

# Japan

## *Ethnicity in Japan*

### *Group selection*

Politically relevant ethnic groups in Japan include the **Japanese, Ainu, Burakumin, Okinawans and Koreans.**

### *Power relations*

#### *1946-51*

Japan is occupied by the US and run by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) (the choice of 'senior part' reflects the occupation arrangement). Koreans and Taiwanese/Chinese have access to executive power blocked due to non-Japanese citizen status. Ainu and Burakumin are discriminated against in social realms, but are not actively pursuing executive power. Okinawa is controlled by the US.

#### *1952-1971*

US occupation ends, but there is little change in the configuration of ethnic group access to executive power.

#### *1972-1983*

In 1972, Okinawa becomes part of Japan again. During this period there is a rise in ethnicity-based political organizations of Ainu, Koreans, and Burakumin that make claims mainly for social and economic rights (and some local voting rights) rather than control of the executive.

#### *1984-2009*

In 1984, the Hokkaido Utari Association demands recognition of Ainu claims to Hokkaido. Increase in labor migration from China as well as Korea. However, in the case of Koreans, naturalization keeps the total population fairly constant. Overall numbers of Chinese rise. By this time, most Koreans and Chinese residents are second or third-generation, and therefore were not stripped of national voting rights and access to executive power (as were the former colonial subjects).

Former colonial subjects, such as the Koreans and the Taiwanese, are either naturalized Japanese citizens or hold "special permanent

resident" status (Tokubetsu Eijyu Sha). According to statistics from Japan's national Immigration Bureau, the special permanent residents consist of 0.3 % of total national population (2007). The official legal interpretation of the Japanese national government until 2009 on the Nationality Act, particularly the status of the special permanent residents, is that special permanent residents do not hold voting rights or have the right to serve in public administration. The term "special" is a marker to identify their difference from other permanent residents as subjects of former colonies. However, this discursive marker did not provide them with any legally equal status as Japanese citizens. Once the special permanent residents decide to be naturalized, they become legally invisible and are absorbed into the dominant "Japanese" category. The Okinawans stayed dominant in the Okinawa prefecture and held de facto regional autonomy in the prefecture. On June 6, 2008, the national Diet passed a bill to demand the national administrative branch officially recognize the Ainu's indigenous status in Hokkaido and in northern Japan. The Burakumin are considered in Japan as Japanese. Burakumin-related discrimination is seen primarily as class/occupation based discrimination (those who engaged in "blood" relation occupations such as butchers, shoe makers (leather), armor makers, etc.) than as a racial issue.

#### *2010-2012*

There has been a decline in the total population of the Japanese and the Korean nationals with the "special permanent resident" status (Tokubetsu Eijyu Sha). There has not been any official population statistics on Burakumin since 1993 and on Ainu since 2006.

#### *2013-2017:*

The situation of ethnic Koreans has improved in this period, but those who decide not to naturalize still face difficulties in terms of civil and political rights (<sup>2298</sup>), thus they remain powerless.

<sup>2298</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

The Ainu, having been officially recognized by the Japanese government as indigenous peoples in 2008, have in a recent xenophobic incidence been supported by the Japanese government. An official Ainu party has been established in 2012 with the aim of electing Ainu individuals to the Diet (<sup>2299</sup>), thus the Ainu are coded as powerless starting in 2013. Okinawans continue not to be recognized by the Japanese government as indigenous peoples, the government does not officially acknowledge their specific culture and traditional practices. The government has made efforts to preserve Okinawan history, thus this ethnic minority is still coded as powerless. The reason for coding a new period in 2016 is the 2015 National Census of Japan. The Japanese census records nationality rather than ethnicity, and thus population sizes of its indigenous peoples such as the Ainu, Okinawans, and Burakumin are estimates.

