous rights

2. Exploitation of natural resources by external powers in Indigenous communities and their resistance against them

I thought that the former key area could be handled by two international lawyers: Hossain and Petrétei at the NIEM and that the latter could be taken responsibility by me, director of the CEMiPoS.

Furthermore, given that special measures are also required to restore and secure Indigenous peoples' rights in relation to culture, religion, traditional knowledge, the environment, physical security, health, education, the welfare of women and children, the media, and maintaining traditional relations across international borders (Anaya 2009: 193), the following three key areas were added to the themes of the conference.

3. Linguistic and cultural revitalization led by Indigenous peoples in the wake of cultural genocide under colonialism

4. Indigenous women on the front line of sufferings and struggles

5. Indigenous health issues

In regard to a relationship between the special measures listed above and three key areas, linguistic and cultural revitalization are to be related to religion, traditional knowledge, education, the media and maintaining relations across international borders. Indigenous women on the front line of sufferings and struggles include the welfare of women and children. Indigenous health issues are regarded as composed of physical security and health. Thus the five key areas were considered to cover almost all of the rights of Indigenous peoples guaranteed by the UNDRIP. Leena Huss, who over the years has done major research on minority languages, language policies, and the revitalization of the Sami languages, was responsible for the third key area. Satu Gröndahl once intimated to me the important roles Elsa Laula Renberg and other female Sami leaders played in improving the status of Sami people. It led to the inclusion of the sufferings and struggles of Indigenous women as one of the key areas, handled by Gröndahl. Additionally, the area of Indigenous health issues was delegated to Maile Taulii.

The programme of the international conference was reflective of my concept



of Indigenous policy. In my opinion, the progress of Indigenous policy has been facilitated by Indigenous activists' continual struggle against colonialism and by the endorsement of international layers and NGOs. It is proved by the 2007 adoption of the UNDRIP by the UN General Assembly. The International Conference of Policy towards Indigenous Peoples was, therefore, organized to be a space where Indigenous/non-Indigenous researchers tackle problems facing Indigenous peoples through their presentations, work out how to support Indigenous peoples' struggle on the basis of international human rights law, including the UNDRIP, and human security, through exchanging opinions with those people concerned, and get a clue as to how to find solutions from discussion with others, including Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, since international human rights standards guarantee the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples to decisions affecting them, it was crucial that Indigenous values were at the center of discussions concerning Indigenous policy.

### **Indigenous Workshop/Art Exhibition**

Prior to the international conference, from 30 November to 1 December, the Indigenous Workshop/Art Exhibition

was held at Sapporo Pirka Kotan. The day before the start, international Indigenous artists, including Tomas Colbengtson, Britta Marakatt Labba, Julie Edel Hardenberg, Antonie Grahamsdaughter, Matti Aikio, Marie Persson Njajta, Anni Linn Fjällström, Lena Stenberg, and Ngaroma Riley, jointly presented their art and exchanged ideas among themselves and with Ainu artists: Koji Yuki, Shizue Ukaji, Ryoko Fujioka, Hiromi Abe, Yukari Naganawa and Kayoko Hiramura (Photos 5, 6, 7, 8).



Photo 5. Participants in the Indigenous Workshop/Art Exhibition at Sapporo Pirka Kotan on 1 December 2017

Ranging in form from embroidery to video installation, their artworks expressed feelings of veneration for nature and ancestors, and their strong will to transmit their culture and history from generation to generation, and some of them explicitly sent us a message of decolonization (Photo 9, 10, 11, 12). During the art exhibition, international

Indigenous performers, including Torgeir Vassvik and Elisabeth Heilmann Blind (Photo 13), were brought together with Ainu performers such as Ponpe Ishii and Koji Yuki for improvisations. The atmosphere inside Sapporo Pirka Kotan was full of enthusiasm, a sense of solidarity and international friendship. After the Indigenous Workshop/Art Exhibition, Ryoko Tahara regretfully told me that two days were not enough to show the cultural strength of Indigenous peoples. On 5 December when leaving Sapporo, Antonie Grahamsdaughter was contemplating the possibility to host an art event with Ainu women in Stockholm in 2018. At the beginning of January 2018, Shizue Ukaji and Kayoko Hiramura wrote to me that they felt empowered by participating in the Indigenous workshop/art exhibition.



