

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE INDIGENOUS TOURISM BASED ON EDUCATION: A COMPARISON BETWEEN JAPAN AND CANADA

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ABSTRACT

Since the United Nations recognised the rights of indigenous peoples in 2007, indigenous tourism has received increased attention. This paper compares the situation of the indigenous peoples of northern Japan with that of the indigenous peoples of Canada and related indigenous tourism promotion. For this study, in Japan, citizens of both sexes and all age groups were asked about their knowledge of and interest in the Ainu and their culture. For both countries, academic sources and online information were used to research the handling of settler history, relevant legislation, and the current promotion of indigenous peoples. The results so far show that, despite some recent progress in the targeted promotion of indigenous tourism, Japan is still at the beginning compared to Canada and can learn a lot from Canada in terms of historical reappraisal of its indigenous people.

Keywords: Ainu, Japan, First Nations, Canada, history, government policies, indigenous tourism.

1 INTRODUCTION

What is Japan doing to promote its indigenous culture and associated tourism? In Hokkaido, 'Upopoy' – a symbolic space for coexistence of ethnic groups – opened to the public in July 2020. This is a museum (both indoor and open-air) and cultural meeting place where visitors can experience Ainu culture up close [1]. The promotion of Ainu indigenous tourism is also included in Japan's tourism policy for fiscal year 2022, which calls for the promotion of Ainu as indigenous people [2].

These efforts have been made only in recent years, and Ainu indigenous tourism is not well-known in Japan. While there are organisations dedicated to the preservation and transmission of Ainu culture, there is no organisation that specialises in indigenous tourism, such as the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) [3]. In this respect, Japan is still lagging behind other countries in the field of indigenous tourism.

While it is still a niche market, indigenous tourism is on the rise worldwide. The culture and lifestyles of native people seem to be gaining acceptance in society as a whole, reflected by international trends such as the 'United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples', which was adopted in 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly [4]. It may therefore be argued that the oppressed indigenous people in America, Oceania, and Asia are gradually receiving their human rights and dignity back.

However, how much do non-indigenous people really understand about indigenous people, and how does this relate to the touristic utilisation of indigenous culture?

Curtin and Bird address this question with regard to indigenous tourism in Australia. Based on the Grounded Theory Approach, they conducted interviews with Aboriginal tourism operators to examine the requirements for a sustainable Aboriginal society. In their findings, furthermore, concerns visitors fully engaging with the indigenous people and the location in question. That is why indigenous tour operators are usually the ones who can convey their own culture more authentically than, for example, tourist guides who are not indigenous themselves [5].



The aim of this paper is to point out that indigenous tourism involves more than a smart business model or marketing campaign. In essence, the idea is that indigenous tourism should be closely related to the values and way of life of the indigenous people themselves. It is certainly fair to say that more knowledge about indigenous people is needed among most of the population, stakeholders, and political decision-makers. Therefore, in the first part, this work deals with knowledge transfer about indigenous people, and in the second part with indigenous tourism itself.

In this paper we want to look at the situation of the Ainu people, who were legally recognised as indigenous people of northern Japan since 2008. Initial data was collected on how to arouse interest in the Ainu among contemporary Japanese people. Based on these findings, this paper compares Ainu related educational activities and indigenous tourism with that of Canada. Canada was chosen because it can be seen as a leader in coming to terms with the history of displacement and the development of indigenous tourism.

It may be suggested that Japan is only at an early stage of indigenous tourism, while Canada is at a more mature stage of development. Initial online surveys of contemporary Japanese people about their interest in the Ainu people and the analysis of the responses lead us to this conclusion. Based on this, the question arises as to what needs to be done in Japan to further develop indigenous Ainu tourism in a sustainable way? The paper at hand cannot answer this question conclusively but would like to provide some initial food for thought.

2 GOAL AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

This paper argues that knowledge transfer about the indigenous peoples of one's own country and demand for indigenous tourism are related. Knowledge transfer takes place at various levels, such as in the interpretation of history, political recognition and promotion of indigenous culture, as well as through teaching materials and various cultural activities and events. A comprehensive analysis in this regard would go beyond the scope of this paper, but we will address the most important developments in both countries – Japan and Canada.

