The Ainu and Being Indigenous: Recent Policy Developments in Japan

The Japanese government recognized the Ainu people as “indigenous people” in 2008, after more than a century of direct colonization that included cultural destruction, harsh assimilation policies, the seizure of Ainu lands, and severe discrimination. This recognition came about only after decades of organizing and protesting by Ainu activists, litigation and a major judicial decision, with the support of local and international human rights scholars and advocates, and the adoption of the 2007 U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

**Professor Teruki Tsunemoto** has been the Director of the Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies at Hokkaido University, Sapporo, since 2007. He has been a Constitutional Law Professor at Hokkaido University since 1993 and served as Dean of the Law School from 2008-2010. He is a Board Member of the Japan International Human Rights Law Association and a Member of the National Council for Promotion of Ainu Policy where he chairs the Working Committee for Policy Promotion. He graduated with a Doctor of Laws degree from Hokkaido University School of Law in 1983 and has been a visiting scholar at Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University, and School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

**Facilitator, Professor Mark Levin** joined the William S. Richardson School of Law faculty in January 1997 from the Law Department of Hokkaido University in Sapporo, Japan. Professor Levin’s scholarly publications have considered diverse topics including the legal circumstances of race and indigenous peoples in Japan. He was the translator of the 1997 Nibutani Dam Decision concerning the rights of Ainu people in Japan. His current research is centered around a multi-year project focusing on judicial administration and procedural justice in Japan.

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Maoli Thursday is a lunchtime forum & speaker series held every first Thursday of the month. Refreshments will be served. RSVP by Tuesday, March 4 at www2.hawaii.edu/~kahuliao