

International Social Work Research Seminar

**Historical Development of Indigenous Social Work and Evolving Practice Models with a Focus on Social Policy and Indigenous Knowledge-Based Mental Health Approaches in Canada**

**Comments from a Japanese researcher and member of the Buddhist Social Work Research Network**

June 10, 2023 @ Japan Women's University, Mejiro Campus  
(Room 12009, Hyaku-niju-nen-kan) and Zoom Webinar

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What did we  
get to know?

FACTS: 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their parents and communities between 1880 to the 1960s.

FACTS: Indigenous people were dispossessed of their property, culture, and spirituality. They were also deprived of their identity and human rights within the colonized society.

FACTS: The Government of Canada has addressed past mistakes.

# Continued...

- Discrimination, significant poverty, and mental health issues still exist.
- Indigenous people play vital roles and embody initiatives to change Canadian policy.
- It is clear that depriving people of their own language is to violate their identity and dignity.
- Mental health care not rooted in people's culture and life is pointless.
- Policies can eradicate peoples if they deprived them of communicating in their own language.

# As a Japanese social work researcher:

- What about us? How do we view the Ainu people?
- They date back 20,000 years, when humans first started living on Hokkaido Island.
- The linguistic connections with the Ainu can be seen in the *Nihon Shoki* and other old documents from the 7th century.
- The Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act (*Hokkaido Kyu-Dojin Hogo Ho*) was enacted in 1899.
- The Japanese government established *Dojin gakko* for Ainu children and provided four years of education, prioritising Japanese language learning.

Resource: Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy. (July 2009). *Final Report (Provisional Translation)*.retrieved from [https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ainusuishin/pdf/siryou1\\_en.pdf](https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ainusuishin/pdf/siryou1_en.pdf), 2023

# Panel of Experts on Measures against *Utari*, (1997)

- The report submitted by the Panel of Experts on Measures against *Utari* (which was made up of by non-Ainu individuals):

*“ [In the] present, the Ainu people live in the same manner as that of other Japanese constituent people’s... [co-opting both] linguistic and cultural styles present in everyday Japanese society.”* (translated by commenters)

Source: Utari taisaku no arikata ni kansuru yuushikisha kondankai. (April 1997). *Houkokusho*. Retrieved from <http://www.mlit.go.jp/common/000015022.pdf> on June 5, 2023, (Japanese)

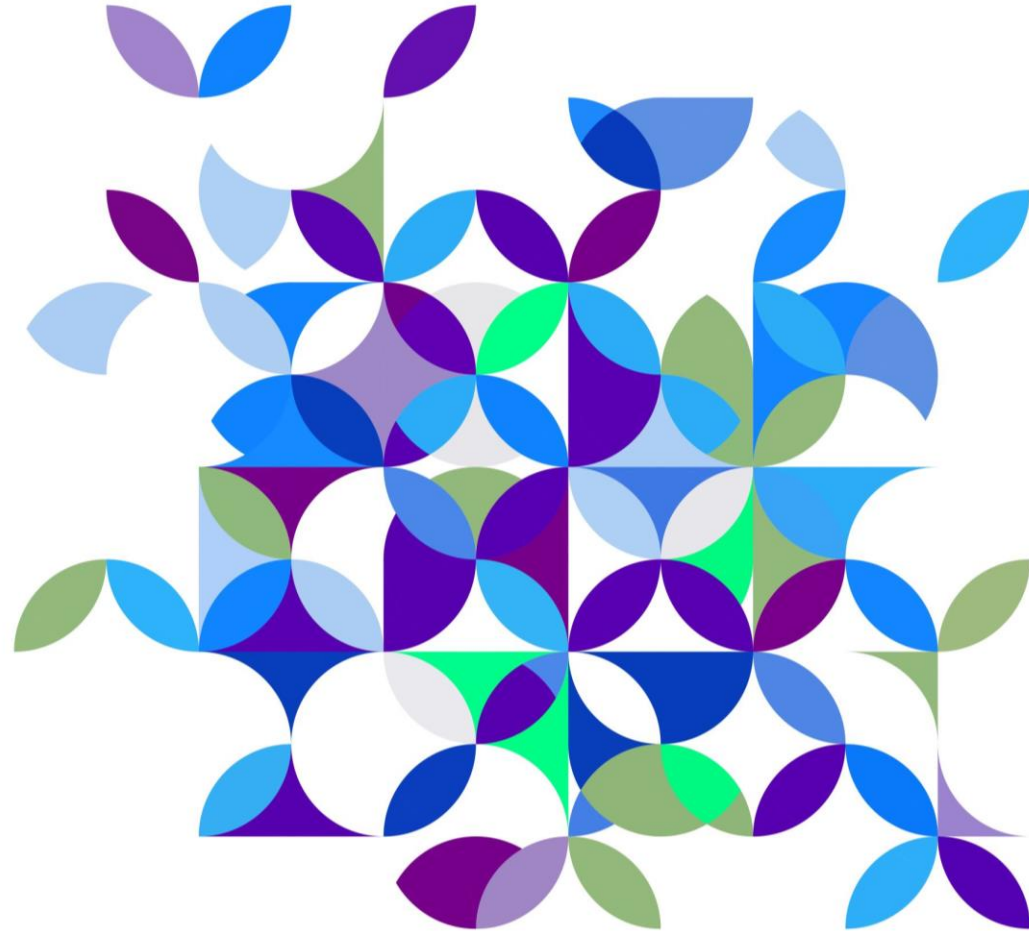
...How do we view these events and reports?