The main research questions are as follows:

- What are the requirements for raising Ainu indigenous tourism in Japan to the development stage?
- What can Japan learn from a country like Canada in this regard?

While this paper mainly collected primary data about Japan, we also looked at available information for Canada.

2.1 Indigenous recognition, knowledge transfer, and tourism in Japan

In the case of Japan, we formulated a hypothesis and tested this hypothesis by examining interest in and attitudes towards Ainu tourism by conducting an online survey (primary data – Table 1).

The hypothesis of this study is that successful promotion of Ainu indigenous tourism is reflected by an increase in interest in and consumption of Ainu culture.

Factors that increase interest in Ainu culture relate to knowledge of Ainu culture, respondents' travel preferences, and participation in events, including cultural experiences at school events. Personal attributes such as gender, age, place of residence, occupation, and educational background were also considered.



Table 1: Data collection about Japan.

Data type	Details	Target
Primary data	Online survey	Japanese population (average)
	Survey subjects	Residents of the Tokyo Metropolitan Area and Hokkaido
	Survey period	March 2023
	Survey method	Questionnaire
	Survey items (content)	Gender and age, residence, marital status, occupation, history of residence in Hokkaido, experience of visiting Upopoy and Ainu-related facilities, intention to purchase Ainu-related products, knowledge of Ainu culture through a quiz, learning about Ainu culture in elementary education
Secondary data	Number of responses	603 (Tokyo Metropolitan Area: 301, Hokkaido: 302)
	- Government reports - The Foundation for Ainu Culture	Ainu policy and corresponding legal changes in Japan
	Websites of cultural organisations and activities	Indigenous culture in museums and information centres, indigenous culture outdoors
	Websites offering indigenous tourism	Tour operators offering tours with the goal of experiencing Ainu culture first-hand

In order to test the hypotheses, a survey on attitudes toward Ainu indigenous tourism was conducted in March 2023 by a web-based survey company. The sample size was 301 for residents in the Tokyo metropolitan area and 302 for residents in Hokkaido, for a totalling 603 participants. Both genders and all age groups were represented in a balanced manner.

Using a five-point assessment similar to the Likert scale, we asked survey participants about their intention to visit Upopoy, the experience of visiting Upopoy and permanent and non-permanent Ainu-related facilities, interest in Ainu culture, and the intention to purchase products related to it. For example, the intention to visit Upopoy was rated as follows: 1 = not at all, 2 = not so much, 3 = undecided, 4 = want to visit, and 5 = definitely want to visit.

The respondents were also asked about the timing of their past Ainu cultural experiences such as eating food, playing musical instruments, and wearing traditional clothes.

Regarding the understanding of Ainu culture, five questions were taken from a quiz provided by the Ainu Culture Foundation, and the number of correct answers was used as a proxy indicator of the level of understanding. Respondents were also asked where they obtained the knowledge used to answer the quiz.

Finally, in order to examine the relationship between attitudes towards Ainu culture and primary education, we asked whether respondents thought that learning about Ainu culture

in elementary and junior high school had led to their current cultural understanding and interest.

In addition, we examined the cornerstones of policy towards a better recognition of the Ainu people and corresponding legal adjustments. We also looked at online sources to see what educational offerings are available and to what extent direct experience of Ainu culture is possible in the shape of indigenous tourism (secondary data – Table 1).

2.2 Indigenous recognition, knowledge transfer, and tourism in Canada

In order to compare the situation of the Ainu people in Japan with that of First Nation people in Canada, we first looked at the cornerstones of Canadian policy towards a better recognition of its indigenous people and corresponding legal adjustments (secondary data – Table 2).

Table 2: Data collection about Canada.

Data type	Details	Target
Secondary data	Government of Canada programs and services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis and related administrations	Policy towards First Nations, Inuit and Métis and corresponding legal changes in Canada
	Websites of cultural organisations and activities	Indigenous culture in museums and information centres, indigenous culture outdoors
	Websites offering indigenous tourism	Information provided by ITAC and tour operators offering tours with the goal to experience indigenous culture first-hand

Next, we looked at online sources to see what educational offerings are available and to what extent direct experience of First Nation people is possible in the shape of indigenous tourism. As noted above, in the case of Canada, only secondary data was researched and compared with corresponding information on Japan.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Results for Japan

First, we report on the results of the surveys (primary data), followed by relevant facts concerning the policy towards the Ainu (secondary data).

