

Part II: Experiences of the Colonized

The articles in Part II explore life in the Japanese empire for colonized people. They faced various assimilation policies, endured discriminatory treatment, and reacted with a wide range of responses. For example, Chiri Yukie, a young Ainu woman featured in Hirano's article, helped Japanese linguist Kindaichi Kyōsuke translate volumes of Ainu oral stories and poems, proudly asserting her Ainu ethnicity. Her ethnic pride was apparent in the way in which she promoted the transcription of the Ainu language into the Roman alphabet, and in her claim that some Ainu expressions could not be translated into any language. Hirano refrains, however, from upholding Chiri's actions as an example of resistance, advocating for a more nuanced and ambivalent understanding of the complex negotiations involved between those who were dominant (the Japanese) and those who were dominated (the Ainu).

In juxtaposition, Park focuses on Korean literature written during the Japanese colonial period by individuals who hoped to "become Japanese," as some Koreans actively self-assimilated. Park's conclusions are grounded in the analysis of discourse, that is, through analyzing the set of meanings through which a group of people communicate, often via written text and spoken word. In contrast to Park, Tomiyama examines actual scenes of imperialism; he explores the process by which colonial subjects in Okinawa became Japanese through lifestyle reform. Lastly, Rabson discusses Okinawans living on the mainland of Japan and the variety of their responses to assimilation policies and discrimination. All these articles explore ways that Japanese colonial subjects defined being "Japanese" in their daily lives and what was at stake for those who chose not to assimilate. No matter the choice, they faced unequal treatment institutionalized by law and social practices.