# Hokkaido Ainu Life Survey Report (2017)

- Hokkaido has published eight (8) “Hokkaido Ainu Life Survey Reports” has been published since 1972.
- In a recent report (2017), Ainu people answered that the most critical areas which their local governments should focus on are the "Ainu Language" (56.2%) and "Rites and festivals." (48.6%)
- As mentioned above, depriving people of their own language is to violate their identity and dignity.
- The report does not yet mention the mental health or social work needs present among the Ainu people.

Source: Hokkaido. *Hokkaido Ainu seikatsu jittai chousa houkokusyo.* (2017). Retrieved from [https://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/fs/5/5/7/2/6/5/7/\\_/2%E5%B9%B3%E6%88%9029%E5%B9%B4%20%E5%8C%97%E6%B5%B7%E9%81%93%E3%82%A2%E3%82%A4%E3%83%8C%E7%94%9F%E6%B4%BB%E5%AE%9F%E6%85%8B%E8%AA%BF%E6%9F%BB%E5%A0%B1%E5%91%8A%E6%9B%B8.pdf](https://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/fs/5/5/7/2/6/5/7/_/2%E5%B9%B3%E6%88%9029%E5%B9%B4%20%E5%8C%97%E6%B5%B7%E9%81%93%E3%82%A2%E3%82%A4%E3%83%8C%E7%94%9F%E6%B4%BB%E5%AE%9F%E6%85%8B%E8%AA%BF%E6%9F%BB%E5%A0%B1%E5%91%8A%E6%9B%B8.pdf) on June 5, 2023. (Japanese).

Questions to  
esteemed  
presenters...



To Joyce Timpson sensei,

The history of child welfare authorities' practice of separating children from their families shows that social work can be an oppressive act. This is also evident in Japan's response to the Ainu people.

Social workers must recognize practical considerations to avoid creating and perpetuating oppression in mental health care.

In Canada, do social workers share any hints to avoid social work oppression in the practitioners' on-the-job training?



To Sally Bunting sensei,

- Traditionally, what is the role of Elders in North Spirit Lake?
- I imagine that the Elder would be different from the leaders of modern urban society. For example, do Elders have any function to consult or to provide any social support/social work when people in the community are in trouble leading their lives?
- What are the strengths of a female Elder?

To Lydia Sherman sensei,

- I am very interested in the "Medicine Wheel" and "Sphere" frameworks.
- Are there any differences between the "Sphere" and the mental health clinical staffs' OJT? If any, could you provide any significant point of views?