3.1.1 Online survey’s attributes

This section illustrates the characteristics of the survey by presenting the results of each of the survey’s attributes. Table 3 shows the results of the basic survey broken down into the residents of Hokkaido and those of the Tokyo metropolitan area.

The decimal points in the table do not always add up to 100%. The gender and age of the targeted respondents was balanced, which enhanced the clarity of the survey results. Most respondents living in Hokkaido have lived in Japan for more than five years. In addition, the respondents and their parents were more likely to be university graduates in the Tokyo area than in Hokkaido.



Table 3: Survey about Ainu, attributes’ definition.

Latent variable	Observed variable	Definition
Personal attributes	Gender	Male = 1, female = 0
	Age	20s = 2, 30s = 3, 40s = 4, 50s = 5, 60s = 6
	Residence	Hokkaido = 1, Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama, Kanagawa = 0
	Occupation	Self-employment, professional, student, housemaker, part-time worker, unemployed, retired = 1, office worker, public servant = 0
	Education	University graduate or above = 1, others = 0
	Parents education	University graduate or above = 1, others = 0
Cultural experience	Museum visit	Have visited an Ainu cultural institution or museum other than Upopoy = 1, no = 0
	Event participation	Have participated in non-permanent events, lectures, or exhibitions related to Ainu culture = 1, no experience = 0
	Elementary school	Experienced Ainu culture at an elementary school event = 1, no experience = 0
	Junior high school	Experienced Ainu culture at a junior high school event = 1, no experience = 0
	High school	Experienced Ainu culture at a high school event = 1, no experience = 0
	Museum cultural experience	Experienced Ainu culture at permanent Ainu cultural facilities and museums, including Upopoy = 1, no experience = 0
	Event experience	Experienced Ainu culture through events and exhibitions that are not permanent installations = 1, no experience = 0
	Colleague experience	Personal experience of Ainu culture through acquaintances, etc. = 1, no experience = 0
Travel frequency	Domestic travel	More than one domestic travel in the last year = 1, 0 times = 0
	International travel	More than one travel abroad = 1, never = 0
Educational effect	School education memories	Remember learning about Ainu culture in elementary and junior high school = 1, don't remember = 0
	School education contribution	I believe that learning about Ainu culture in elementary and junior high school has led to my current understanding of and interest in Ainu culture. (5 = pretty, 4 = fairly, 3 = neutral, 2 = not much, 1 = not at all, 0 = don't know, · don't remember)
—	Quiz	Number of correct answers to quiz on Ainu culture (max = 5, min = 0)



Table 3: Continued.

Latent variable	Observed variable	Definition
Cultural interest	Ainu Cultural interest	Interested in Ainu culture (5 = pretty, 4 = fairly, 3 = neutral, 2 = not much, 1 = not at all)
Consumption Intension	Intention to visit Upopoy	Would like to visit Upopoy (5 = pretty, 4 = fairly, 3 = neutral, 2 = not much, 1 = not at all, · don't know)
	Intention to purchase goods	Would like to purchase folk crafts related to Ainu culture (7 = have already purchased and would purchase again, 6 = no experience in purchasing, but would LOVE to, 5 = I have no experience in purchasing, but would LIKE to, 4 = neutral, 3 = experienced purchase but no longer interested in purchasing, 2 = not much, 1 = not at all)

3.1.2 Factor analysis of psychological distance using covariance structure analysis

Covariance structure analysis (CSA) is a statistical method used to examine the relationships between several variables. IBM SPSS AMOS is software specifically designed for such analyses, and for this paper, version AMOS 29 was used. The analysis to understand the factors of psychological distance from the Ainu people is based on the hypotheses set out in Section 2.1 and uses CSA to examine how each item affects people’s interest in Ainu culture.

This analysis uses a ‘path diagram’ to determine the relationship between variables. Fig. 1 shows the results of the analysis visually. The results of the model estimation show that GFI = 0.888 (goodness of fit index), AGFI = 0.857 (adjusted goodness of fit index), CFI = 0.838 (comparative fit index); and RMSEA = 0.073 (root mean square error of approximation).