<sup>2299</sup> [Global Security, 2013]

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## *Political status of ethnic groups in Japan*

*From 1952 until 1958*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Japanese	0.973	MONOPOLY
Burakumin	0.008	IRRELEVANT
Okinawans	0.008	IRRELEVANT
Koreans	0.006	DISCRIMINATED
Ainu	$2.0 \times 10^{-4}$	IRRELEVANT

*From 1959 until 1971*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Japanese	0.973	MONOPOLY
Burakumin	0.008	IRRELEVANT
Okinawans	0.008	IRRELEVANT
Koreans	0.006	POWERLESS
Ainu	$2.0 \times 10^{-4}$	IRRELEVANT

*From 1972 until 1983*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Japanese	0.973	MONOPOLY
Burakumin	0.008	POWERLESS
Okinawans	0.008	POWERLESS
Koreans	0.006	POWERLESS
Ainu	$2.0 \times 10^{-4}$	IRRELEVANT

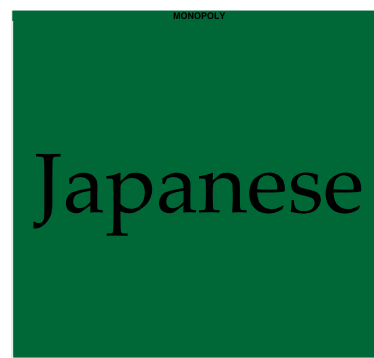


Figure 464: Political status of ethnic groups in Japan during 1952-1958.

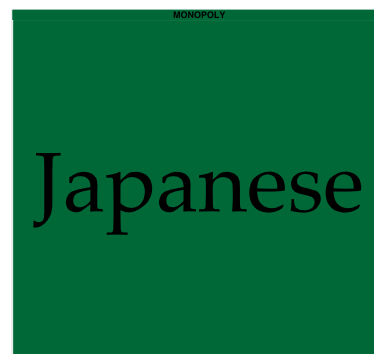


Figure 465: Political status of ethnic groups in Japan during 1959-1971.

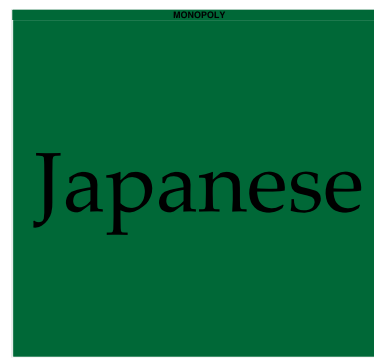


Figure 466: Political status of ethnic groups in Japan during 1972-1983.

*From 1984 until 1996*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Japanese	0.973	MONOPOLY
Okinawans	0.008	POWERLESS
Burakumin	0.008	IRRELEVANT
Koreans	0.006	POWERLESS
Ainu	$2.0 \times 10^{-4}$	DISCRIMINATED

*From 1997 until 2009*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Japanese	0.9798	MONOPOLY
Okinawans	0.01	POWERLESS
Burakumin	0.007	IRRELEVANT
Koreans	0.003	POWERLESS
Ainu	$2.0 \times 10^{-4}$	IRRELEVANT

*From 2010 until 2012*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Japanese	0.9808	MONOPOLY
Okinawans	0.01	POWERLESS
Burakumin	0.007	IRRELEVANT
Koreans	0.002	POWERLESS
Ainu	$2.0 \times 10^{-4}$	IRRELEVANT

*From 2013 until 2015*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Japanese	0.9808	MONOPOLY
Okinawans	0.01	POWERLESS
Burakumin	0.007	IRRELEVANT
Koreans	0.002	POWERLESS
Ainu	$2.0 \times 10^{-4}$	POWERLESS

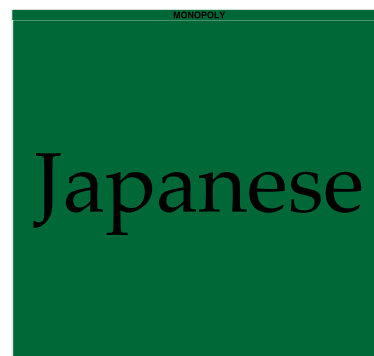


Figure 467: Political status of ethnic groups in Japan during 1984-1996.

