Part III: Postcolonial Struggles

To this day, groups formerly oppressed by Japanese imperialism do not enjoy total equality, and the articles in Part III illustrate how these present-day controversies both stem from the Japanese colonial past and are intertwined with contemporary geo-political concerns in East Asia. In his study of anti-Japanese activism by certain Taiwanese Aborigines, Scott Simon examines how ethnicity is used to mobilize nationalist movements in Taiwan and explores the political consequences reaching beyond the legacies of Japanese colonialism. Next, Kawabata and Kitazawa discuss the legacy of the Battle of Okinawa and the controversy over how it should be portrayed in textbooks within the context of the longer history of Okinawa's colonization. Kawabata and Kitazawa suggest these present-day controversies show the persistence of discriminatory treatment that harkens back to the colonial period. In sharp contrast to these recent controversies, William Underwood's article about the repatriation of the bones of conscripted Korean soldiers to what are now South and North Korea illustrates a positive step toward reconciliation by the Japanese government. Lastly, ann-elise lewallen tracks progress in Japanese official recognition of the Ainu, particularly formal acknowledgement that they are an indigenous group in 2008. This development, together with Ainu participation in the Indigenous Peoples Summit (IPS), is a historic moment in the Ainu struggle to redress injustices of the colonial period by asserting their agency on a platform based upon their indigeneity. She argues that the IPS is part of a larger global phenomenon across the world in which indigenous groups are claiming the authority to speak out about both indigenous rights and issues that concern humanity in general, like environmental conservation.

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