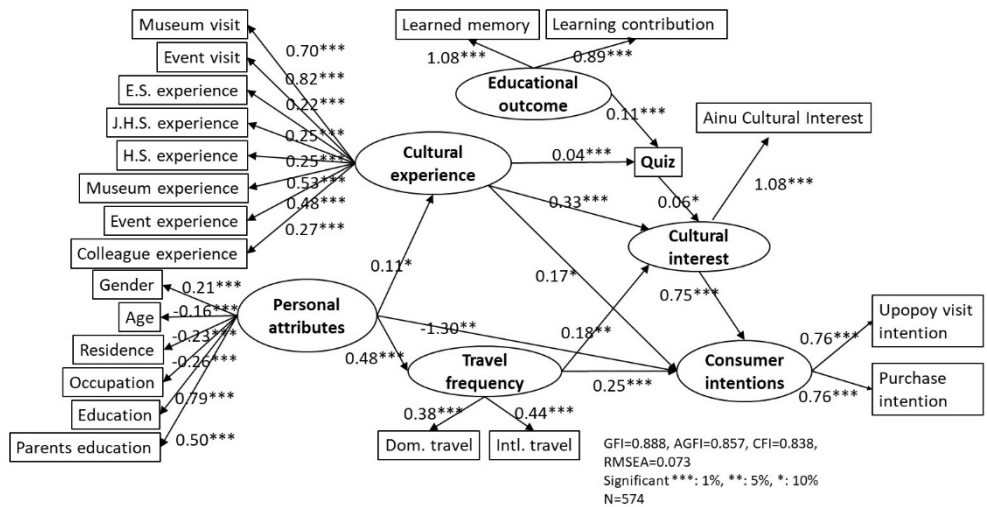


Figure 1: Factor analysis of psychological distance using covariance structure analysis.



The closer the GFI is to 1, the more explanatory power the model has, and a value of 0.9 or higher is considered very good; the closer the AGFI and CFI are to 1, the better the fit to the data, and a value of 0.9 or higher is considered very good. AGFI and CFI are considered to fit the data better if they are close to 1 and very good if they are 0.9 or higher, and RMSEA is considered to fit the data better if it is 0.06 or lower. According to the numbers above in comparison to the target values explained, it can be said that we were able to achieve good results overall in this analysis.

In this estimation, the promotion of Ainu culture is assumed to be formed by two factors: increased interest in culture and increased willingness to consume. The factors that increase interest in Ainu culture are assumed to be 'personal attributes', 'cultural experience', 'cultural knowledge' and 'travel preferences'. The 'intention to consume' is assumed to be 'consumption intention' after visiting Ainu culture-related products and Upopoy. The definitions of the other variables used in the analysis are presented in Table 3. This section summarises the most important results in five statements.

1. Cultural experience is the most significant factor influencing interest in Ainu culture. Among the various cultural experiences, participation in events, participation in permanent exhibitions, and experiences in permanent exhibitions are the most strongly related, in that order.
2. The path from personal attributes to interest in Ainu culture via cultural experiences is also advantageous. However, even if respondents with the most relevant personal attributes have a higher final education level, it is less effective than respondents who experienced Ainu culture at an elementary school event first-hand.
3. Experiencing Ainu culture at an elementary school event and even one trip abroad has about the same effect on the least relevant cultural experience. Although participation in an event is a more probable pathway from cultural experience to cultural knowledge, the effect is greater for respondents who reported remembering their education in elementary and junior high school through cultural knowledge derived from educational outcomes.
4. Although participation in an event is a more probable pathway from cultural experience to cultural knowledge, the effect is greater for respondents who reported remembering their education in elementary and junior high school through cultural knowledge derived from educational outcomes.
5. A higher level of cultural interest has an effect on consumption intention. Notwithstanding the respondent's final educational attainment and personal attributes, the effect is greater when the respondent has attended events and via cultural interest from cultural experiences.

The overall interpretation of the survey results is provided in Section 3.1.5.

3.1.3 Policy towards Ainu people and corresponding legal changes in Japan

Since this paper deals with the role of knowledge transfer, the basic question arises, how can we expect genuine interest in indigenous people and related tourism if these same indigenous people have never really been treated with respect throughout recent history? In most countries, including Japan, it was assumed that the 'savages' had to be civilised and educated according to modern (Western) ideas. In the case of Japan, the colonisation of the Ainu by the Japanese people took place, roughly speaking, in two stages.