Photo 6. Britta Marakatt Labba, Elisabeth Heilmann Blind, Tomas Colbengtson and Lena Stenberg (from left to right) at Sapporo Pirla Kotan (By courtesy of Marie Persson Njajta)



Photo 7. Tomas Colbengtson (left) and Kyoko Kagaya (right) in front of Marie Persson Njajta's art (By courtesy of Marie Persson Njajta)



Photo 8. Antonie Grahamsdaughter (left) and Shizue Ukaji (right) with Ainu art



Photo 9. Julie Edel Hardenberg's art





Photo 10. Tomas Colbengtson's glass sculpture

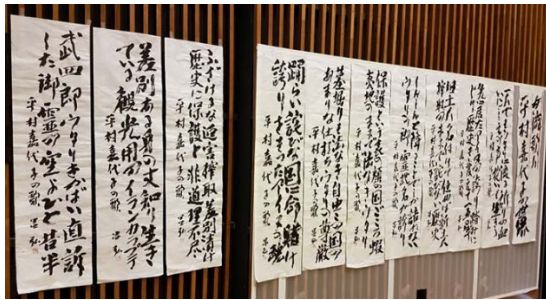


Photo 11. Kayoko Hiramura's tanka



Photo 12. Koji Yuki's art



Photo 13. Elisabeth Heilmann Blind's mask dance performance (By courtesy of Antonie Grahmsdaughter)

Furthermore, four dancers from Amareya Theatre in Gdansk Poland: Katarzyna Pastuszek, Aleksandra Sliwinska, Daniela Komedera, and Monika Wińczyk, and Greenlandic Inuit performer Louise Fontain presented "Nomadic Woman" on the stage (Photo 14, 15, 16). According to their flyer, "Nomadic Woman" is a cross-genre and cross-cultural performance about women and their inner and outer immigration, about the situation of Indigenous women and their relation to inner and outer landscape. It is also based on the true story of Fontain, who was deported to Denmark from Greenland in her childhood to be "civilized" by Danish assimilation policy, and who consequently, lost her mother tongue, contact with her family members and identity. The flyer further tells us that after many years of exile, Fontain finally realized that her true



home is in the inner landscape that she holds within her and in the natural landscape of the far North. “Nomadic Woman” was directed and choreographed by Katarzyna Pastuszek, art director of Amareya Theatre, with technical support from Jakub Miśkiewicz. In Sapporo, Pastuszek decided to recruit an Ainu woman named Tsugumi Matsudaira as a guest performer for “Nomadic Woman” with a view to performing it at the Conference on Bronisław Piłsudski and his research on Ainu people in 2018 planned by Culture Centre Manggha in Cracow, Poland. The new version of “Nomadic Woman” visualized the agonies of Ainu women as well as those of other Indigenous peoples. Sapporo Pirka Kotan resounded with unceasing applause after the performance was over.

All of this occurred in spite of the fact that Sapporo Pirka Kotan was not very well suited to this kind of art event—it is far from the center of Sapporo and has a poorly-equipped stage. Considering that the office of the Ainu Women’s Association is located in Sapporo Pirka Kotan, hosting the Indigenous workshop/art exhibition was aimed to empower Ainu women. For that purpose, we put energy and money into the improvement of the stage for the performance of “Nomadic Woman” with the help of Hiroyuki Domon. Pastuszek and Amareya Theatre finally

succeeded in solving these issues facing their performance. At present Pastuszek is applying to perform “Nomadic Woman” with two Ainu women (Tsugumi Matsudaira and Utae Ehara) at the 2018 CINARS Biennale in Montreal, Canada, as well as the Conference on Bronisław Piłsudski. Matsudaira and Ehara felt highly honored in being chosen as guests for Amareya Theatre’s performance when I talked to them in January 2018. In addition, the venue, reception and lunch for participants were taken care of by the following members of the Ainu Women’s Association: Kimiko Naraki, Chiaki Ihashi, Mika Ishii, Ryoko Fujioka, Yukari Naganawa, Hiromi Abe, and Kyoko Kagaya, as well as two Ainu men Shigeru Naganawa and Toshikazu Ogawa.