# To Bunting sensei & Sherman sensei,

- There were many things that I had to consider in relation to the people involved in social work in Japan.
- Can “reconciliation” and “healing” be realized?



As a staff of the international social work research institute (ARIISW) (for your reference):

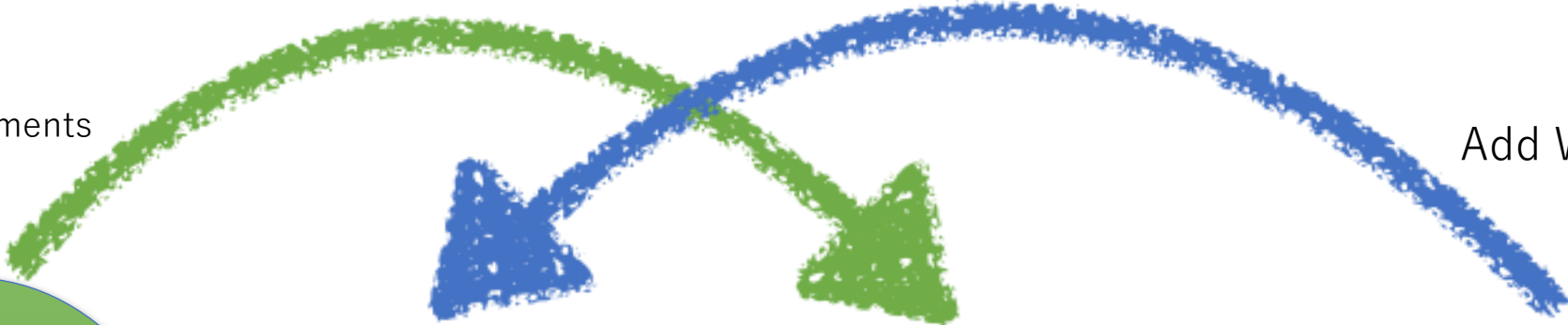
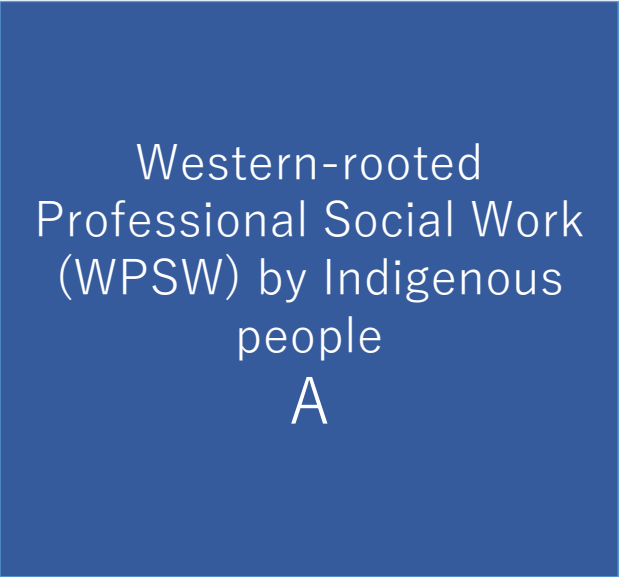
- Few researchers question the Western-rooted social work profession and its globalization.
- Buddhist Social Work Research Network, consisting of Asian countries,\* proposed the working definition of Buddhist Social Work.
- The “Refined ABC Model of Indigenous Social Work” was proposed by ARIISW in 2021.

\*Bhutan, Cambodia, China, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Japan

# The “Refined ABC Model of Indigenous Social Work

Add Indigenous elements

Add WPSW elements



Source: T.Akimoto.(2020).Buddhist Social Work— Its Birth and Achievement to Date—And the contribution to the development of social work (The provision of the minimum information).In Gohori & Someya ed., Social Work Academics Resisting the Globalization of Western-rooted Social Work: Decolonization, Indigenization Spirituality, and Buddhist Social Work.Proceeding Report. ARIISW. p.16

Thank you again for your  
contribution to the International  
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For more information about the ARIISW →