The initial phase occurred during the Tokugawa period (1603–1868). Under the leadership of the Matsumae clan, the Japanese or *Wajin* established trading posts along the coasts of Southern Hokkaido (Ezo) and employed the Ainu men in fishing [6]. As we can learn in the



Upopoy museum, trading activities developed from 1821, and as a side effect of increasing encounters with the Ainu, 'smallpox and other infectious diseases broke out among the Ainu. As a result, the population of the Ainu in Hokkaido rapidly decreased' [1]. Traders and first settlers gradually expanded their influence inland, taking control over most of the island from 1856. In other words, the government in Edo (now Tokyo) had already begun to introduce agriculture and push back the traditional Ainu way of life, however, the Ainu were still able to maintain their existence [6].

The second stage took place in the Meiji period (1868–1912) and led to the rapid decline of the Ainu. In 1869, the new Meiji government renamed Ezo as Hokkaido, and officially incorporated the whole territory into the Japanese state. In the same year, the government established the 'Hokkaido Colonization Commission' (*Kaitakushi*) and appointed advisors from the West, particularly the United States, to this commission, to oversee the development and settlement of Hokkaido. In this context, it should be mentioned that the exploitation of the Ainu and the development of the US western frontier, both of which led to the dispossession of indigenous peoples, occurred simultaneously. In short, the Japanese watched what was going on in America and applied it to the colonisation of Hokkaido [6].

In addition, in 1875, the Russian Empire and the Empire of Japan agreed on 'The Treaty of St. Petersburg' (Karafuto-Kuril Exchange Treaty, *Karafuto-Chishima Kōkan Jōyaku*) to resolve territorial disputes in the Far East. The treaty stipulated that Japan would cede all of its claims to Sakhalin Island to Russia. In return, Russia would transfer control of the Kuril Islands to Japan. This political treaty led to the forced resettlement of hundreds of Sakhalin Ainu to Hokkaido and the Kuril Islands. Many Ainu died quickly afterwards.

Also, in 1899, the newly enacted 'Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Law' (*Hokkaidō Kyūdojin Hogo Hō*) did not protect the Ainu, as the name suggests, but merely offered them a kind of social assistance due to unemployment and displaced the Ainu from their traditional lands to the mountainous barren area in the island's centre [7].

The name 'Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Law' reveals that that at the beginning of the 20th century, the Ainu were already regarded as people of the past. According to estimates, by 1913, only 1% of the total population of Hokkaido remained Ainu. The Ainu language was hardly spoken anymore. With the settlement of hundreds of thousands of new settlers, mainly as farmers, forest was cleared, wilderness was transformed into farmland, and schools and roads were built. The Ainu's way of life as hunters and gatherers in nature was thus finally destroyed. The Ainu became a 'vanishing race' destined for extinction, and remnants of the Ainu culture have been consigned to museums [8].

Even in 1986, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone claimed that 'Japan is a mono-ethnic nation', which triggered a lively debate on the Ainu people. Things started to change when Shigeru Kayano became the first Ainu member of the Japanese parliament in 1994. He worked hard to prepare for the 1997 'Ainu Culture Promotion Act' (*Ainubunkashinkōhō*).

Nearly 100 years after the discriminatory 'Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Law' of 1899, which was now abolished, the language and culture of the Ainu are now financially supported by the government of Japan. The law also implies that Japan is not an ethnically homogeneous country. However, the new law does not address issues of land use rights or even compensation [8].

In 2007 the United Nations General Assembly declared the basic rights of indigenous people worldwide, and the Japanese parliament followed suit a year later by officially recognising the Ainu as indigenous people of Japan in 2008 (*Ainu senjūmin-zoku nintei ketsugi*). Finally, in 2014, the cabinet decided to create and open up a 'space that symbolizes ethnic symbiosis', which was realised as 'Upopoy' in 2020.