Photo 14. Katarzyna Pastuszek, Nomadic Woman



Photo 15. Monika Wińczyk, *Nomadic Woman*



Photo 16. Daniela Komedera, Tsugumi Matsudaira, Katarzyna Pastudszak, Monika Wińczyk, Louise Fontain, and Aleksandra Sliwinska (from left to right)

### **An overview of the International Conference**

From 2 to 4 December 2017, approximately 70 international researchers/artists gathered at Hokkaido University in Sapporo from all over the world, as a result of our regularly distributing calls for papers and updated information through our own blog and Facebook. In fact, I regularly posted original information on the art and

academic event on the blog and Facebook and through Japanese media, while other organising committee members distributed the information further to their friends on Facebook and through other media. The Hugo Valentin Centre at Uppsala University also helped spread information to the world via their home page and Facebook. In the three-day international conference in December 2017 in Sapporo, 36 out of 45 presentations were given by international presenters, mostly researchers from Canada, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Hawai'i, USA, Brazil, New Zealand, Australia, Greenland and India. As main speakers of each session, I invited six revered Ainu elder activists: Shizue Ukaji, Yuji Shimizu, Koichi Kaizawa, Shiro Kayano, Satoshi Hatakeyama and Mamoru Tazawa to the international conference. They presented problems with Ainu policy. It is no exaggeration to say that there are few Ainu who represent the current Ainu struggle against the Japanese government for their rights better than those elder activists. Journalist from the Hokkaido Shimbun Press Yosuke Kosaka and three Professors: Jeff Gayman and Kunihiro Yoshida, Hokkaido University and Kenichiro Hirose, Kagoshima Immaculate Heart University critically analysed Ainu policy in their presentations. Those six Ainu elder activists and three researchers comprise the core of the Citizens' Alliance for the

Examination of Ainu Policy that I co-organised in April 2016 in Sapporo with them for the purpose of proposing an Indigenous rights-based alternative to the current Japanese government-led Ainu policy to the UN human rights monitoring bodies as well as the Japanese government.

While Day 1 and Day 3 had two parallel sessions, Day 2 only had one session focusing on women's issues, chaired by Satu Gröndahl. A panel discussion was held in the morning with two leading Ainu female activists, Shizue Ukaji and Ryoko Tahara, and a discussion on Indigenous women took place in the afternoon with international researchers from Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Sweden. Day 2 was a highlight of the conference, not least in light of empowering Ainu women who co-organised the conference. Thus, the panel discussion and the subsequent presentations were interpreted into Japanese for Ainu and Japanese participants. Throughout the conference, the issue of how to guarantee the rights of Indigenous peoples was discussed in terms of international human rights law, including the UNDRIP, human security and Indigenous values, which is quite different from discussion on Indigenous

policy in Japan that is usually based on the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> Below I will give some glimpses of the international conference based on the sessions I attended.

## Day 1

The opening session began with a welcoming speech of Ryoko Tahara (Photo 17), chief director of the Ainu Women's Association, with an efficient interpreting by Ngaroma Riley, New Zealand Māori. After expressing her gratitude to all the participants for a visit to *Ainumosir* (Ainu land), Tahara spoke:

Many Indigenous peoples throughout the world were forced to be assimilated for colonization. We had been deprived of lands, livelihoods, languages and cultures, and even lost a pride as a people. But I believe such injustices will not last forever...It has been 15 years since we started working towards anti-discrimination against Ainu women. We will be able to bring this pressing problem to the table at this international conference tomorrow. It's amazing to think Ainu women have come so far. From today we kick off the

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<sup>1</sup> Erica-Irene A Daes (2008, p. 23) writes about the UNDRIP as follows: "It should [...] be emphasized that the declaration is a declaration of human rights and it is universally understood in the law of nations that human rights obligations are not subject to contrary domestic legislation. Human rights law prevails over national law". In this context, discussion on Indigenous policy should be based on at least international human rights standards, which is usual in the international community.

International Conference on Policy towards Indigenous Peoples.



Photo 17. Ryoko Tahara (left) addressed the opening session with interpreter Ngaroma Riley (right)

The opening session was followed by Tomas Colbengtson's and my welcoming speeches. Furthermore, lectures were given by two invited speakers: Mark Winchester, lecturer, Kanda University of International Studies, Japan, and Marie Persson Njajta, Sami human rights defender/designer in Sweden.

