



NCTA Lesson Plan

Name: Sisi Funk, Valley High School (KY), NCTA Seminar 2020 (Columbus, OH)

Title: Kami/Kamuy: Oppression, ideology, and representation of the Ainu in Japan

Introduction (2-3 sentence summary of lesson): *Golden Kamuy* is a manga and anime by author Satoru Noda. Set just after the Russo-Japanese War, the manga, supported by historical researchers, *Golden Kamuy* covers the Ainu experience and culture through the backdrop of popular media. In this lesson, students will explore the perception of the Ainu culture and identity through multiple lenses as a flipside to the narrative of the Meiji Restoration: while the original supporting question of this case study asks how the Meiji Restoration protected Japan, students will be asked to consider what "Japan" actually meant to the Meiji government, and how ideas of nationalism and nation-state led to the oppression of indigenous culture.

Subject(s)/Grade level(s): 10th grade / Modern World History

Duration of lesson: 2 class periods (90 minutes) / 1 block period

Connection to standards/common core:

Kentucky State Standards for Inquiry

HS.WH.CE.6 Examine the causes and effects of imperialism from multiple perspectives between 1750-1900.

HS.(C, E, G, UH, WH).I.CC.1 Engage in meaningful discussions/democratic discourse and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling/supporting questions in world history.

HS.C.PR.3 Evaluate the intended and unintended consequences of public policies locally, nationally, and internationally.

HS.(C, E, G, UH, WH).I.CC.2 Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to compelling/supporting questions in world history.



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HS.(C, E, G, UH, WH).I.UE.3 Use appropriate evidence to construct and revise claims and counterclaims relevant to compelling/supporting questions in world history.

Objective: The student will be able to...

- Identify indigenous cultures of Japan
- Explain the impact of imperialism on indigenous cultures
- Analyze primary and secondary sources based on perspective of author and audience using the HAPP source strategy
- Develop a claim to the compelling question "How do ideas lead to oppression?" using evidence from primary and secondary sources on the case study of the Ainu in Japan.

Essential Questions

Compelling/Unit Question: How do ideas lead to oppression? (1800-1914)

How did indigenous people protect their culture against imperialism?

How did the concepts of *kokutai* and *nihonjinron* affect the indigenous people of Japan?

In what ways did imperialism impact Japan domestically and internationally?

Materials Needed:

- Copy of resources/primary sources
- Projector and speaker or access to video clip via QR code on student mobile devices/ipad/etc
- Lecture materials (slideshow, projector, etc.)

Pre-Assessment of Prior Knowledge:

Students will begin the class by reflecting on the advancements made by the start of the Meiji Government in Japan as reviewed in class the day before. Students will be asked to discuss what the Meiji Restoration was, and the positive effects that it had on Japan in the context of imperialism in small groups. Students will also be asked to define "nationalism" and "nation", a review from the beginning of the imperialism unit.

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Lesson Activities/Instructional Strategies (5-7 steps):

1. In this inquiry based lesson, the teacher will begin with a brief introductory lecture on Japanese nationalism, sharing the definition of both *kokutai* and *nihonjinron*, and briefly explaining the use of religion (Shintoism specifically) as an identifier for Japanese nationality.
2. As a class, the teacher will lead the students into an analysis of the Meiji Constitution excerpts. Students will note the rights of Japanese subjects during this time period, and then read the short excerpt on the Hokkaido Former Natives Protection Act, and hold a group discussion on how the Japanese nationalist ideals of unity may have caused problems for the Ainu peoples.
3. Students will then be asked to consider the unit question, "Do ideas lead to oppression?" in the context of the case study of Meiji-era Japan. Divide the students into small groups and have them study the paired sources of *Hairy Ainus* from the World's Fair and the clip from *Golden Kamuy*.
 - a. Ask students to compare the depiction of the Ainu cultures in each source using a chart paper venn diagram.
 - b. Ask students to complete a HAPP (Historical Context, Audience, Point of View, Purpose) analysis on the *Hairy Ainus* article.
 - c. Provide background information (including author and historical researchers attached to the series) to the *Golden Kamuy* clip, and have students perform a HAPP analysis on the clip with that additional information.
4. Bring the class back together to discuss findings and bring the lesson back to the compelling question. The teacher will be sure to make the connection with students that identity formation is a type of "idea", and continue along the theme of "otherness" that has been established throughout the unit over various case studies.
5. Students will use the inquiry methodology to develop an argument answering the compelling question "*do ideas lead to oppression?*" focusing on Meiji Japan and the Ainu peoples. Students can develop this inquiry answer through either verbal or written manners, corroborating evidence and citing sources to back up their claims.