3.1.4 Ainu indigenous knowledge transfer and tourism activities

Historically, with the colonisation of Hokkaido and the displacement of the Ainu culture, the children of the Ainu were transferred to the Japanese school system. At first this happened in mixed schools with the children of the settlers (*Wajin*), later in special schools according to the law of 1899. Due to space constraints, it is not possible to go into detail, but in summary it can be said that from the Meiji period onwards the Ainu culture was not taught in schools, the Ainu were re-educated to become modern Japanese residents, and their own language was successfully eradicated. Around 100 years ago, in the early 1920s, the prefectural government in Sapporo was apparently satisfied to find that hardly anyone was using the Ainu language anymore [8].

What is the state of knowledge transfer about Ainu culture today? In general, it can be said that most Japanese people lack knowledge about the Ainu people and do not learn details about them in school. Makino, who teaches at the prestigious Chuo University, notes that his otherwise well-educated students know little about the Ainu [8]. On a similar note, 'The Foundation for Ainu Culture' (*Ainu minzoku bunka zaidan*), which was established following the 'Ainu Culture Promotion Act' in 1997, states on its homepage: '[W]e must say that the Japanese peoples' understanding of Ainu history and culture remains at a low level' [9].

At the same time, there is also a glimmer of hope. The Foundation for Ainu Culture is active nationwide and, for instance, hosts seminars in both its Sapporo and Tokyo offices. These seminars, designed for school and social educators, feature advanced content on Ainu history and culture. The goal is to spread knowledge and increase awareness about Ainu heritage [10]. In addition, in recent years, schools in Hokkaido, in particular, have been conducting targeted courses to introduce students to Ainu culture. For example, the Midori Elementary School in Chitose City covers a range of topics related to the cultural heritage of the Ainu. Depending on the grade level, the following topics are covered: learning about Ainu songs, dance, food, clothing and shelter, learning how the Ainu people interact with nature (with a guest lecturer), and a summary of Ainu culture studies to date. The school also conducts visits to Upopoy [11]. Other schools in Hokkaido also conduct similar activities.

When it comes to indigenous tourism, which focuses on authentic experiences and encounters with the Ainu, Japan is still at the beginning. Of course, 'Upopoy', which opened in 2020, also includes a park including ethnic cultural experiences. Apart from 'Upopoy', one of the most famous examples of indigenous tourism is 'Akanko Ainu Kotan', an Ainu inhabited settlement located in Akan-Mashu National Park. In this lakeside village visitors can discover traditional Ainu theatre, music, cuisine, and handicraft-making. They even offer an adventure walk in nature around Lake Akan together with an Ainu guide, called 'Anytime, Ainutime!' [12].

On the other hand, we could hardly find any corresponding offers from travel agencies. For instance, the leading travel agency H.I.S. offers the following on its website: 'Learn about Ainu culture and its traditions in 3 days in Hokkaido' (*Dentō o uketsugu Ainu no bunka wo manabu Hokkaidō 3-kakan*). However, unfortunately below the headline is written in red letters: 'Recruitment is now closed' (*Boshū shūryō shimashita*) [13]. 'Adventure Hokkaido', a smaller travel company specialising in adventure and nature trips in Hokkaido, devotes an interesting blog article to the Ainu and indigenous tourism, but does not offer a trip on the topic [14]. Overall, there does not seem to be enough interest in such offers yet.

3.1.5 Discussion of results for Japan

In the following, we will briefly refer back to the results of our investigation before discussing how the Japanese treat the Ainu and promote indigenous tourism. The survey results show that textbook knowledge or correct answers in the Ainu quiz are not decisive for increased



interest in the Ainu. Rather, direct cultural experiences and encounters left a stronger impression on the respondents and aroused interest in the Ainu. Experiences in non-permanent facilities and permanent museums with event-like characteristics had the most significant impact on people.

In addition, as cultural experiences in elementary, junior high, and high schools also lead to an increasing interest in culture, it is necessary to conduct Ainu cultural experiences in elementary and junior high schools not only in Hokkaido but also throughout Japan.

When we look at how the Ainu and their culture were displaced and destroyed by the mainland Japanese, we must conclude that the Ainu and their way of life were neither understood nor respected. The legal regulations and assimilation policies of that time reflect exactly this way of thinking. As other authors observe, this mindset is mainly based on socio-Darwinism, an ideology that applies Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection to human societies. It suggests that certain human groups or races are naturally superior to others and that societal progress occurs through the survival of the fittest. It goes without saying that such thinking promotes ongoing conflict, imperialism, and war, and must soon be overcome if humanity is to survive in the age of nuclear weapons.