Under the title of "Backlash: Hate Speech, Indigenous Denial and Historical Revisionism in Post-DRIPS Japan", Winchester lectured on the worsening of the current political situation surrounding the Ainu. His academic specialty is the modern history of Ainu thought. Winchester regards the Ainu experience as essential to understanding modernity in Japan and wider North East Asia, whilst preceding

researchers made use of the Ainu to merely to acquire ethnographic information. He thereby appreciates that the writings of Ainu intellectuals present challenges of thought to be addressed on a global scale. At the same time, as a core member of the Counter Racist Action Collective North, he has been fighting against those who make hate speeches and demonstrations against the Ainu and other minorities. I expect him to lead Ainu studies in Japan. Njajta presented problems faced by Indigenous peoples covering the above-mentioned five key areas under the title of "The Damning of A People: Indigenous Struggle against Past and Present Colonial Behavior; Mining and Exploitation; Striving for a Healthy Future." She lives in Dearn/Tärnaby, Sweden, making a living by traditional fishing, gathering herbs, and making Sami handicraft. Creative expressions have always been her way to cope with colonial wounds and abuses. She has put great effort into addressing mining and exploitation issues for almost ten years, due to the fact that traditional South Sami land, water and culture are threatened by a planned large-scale nickel mining project. In the Sami parliament in Sweden, she has been committed to the need for a Truth Commission on the colonial abuses by the Swedish state against the Sami people. In 2017, she represented The Sami Parliament in the Swedish delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women



(CSW61). Over the years, I have learned a lot about the situation facing the South Sami in Dearn/Tärnaby from her. Both Winchester and Njajta are courageous enough to confront difficulties by themselves and to make a difference.

After the opening session in the morning, there were two parallel sessions in the afternoon: “Redress for Historical Injustices Imposed on Indigenous Peoples” chaired by Anna Petrétei and “Indigenous Health Issues” moderated by Maile Taulii (Photo 18). I chose the latter session because it was new to me. It was a great pity that I could not attend the former though I knew its all presentations deserved to be heard.

Maile Taulii opened the session with a traditional chant, followed by a presentation which described the need and importance of developing an Indigenous Public Health workforce. She described how the world’s first global Master of Public Health (MPH) programme was created at the University of Hawai’i and how the programme focuses on methods, ethics and social justice. She also highlighted the work of a number of students and graduates. Four students - Yuito Okada, Malia Purdy, Siera Kawenaokahokuwelowelo Hirayama, Kamuela Werner, and Landen Muasau - presented their work. Topics included; navigating the health care system with the help of trained family members,

focusing on the family and community for health care interventions, creating a Native Hawaiian place of learning in medical schools, and ensuring Indigenous peoples with disabilities have equal access to land based programmes. Since the launch of the Native Hawaiian and Indigenous MPH programme at the University of Hawai’i in the fall of 2013, 30 students have enrolled in the programme, of which 90% were representative of 6 indigenous nations. There have been 23 graduates, with 8 continuing on with doctoral programmes. The graduate degree programme is building the Indigenous Public Health Workforce while promoting cultural safety practices and influencing Indigenous health policy, public health education, health service mandates, research methodology, and programme evaluation.



Photo 18. Maile Taulii chaired the session of Indigenous health issues

Taulii’s session on Indigenous health issues was also augmented by expertise resulting from major long-term studies done by two professors: James Daschuk,

Associate Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, University of Regina in Canada, and Maria de Lourdes Beldi de Alcantara, Professor, Medical school, University of São Paulo in Brazil. Daschuk began his presentation “Colonialism and the Loss of Indigenous Health: A Canadian Example” by speaking on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. He underscored the Commission’s statement of health, noting that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies. Afterwards, he traced the history of malnutrition and famine of First Nations caused by European settlers and portrayed the ongoing disparities in health and life expectancy between Indigenous and mainstream Canadians. Alcantara is a professor of Medical Anthropology in the Medical School of the University of São Paulo, and also a researcher and consultant for the International Work Group of Indigenous Peoples (IWGIA), the head of a NGO “Support Group for Indigenous Youth-GAPK”, and an observer of the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues at the UN. In her presentation “Dialogue among Indigenous Youth and Physicians in Dourado’s Reservation, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil”, Alcantara expressed her opinion that Western prescriptions could not work for Indigenous peoples and analysed conversations in relation to suicide

between physicians and Indigenous young patients. In addition, Dele Raheem, Post-doctoral researcher, the NIEM, Rovaniemi Finland, contributed to the session by giving the audience an idea of how important food sovereignty is to Indigenous peoples’ health.

