

「先住民族サミット」アイヌモシリ2008  
Indigenous Peoples Summit in Ainu Mosir 2008  
Ainumosir otta Hoski wano Okay Utar Ukoytak 2008



## Concerning the Situation of Ainu Women

Over a long time, Ainu women's traditional culture, conventions, and customs have been extinguished by the assimilation policies of the Japanese government. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, under assimilation policy, Ainu women were forced to become "local wives" for Japanese men and so-called mixed-blood children increased from these marriages. Over a long time, due to structural discrimination in Japanese society, Ainu women gradually lost their identities as Ainu. As a result, through the daily repetition of groundless slander and abuse, we Ainu women have grown to reject our own heritage and identity. In marriage, women were abused everyday through violent language hurled by alcoholic spouses. Everyday quarrels in the household had a damaging effect on children's education. Children with Ainu heritage were rejected by Ainu women's spouses, and many marriages have ended in divorce. After 40 years of suffering their husband's violence, many women are psychologically traumatized. Now, resulting from discrimination, there are few Ainu-to-Ainu marriages.

As many of you already know, Ainu people were recognized as Japan's Indigenous people on June 6, 2008. Our work to press the Japanese government to recognize Ainu people's history and legal reality, and to accord us the dignity we deserve as Indigenous peoples, is work we are only just beginning. This means that the work to respect Ainu people's human rights is the most critical work which remains before us. As submitted in the consultation materials, the Survey on Ainu Women's Living Conditions was the first survey to be conducted by Ainu women themselves. The impetus for conducting this survey originated from the need to generate comprehensive and detailed data on the situation of minority women in Japan; including education, employment, discrimination, health, and violence. In 2003 during CEDAW's review of Japan, noting a lack of political will on the part of the Japanese government, the

Committee recommended that the Japanese government conduct a survey of living conditions to collect data on minority women's conditions. The Japanese government added a few items on minority women to meet the Committee's recommendations for its 2006 report. However, the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society (passed in 1999) which includes minority women in its mandate, demonstrates the situation faced by minority women in that there is not a single word addressing minority women's issues in the entire law. This fact in itself is a perfect example of the discrimination and violence we face from the system as minority women.

Yet, we must strengthen our solidarity not only among Ainu women but with citizens across Japan, and also with Indigenous peoples globally, to ensure that women may exercise their rights in politics, economics, socially and culturally. And therefore we must connect as a global network. It's critical that we continue to issue direct appeals for recovery of indigenous political and human rights. To eliminate the widening income disparity in Japanese society, we must train women leaders, encourage women's political participation, educate and train our youth. Concerning demands for the Japanese government, we seek an official apology, and the recognition of Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and the corresponding improvement of Indigenous peoples' political status. Of course we will also demand rights for land and natural resources. Finally, I would like to urge both Special Rapporteurs to work together to establish a standing body to address the issues of minority women around the world.

*Sinno Iyayraykere---!*

Naomi Shimazaki, 15 October 2008