It is encouraging to see that in recent years Japan has gradually recognised the Ainu as indigenous people of Japan and is now promoting the Ainu language and culture. However, to truly do justice to the Ainu and their former way of life and to save what can still be saved, more should be done.

Firstly, the Japanese government should openly admit the mistakes it made in the past in dealing with the Ainu. Only then will real understanding and reconciliation with the Ainu descendants become possible. Secondly, cultural transfer should not only involve folklore, everyday objects, music, and clothing. At least as important is how the Ainu understood nature and lived in harmony with it. Centuries before us, they lived sustainably and wisely with nature. Why don't we take a closer look? Indigenous tourism could be well linked to sustainable tourism here. Hokkaido still has rich natural resources and outstanding national parks that would enable such an approach. In the Akan-Mashu National Park, we already see tourist offers that go in this direction.

Adventure travel and nature-based tourism are on the rise. This could be utilised and cleverly combined with indigenous Ainu tourism. However, such an approach requires understanding the values that the Ainu stood for and reflecting on our own attitudes and values, especially on the part of government officials. By contrast, merely commercialising the cultural remnants of the Ainu culture without understanding the core of their way of life will not lead anywhere.

3.2 Results for Canada

3.2.1 Policy towards First Nation people and corresponding legal changes in Canada

Worldwide, including Canada, the reappraisal of the history of the European settlers and of the forced assimilation of indigenous people into the settlers' educational system remains a socially controversial 'hot topic'. As in the previous section about the Ainu policy in Japan, we can only briefly touch on a few key points.

Basically, during the settlement of North America by Europeans, no consideration was given to the indigenous people, who were considered backward. Canada was no exception when it came to such discriminatory thinking. 'Indigenous peoples were not included in the decision making that led to the 1867 creation of the country that settlers named Canada' [15].



This disrespect for the indigenous people also became apparent in the school system. Little describes what happened at Indian Residential Schools (IRS) between the 1880s and 1990s, taking the Blue Quills Indian Residential School as an example [16]. In essence, such boarding schools were government-sponsored but church-run. The aim was to educate the 'Indians' (First Nation people) and assimilate them into the settlers' modern way of life. In reality, however, abuse was the order of the day. It was all about eradication of indigenous culture and values, imposing Christian faith on the children, as well as physical and psychological discrimination and abuse.

Now, why did the scholar choose this particular school for her analysis? On the one hand, this boarding school stands for typical historical discrimination, but on the other hand it also embodies the transformation to a school that is now managed by indigenous people themselves. This is remarkable, as Blue Quills marked the first instance of an educational institution in Canada being fully controlled by indigenous people, representing a significant achievement in the long-standing quest of First Nations for educational autonomy [16].

In a broader sense, however, this example also serves as an illustration of the change in Canada as a whole, and how the Canadian government has dealt with the (unpleasant) issue of settlement history in recent years, from discrimination and repression to respect and reconciliation with the First Nations. As more and more details of discrimination and misconduct in these schools came to light (and continue to this day, as exemplified by many unexplained deaths and hundreds of grave finds of children on former boarding school grounds), Canada took a leap forward and made an impressive policy change. This led to a major nationwide investigation between 2008 and 2015 by 'The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada' and culminated in the opening of the 'National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation' in 2015 [17].

The Canadian government has also officially apologised to the indigenous peoples for the crimes committed [18]. Although the matter is not yet settled and much remains to be resolved, it can be said that Canada is now on a path of reconciliation with its indigenous peoples, which is a remarkable step forward.

3.2.2 First Nation indigenous knowledge transfer and tourism activities

Recognising the mistakes that have been made in dealing with First Nations for more than 100 years made it possible to deal with the topic more openly in schools and universities. After initial research, we can conclude that Canada is making considerable efforts to teach aboriginal culture comprehensively in Canadian schools.

For instance, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) offers about 400 teaching resources on boarding schools and other closely related topics. These teaching resources are available free of charge and in a variety of formats, including downloadable apps, books, computer games, films, graphic novels, lesson plans and teaching guides. They are organised by grade level to help school teachers quickly find appropriate materials [19].