## Day 2

In the morning panel discussion, Shizue Ukaji (Photo 19) emphasized the importance for the Ainu people of praying daily to their gods. Perhaps it can be asserted that Ainu culture is based on a communal livelihood, which involves praying to deities, as Ainu people believe everything is given by the gods. In Ukaji’s lecture, I felt there was underlying message warning younger generations that are losing ties with their traditional livelihoods and communities. Ukaji also blamed herself for having had a child with a Japanese husband with a view to softening features of Ainu people in her child. “I am still suffering from this”, she added. In response to my question of why she founded the first Ainu organization in the Tokyo metropolitan area, Ukaji answered that she had suffered, working in Tokyo like a Japanese, far away from her home in Hokkaido and that she wanted to know why Ainu people were in poverty and discriminated against.



Photo 19. Shizue Ukaji

Ryoko Tahara said that she had heard many stories regarding insults to Ainu women while serving as a life coach/social worker for her colleagues. She exemplified this bringing up the cases of Japanese migratory workers who live with Ainu women during summer and leave for their homes in winter. She also explained that by organizing the first Ainu Women's Association she had wanted to improve the situation faced by Ainu women: poverty, lack of opportunities to get an education and employment, and lack of pride caused by a Japanese custom of male dominance. The panel discussion was facilitated by the efficient interpretation by Jeff Gayman and Mark Winchester. Both of them have been involved in Ainu studies in favor of the Ainu for many years, and have earned the trust of the Ainu around them.

In the afternoon, the high rate of human trafficking and sexual exploitation of Indigenous women compared with that of majority women in New Zealand and Canada was respectively discussed by two presentations: "White lies: Centring Māori Women in the Reform of Prostitution Legislation and Policy" was made by Fern Eyles, student, Massey University, New Zealand and Jade Kake (Ngāpuhi), Te Honga Centre, UNITEC Institute of Technology, Programme Manager for Te Mtapahi (National Māori Housing Advocate), Palmerston North, New Zealand; "An Indigenous Grandmothers' Initiative in Response to Human trafficking for Sexual Exploitation of Young Aboriginal Women" was made by Janice Cindy Gaudet (Photo 20), Assistant Professor, Campus Saint-Jean, University of Alberta. Eyles and Kake explored the prostitution of Māori women as a product of colonization and comparable to other indicators of social deficit, while Gaudet presented the culturally-based efforts of Nookimisak-Nangdownjgewad, in which a core circle of Anishinaabek grandmothers and frontline workers began to address sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of women in Anishinaabek communities. In other words, Eyles and Kake sought a resolution by urging the national government of New Zealand to protect the treaty-based rights of Māori women, while Gaudet highlighted the efforts of Indigenous women to tackle the

problem of human trafficking facing them. In her presentation “A World Apart with Shared History: Norwegian Sápmi and Indigenous Australia: Colonisation, Consequences, and Empowerment”, Nina Sivertsen, Ph.D, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia mentioned that the Sami people of Northern Norway and Indigenous Australians share a common fate as Indigenous minorities, emerging from centuries of internal colonization and harsh assimilation policies. Sivertsen admired Indigenous women’s fighting for their rights and security on the front line in such adverse circumstances. Lastly, Satu Gröndahl examined the emergence of new kinds of Sami identity as described in the novels of two Sami female authors, through analyzing female protagonists appearing in those novels. Her presentation “Creating Modern Sámi Identity” highlighted, in an inspiring way, new developments in the identity formation of Indigenous peoples. Those presentations were ably interpreted by Madoka Hammine, PhD student, University of Lapland, Yuito Okada, Master student, University of Hawai’i, Ayako Tominari, Associate Professor, Hokkaido University, and Makoto Shimizu.