Resources:

*See section labeled "SOURCES" for excerpts.

Primary Sources

Source A: Clip: ["Ainu Girl for a New Era" - Crunchyroll Media, uploaded on Youtube](#)

*Clip is subtitled and may need to be reviewed for struggling readers.

Source B: Excerpts from: "The Meiji Constitution", adapted by Asia for Educators

[ORIGINAL SOURCE](#) |



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Source C + D: Excerpts from: "[Hairy Ainus: Aborigines of Japan at St. Louis Exposition](#)", [Los Angeles Times, 5 June 1904](#) and [\[Ainu aborigines of Japan in front of home. World's Fair, St. Louis.\]](#) , 1905

Image via Library of Congress

[ORIGINAL SOURCE](#) | Excerpted text attached in section labeled "Sources"

Source E: Selections from: [Kokutai No Hongi \(Fundamentals of Our National Polity\), 1937, provided by Asia for Educators.](#)

Excerpted text attached in section labeled "Sources"

Sources for Direct Instruction

Excerpt: "The Meiji Restoration and Modernization" - Asia for Educators

[ORIGINAL ARTICLE](#) |

Excerpted text attached in section labeled "Sources"

Excerpted: [The Meiji Showa Collection: Hokkaido Former Natives Protection Act; summary](#)

Excerpted text attached in section labeled "Sources"

Closing/Reflection Activity:

Students will be considering an indigenous culture unknown to them in a number of ways: many of my students do see Asia as a somewhat homogenous place. This activity helps them see not only the history of indigenous peoples of Japan, but also helps them consider the importance of perception. Students will be asked how they think the Japanese of the Meiji Era saw themselves; how the Japanese of the Meiji Era saw the Ainu peoples; how the Americans attending the World's Fair in St. Louis saw the Ainu peoples; how the fictional character of Asirpa and Sugimoto saw the Ainu; and how the authors and consultants of Golden Kamuy depicted the Ainu.

Students will be asked to reflect on each of these lenses and write a brief response to them.

Post-Assessment:

The students will develop a claim responding to the inquiry using the Ainu peoples case study and the sources provided. The inquiry will be graded based on the inquiry standards noted above.

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Extension Activities/Extending the Lesson/Cross-Curricular Connections (2-3 ideas):

- Have students study the Ainu laws of 2008 and 2019 respectively, and discuss the perception of Ainu in modern Japanese society
- Compare the Ainu experience to the experience of any of the other case studies of imperialism within the unit, such as the experience of indigenous fruit workers in Central and South America
- Have students interested in *Golden Kamuy* research some of the cultural icons of the series, including the traditional Ainu bear sacrifices, or the many indigenous dishes built into the series and tie them into their overall study of imperialism and indigenous cultural resistance.
- English: Connect students with poetry written by Genzo Sarashina, a poet, anarchist, and outspoken critic of Japanese policies towards Ainu, who wrote the collection "[Kotan Chronicles](#)", poetry about the day to day life of the Ainu in Hokkaido.

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Source B: Excerpts from: "The Meiji Constitution", adapted by Asia for Educators

ARTICLE XXII. Japanese subjects shall have the liberty of abode and of changing the same within the limits of law.

ARTICLE XXIII. No Japanese subject shall be arrested, detained, tried or punished, unless according to law.

ARTICLE XXIV. No Japanese subject shall be deprived of his right of being tried by the judges determined by law.

ARTICLE XXV. Except in the cases provided for in the law, the house of no Japanese subject shall be entered or searched without his consent.