Another example is the education toolkit 'It's Our Time' made by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Its slogan is as follows: 'A tool to bring together First Nations and non-First Nations people and foster a spirit of cooperation, understanding, and action' [20]. AFN is a national advocacy organisation representing First Nations citizens in Canada, including more than 600 First Nations communities. In this comprehensive toolkit, which is available online free of charge, indigenous people teach the whole story from their own perspective. It includes 21 interactive modules covering topics such as cultural competency, the history of residential schools, treaties, and the First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model. The toolkit is used in schools across Canada, with support from educational bodies such as the



Canadian School Boards Association, the Canadian Education Association, and the Canadian Teachers' Federation [21].

As far as tourism is concerned, Canada has a government-sponsored organisation that takes care of the professional development and marketing of indigenous tourism in Canada, called ITAC, which was mentioned briefly in the introduction [3]. ITAC performs a key position in advertising and marketing indigenous tourism experiences both regionally and internationally. It also offers education and resources to indigenous entrepreneurs and groups to assist them broaden sustainable tourism businesses. This includes workshops, commercial enterprise planning guidance and funding opportunities [3]. In addition to resources on the Internet, we emailed to ITAC and received information and commercial enterprise reviews from the management confirming a dynamic boom of indigenous tourism in Canada since 2015. According to their 2019–2024 'Five-Year Strategic Plan', there were 33,100 jobs in indigenous tourism in 2015, while the target for 2024 is already over 49,000 (despite the slump caused by COVID-19 in 2020–2022) [22].

Particularly impressive are the latest funding initiatives to support Indigenous tourism, such as the 'Micro and Small Business Stream (MSBS)', developed 'to empower indigenous tourism enterprises nationwide'. To be able to apply for financial aid, business must be indigenous majority-owned, operated, or controlled by First Nations, Métis, or Inuit peoples, with a strong connection to the local indigenous community and traditional territory. In short, only companies and tours that offer authentic indigenous culture and experiences are promoted [23].

3.2.3 Discussion of results for Canada

In the 19th century, Canada was just as ruthless in displacing its indigenous peoples and destroying much of their culture as we have seen in the case of Japan. Despite all the differences, the re-education of the indigenous peoples in the boarding schools is similar to the re-education of the Ainu, because in both cases the aim was to eradicate the 'backward' and 'underdeveloped' way of life of the barbarians. All this has been sufficiently described.

Of particular relevance to this paper is how Canada has responded to this historical legacy. As the truth became clearer, particularly about various crimes committed in the residential schools, the Canadian government finally went on the 'offensive' and faced the historic facts as best it could. The establishment of the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada' to investigate these human rights issues and the opening of the 'National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation' in 2015 are impressive steps in the change of policy towards Canada's indigenous peoples.

The same applies to the promotion of indigenous knowledge transfer and authentic indigenous tourism. The Canadian state supports extensive activities to reduce prejudices, promote reconciliation through openness, and empower indigenous business start-ups. It is particularly impressive that the indigenous peoples are involved in these social processes, for example by creating their own teaching materials, such as 'It's Our Time!' by AFN, that present history from their own perspective, and not from the perspective of the white settlers.

4 CONCLUSION

In this paper, we compared indigenous history, culture, and tourism between Japan and Canada. Such a comparison entails some difficulties, because despite certain similarities, there are also differences, such as the diversity of indigenous peoples and the size of the two countries. For example, in the case of Canada, we are dealing with a whole range of indigenous people having their own culture and languages, called First Nations, Inuit and Métis.



Furthermore, the data basis is still inadequate. The survey in Japan enabled us to see that, although there is still too little known about the Ainu, cultural encounters have the power to make people more interested. With regard to Canada, we have yet to collect our own data.

However, one thing already seems clear: the comparison of the two countries shows how differently nations can deal with their own settlement histories. Canada has tackled the issue of reconciliation with its indigenous peoples and, building on this, has promoted authentic indigenous tourism. One is not possible without the other. Initially, we asked what Japan could learn from Canada. Of course, it is not always advisable to just imitate others. Japan can and should find its own way. However, this can only be promising if there is an honest reckoning with its own history and a genuine recognition of the values by which the Ainu have lived. Then there is certainly potential for a more successful indigenous tourism industry in Japan.

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