Photo 20. Janice Cindy Gaudet (right) made a presentation with interpreter Madoka Hammine (left)

### Day 3

There were eight presentations in the session of exploitation of natural resources in Indigenous communities and Indigenous peoples’ resistance, which was chaired by Marie Persson Njajta and me in the morning on 4 December. Two Ainu elder activists: Satoshi Hatakeyama and Koichi Kaizawa presented problems faced by them with interpretation by Takashi Oda, who had worked for Ainu people as an interpreter. Hatakeyama’s presentation was titled “Towards Restoring Our Indigenous Right to Whaling in Japan”. He is the only Ainu who has claimed the right to Indigenous whaling on the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk despite current prohibition by the authorities. Kaizawa’s presentation was “After the 1997 Court’s Decision over the Nibutani Dam Case”. He is the only survivor of the Ainu plaintiffs who contested the planned Nibutani Dam in



his community against the authorities. Four young researchers: Anna Petrétei, Assi Harkoma, Giuseppe Amatulli from the NIEM, Rovaniemi Finland and Catherine Moriarity, UiT, The Arctic University of Norway, paid attention to international human rights standards to guarantee a full involvement of Indigenous peoples in decisions affecting them when planning and implementing mining and other extractive industrial projects. The titles of those four presentations were as follows: “Resource Development in the Sápmi Region: Integration of Human Rights Impact Assessment in Licensing Processes” (Anna Petrétei), “How Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous People Can Contribute to the Conservation and Protection of Biodiversity” (Assi Harkoma), “Promoting Sustainable Development in Indigenous Communities through the Implementation of the Principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the Use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)” (Giuseppe Amatulli), and “Securing Rights: the Duty to Consult and Indigenous Engagement in the Canadian Legal System” (Catherine Moriarity).

As far as two Indigenous scholars: June L Lorenzo, Ph. D, member of Laguna-

Acoma Coalition for a Safe Environment and Indigenous World Association, and Michell Daigle, Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia are concerned, their studies have raised a question of the mainstream legal system. Lorenzo wrote in the abstract of her presentation “Contradictions Abound: Reflections on Impacts of Nuclear Policy on New Mexico Indigenous Peoples” that “using multiple viewpoints to examine the presence of uranium mining and nuclear energy infrastructure among Laguna Pueblo and other Indigenous peoples in New Mexico, I will relate the juxtaposition of Indigenous values with colonial mandates” (Centre for Environmental and Minority Policy Studies 2017: 50). Daigle wrote in her abstract “Resurging through Kistachowan: Indigenous Water Governance at the Heart of Colonial Empire” that “Mushkegowuk water governance is obstructed by colonial jurisdictions and forms of citizenship” (Centre for Environmental and Minority Policy Studies 2017: 52).

After the conference, I realized that we can’t understand article 25 of the UNDRIP <sup>2</sup> without Daigle’s and Lorenzo’s presentations. Lorenzo recalls a moment when they were working to finalize the wording of article 25, stating:

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<sup>2</sup> Article 25 of the UNDRIP reads: Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters, and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

It captures the essence of what Indigenous Peoples, who live in diverse geographies, have in common: a diverse spiritual relationship “with lands, territories, waters and coastal seas.” Many Indigenous representatives insisted on use of the word “responsibilities,” but some State representatives failed to understand its place in a rights-centered document. We insisted and explained our responsibility as stewards to provide for future generations so that they might continue this relationship...We prevailed on this issue (Lorenzo 2017: 12).

Daigle has been involved in the development of new models of Indigenous co-governance and stewardship for water resources that include Indigenous voices, sciences and ontologies at the core of sustainable water resources planning, policy development, and regulatory decision-making (Decolonizing Water). Article 25 must be materialized by Daigle and Lorenzo.

The session of linguistic and cultural revitalization led by Indigenous peoples ran parallel to the session of exploitation of natural resources in Indigenous communities. On 5 December, the Hokkaido Shimbun Press reported the session of linguistic and cultural

revitalization by exemplifying Shiro Kayano’s and Leena Huss’s presentations (Photo 21). Shiro Kayano, director, Kayano Shigeru Ainu Culture Museum, was quoted as saying in his presentation “The Right of the Ainu People to Learn the Ainu Language” that the official recognition of the Ainu language as an official language in Hokkaido must help spread the Ainu language. Leena Huss was reported to have spoken in her presentation “This Is a Beginning, We Must Start Somewhere! – The Work of the Sami Language Centre in Sweden for Language Revitalisation” that two language centers in the traditional South Sami Language areas set up in 2010 in accordance with the Law on National Minorities and Minority Languages in Sweden have been positively tackling with language revitalization and that they have borrowed and developed further advanced revitalization programmes from other countries. Additionally, I asked Masumi Tanaka and Tatsiana Tsagel’nik, Ph.D. student, Hokkaido University, to assist a journalist from the Hokkaido Shimbun Press with interviewing Indigenous artists in English as well as interpreting every English presentation into Japanese at the conference. As a result, the journalist was able to report in detail every day throughout the five-day art and academic event.