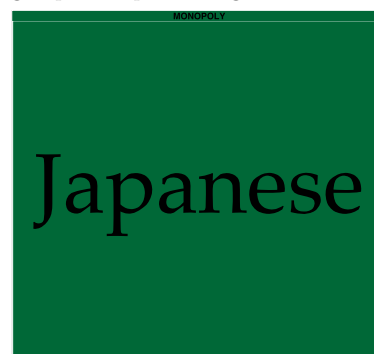


Figure 468: Political status of ethnic groups in Japan during 1997-2009.

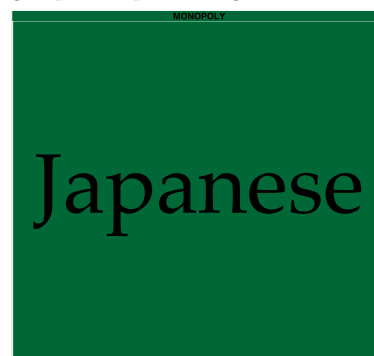


Figure 469: Political status of ethnic groups in Japan during 2010-2012.

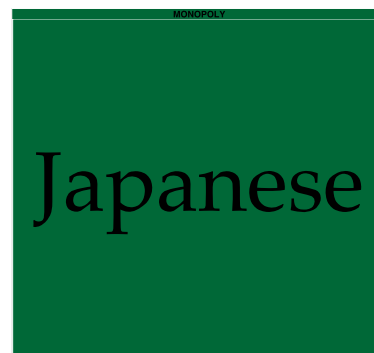


Figure 470: Political status of ethnic groups in Japan during 2013-2015.

*From 2016 until 2017*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Japanese	0.979	MONOPOLY
Okinawans	0.01	POWERLESS
Burakumin	0.007	IRRELEVANT
Koreans	0.002	POWERLESS
Ainu	$2.0 \times 10^{-4}$	POWERLESS

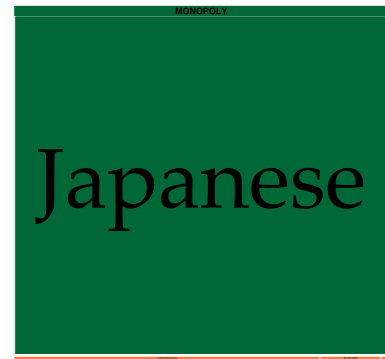


Figure 471: Political status of ethnic groups in Japan during 2016-2017.

## *Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Japan*

*From 1952 until 1971*



Figure 472: Map of ethnic groups in Japan during 1952-1971.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■ Japanese	369 997	Statewide
Koreans		Urban

Table 159: List of ethnic groups in Japan during 1952-1971.

*From 1972 until 1983*





Figure 473: Map of ethnic groups in Japan during 1972-1983.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Japanese	369997	Statewide
Okinawans	913	Regionally based
Koreans		Urban
Burakumin		Dispersed

Table 160: List of ethnic groups in Japan during 1972-1983.

*From 1984 until 1996*



Figure 474: Map of ethnic groups in Japan during 1984-1996.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Japanese	369 997	Statewide
Ainu	1 582	Regionally based
Okinawans	913	Regionally based
Koreans		Urban

Table 161: List of ethnic groups in Japan during 1984-1996.

*From 1997 until 2012*



Figure 475: Map of ethnic groups in Japan during 1997-2012.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Japanese	369 997	Statewide
Okinawans	913	Regionally based
Koreans		Urban

Table 162: List of ethnic groups in Japan during 1997-2012.

*From 2013 until 2017*



Figure 476: Map of ethnic groups in Japan during 2013-2017.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Japanese	369997	Statewide
Ainu	1582	Regionally based
Okinawans	913	Regionally based
Koreans		Urban

Table 163: List of ethnic groups in Japan during 2013-2017.