ARTICLE XXVI. Except in the cases mentioned in the law, the secrecy of the letters of every Japanese subject shall remain inviolate.

ARTICLE XXVII. The right of property of every Japanese subject shall remain inviolate. Measures necessary to be taken for the public benefit shall be provided for by law.

ARTICLE XXVIII. Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.

ARTICLE XXIX. Japanese subjects shall, within the limits of law, enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations.

Source C: [Hairy Ainus: Aborigines of Japan at St. Louis Exposition](#)", *Los Angeles Times*, 5 June 1904

"GROUPS of people belonging to three races never before seen in civilized countries are attracting much attention at the world's fair. These are the hairy Ainus of Japan, the giant Indians of Patagonia and the head-hunt-ing Igorottes of the Philippine Islands [...]

Probably the Ainus are the most interesting of the three. There are nine specimens of this race, at the fair, men, women and children being included. The Ainus are supposed to be the aboriginal people of Japan, though their antecedents are so far lost in the mists of history that ethnologists are not able to settle that question. At present they inhabit the island of Hokkaido, the most northerly of the Japanese islands. Some of them live even farther north in Siberia. Ages ago the Japanese are believed to have overrun and subdued these people, driving them from the Islands which have become the seat of the Japanese empire.

It is known that the Ainus used to be a numerous people. Now only about 36,000 of them survive and these are rapidly diminishing in numbers. Physically the Ainu is

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heavier and stronger than his Japanese conqueror, but intellectually he is far inferior. The Japanese have become noted as perhaps the most energetic and progressive people in the world, eager to take advantage of new ideas and inventions. The Ainu cares nothing for the world outside his rude hut of brush and earth. It is believed by scientists that the Ainu of today are no farther advanced toward civilization than were their ancestors thousands of years ago. They worship the same Idols, live in shacks of the same rude construction and are utterly without ambition."

Source E: Selections from: [*Kokutai No Hongi \(Fundamentals of Our National Polity\)*, 1937, provided by Asia for Educators.](#)

"That is, it can be said that in both the Occident (West) and our country, the deadlock of individualism has led alike to a season of ideological and social confusion and crisis... This means that the present conflict in our people's ideas, the unrest of their modes of life, the confused state of their civilization, can be put right only by a thorough investigation by us of the intrinsic nature of Occidental ideologies and by an understanding of the true meaning of our national polity (*kokutai*). Then, too, this should be done for the sake not only of our nation, but also of the entire human race, which is struggling to find a way out of the deadlock with which individualism is faced."

Sources for Lecture/Direct Instruction:

[The Meiji Showa Collection: Hokkaido Former Natives Protection Act: summary](#)

On March 2, 1899 (Meiji 32), the Hokkaido Former Natives Protection Act was promulgated (北海道旧土人保護法公布) by the Meiji Government.

The act labeled the Ainu as former aborigines, forcing them to become Japanese citizens. This effectively denied the Ainu their existence as an indigenous group. Their land was taken by the Japanese government, and they lost their right to fish and hunt, their main activities for livelihood and cultural identity. It also became forbidden to use the Ainu language.

"The Meiji Restoration and Modernization" - Asia for Educators

Ideology

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In an effort to unite the Japanese nation in response to the Western challenge, the Meiji leaders created a civic ideology centered around the emperor. Although the emperor wielded no political power, he had long been viewed as a symbol of Japanese culture and historical continuity. He was the head of the Shintô religion, Japan's native religion. Among other beliefs, Shintô holds that the emperor is descended from the sun goddess and the gods who created Japan and therefore is semidivine. Westerners of that time knew him primarily as a ceremonial figure. The Meiji reformers brought the emperor and Shintô to national prominence, replacing Buddhism as the national religion, for political and ideological reasons. By associating Shintô with the imperial line, which reached back into legendary times, Japan had not only the oldest ruling house in the world, but a powerful symbol of age-old national unity.

The people seldom saw the emperor, yet they were to carry out his orders without question, in honor to him and to the unity of the Japanese people, which he represented. In fact, the emperor did not rule. It was his "advisers," the small group of men who exercised political control, that devised and carried out the reform program in the name of the emperor.