Photo 21. The Hokkaido Shimbun Press reported the session of linguistic and cultural revitalization with a photo of the banquet on 5 December 2017

## Artists' participation in the International Conference

In general, art and research share something in common in that they make what can't be visibly seen. Art instinctively moves people to bear Indigenous issues in mind, while the scientific research presented instills attendees with a theoretical framework of the issues at hand. In Sapporo, artists and researchers collaborated with the aim of directing Indigenous policy towards decolonization, ensuring Indigenous peoples' rights, security and livelihood. Artists actively participated in the international conference through exhibiting their artworks at the venue, performing music at breaks (Photo 22), making a presentation ("Methodology of Storytelling to Heal Trauma of Indigenous Peoples" by Katarzyna Pastuszek), actively joining discussions, and hosting a concluding session chaired by Tomas Colbengtson. In

addition to contributing to the academic content of the conference through new perspectives, their participation made the atmosphere warm and welcoming, and consequently, helped connecting participants to each other. Additionally, thanks to international Indigenous artists' participation, the art and academic event was well-publicized both in Japan and Sweden (Photo 23). However, in spite of our attempt to combine art and research on equal terms, there ended up being less room at the conference venue for art presentations.



Photo 22. Torgeir Vassvik (left), Utae Ehara (centre), and Louise Fontain (right) improvised at a break



Photo 23. Marie Persson Njajta was interviewed by a TV crew after her speech

## **Extended programmes**

In addition to the art and academic event, we had two extended programmes: an excursion to Nibutani in Biratori, the birthplace of Ainu studies, and public lectures at Sapporo Freedom School, a NPO, given by two Japanese promising researchers, who study abroad and presented at the international conference. In March 2017, my friend Atsuko Kumagai, member of the Council for Invigorating Local Communities in Biratori, started creating a two-day excursion to Nibutani for us in cooperation with the town office. Thanks to her fun and witty tour, fourteen international researchers/artists, including me, enjoyed meeting local Ainu people and learning living Ainu culture at the excursion. In response to my request, public lectures were willingly given by Yuito Okada, University of Hawai'i, and Madoka Hammine, University of Lapland, Finland. Their presentations – "Cutting-edge Medical Science and Indigenous Studies" by Okada and "Educated not to be Able to Speak Your Own Language?" by Hammine - showed that their studies are more interdisciplinary and ethical than most Japanese Indigenous studies, which often feature a non-interdisciplinary approach and lack of ethical requirement. In addition, the excursion was not created by us, but by local people. The public lectures were also

planned by the Sapporo Freedom School. From our perspective, these extended programmes served to share some outcomes of the art and academic event with local people and civil society.

## **Distinguishing features of the art and academic event**

What further differentiates the art and academic event from other international conferences is that the event was supported by many people. Not only organizing committee members but also steering committee ones had devoted themselves to bringing this event to fruition for months as follows: Two Ainu designers named Tomoko Mitsuno and Yoko Sasaki designed the front and back covers of the abstract book in collaboration with Tomas Colbengtson (Photo 24); Another Ainu designer, Chiyomi Fujioka designed the name cards of participants in collaboration with her colleague Ayaka Ishii; Core volunteer interpreters, including Ritsuko Hirose, Kazuko Backhouse, Makoto Shimizu and Misao Matsumura, translated English abstracts to Japanese, organized the venue for participants and interpreted presentations/conversations in collaboration with Jeff Gayman and Kenichiro Hirose; Those Japanese translations were proofread by Kenichiro Hirose, Associate Professor, Kagoshima Immaculate Heart University; Two old friends of mine Tatsuo Ohkubo and Kimihiko Maekawa



helped us to document presentations, and Hiroyuki Domon helped register participants at the reception with Ainu women, voluntary interpreters and students; My young American friend Andrew Schirmer edited the call for papers and abstracts; Kunihiro Yoshida, Professor of public law, Hokkaido University successfully negotiated with Hokkaido University for use of the venue gratis; Kenichi Matsuoka, former president of the Muroran Institute of Technology, solicited donations from nine companies in Sapporo.

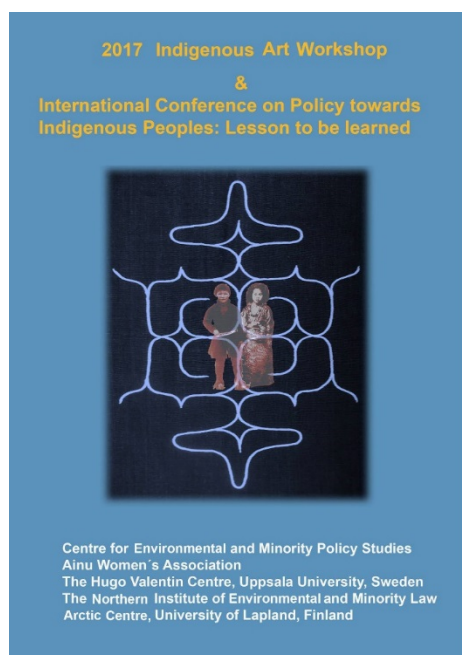


Photo 24. The front cover of the abstract book symbolized an Ainu-Sami collaboration

Furthermore, without other volunteers' contributions, the art and academic event could not have been realized. The reception was managed by Ainu women

such as Yoko Sasaki, Tomoko Mitsuno, Akiko Tahara, Kayo Tsukiyama and Yoko Kawakami. Volunteer interpreters, including Ngaroma Riley, Ayako Tominari, Madoka Hammine, and Yuito Okada, interpreted presentations. Many other volunteer interpreters assisted the core volunteer interpreters in helping Ainu participants to understand English presentations by whispering in Japanese, and facilitated conversations between international artists/researchers and Ainu participants. Around 40 people, mostly my friends, donated to us from their purses in response to my request. As a result, nearly three quarters of the costs of the art and academic event was covered by donations. Delicious Ainu food for the banquet (Photo 25) was cooked by seven Ainu women: Hiromi Abe, Satoe Imai, Ayaka Ishii, Kyoko Kagaya, Masako Kawanami, Yukari Naganawa and Ryoko Fujioka. Lastly, around 110 people participated in the banquet with many participants remaining at the venue for a long time after closing. I was reluctant to leave as well.



Photo 25. 110 Participants performed an Ainu circle dance at the banquet (By courtesy of Antonie Grahamsdaughter)

I am closing this essay with a quote from the letter I received after the excursion to Nibutani from Arnaq Grove, Associate Professor, Nutserinermut Oqaluttaanermullu/Department of Translation & Interpreting, Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland:

I'm very impressed that you and your organizing group succeeded to make a good program and also to mix academic and non-academic participants. I think that's why the atmosphere was so extremely good during all the conference (and our tour to Nibutani)... My personal view is that academic work will miss a lot of value if it is not intertwined with our emotions... So your idea and the way to organize it was exceptionally good and successful... And wonderful to witness how the Sami and the Ainu found each other as a family reunion. And finally yet another

good thing: I don't think I have ever been together with so many all of them very nice, kind, friendly people before. I already missed them after saying goodbye."

## Acknowledgements

The five-day art and academic event passed in the twinkling of an eye. I was wondering for a while whether it was only a dream. In retrospect, a lot of things happened in the preparation process. Whenever facing any challenge, organizing committee members continued encouraging me to move forward. As time passed, steering committee members stepped in and addressed practical matters. It is, therefore, entirely due to all of them, as well as other Ainu women, presenters and volunteers, that the event was managed. My special thanks go to the Embassy of Sweden and the Embassy of Norway in Tokyo, and the city of Sapporo for their nominal support for us, the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo for its financial support for Amareya Theatre, the Office for Contemporary Art Norway for its financial support for Torgeir Vassvik, and Japanstiftelsen and Estrid Ericsons stiftelse for their financial support for Tomas Colbengtson. Although I can't mention everyone by name, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to all the people who were involved in the event. As the end of this

acknowledgement, I would like to give thanks to Leena Huss, Andrew Schirmer and Maile Taulii for editing.

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