

CLOSING REMARKS

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Thank you everybody here. I would like to tell you what I have learned from this great symposium. There are three things I would like to say. One is about the complexity of the concept of indigenusness or indigeneity. When we think of indigeneity in Asian and African context, its phenomena are somehow very different from the experiences in Australia or in America, where there is a very distinct group of indigenous people as a minority against the modern colonisers mainly from Europe as the majority.

In the case of Asia and Africa, the situation is quite different. For example, in India where I do my research, there have been waves of people who came to the Subcontinent: Austroasiatic people, Dravidian people, then so-called Indo-Aryans. The British came much later but many have left. Among these various groups, some became landholders, some became kings, some became Dalits, some came to be classified as Adivasis or the indigenous inhabitants. So we cannot really clearly distinguish between the first settlers and the colonizers here. There have been waves of various groups of people who arrived in India and then there developed differences in their positionalities. The social classes that has developed do not necessarily correspond to where you were originally from,

So, then, who are the indigenous people who have the special claim to the land? It's extremely difficult to say in the case of India. So I was wondering about the case of India. I was thinking a lot about the Dalits, who are the discriminated people. The so-called indigenous people have more cultural resources, so to speak, to insist on their distinct existence and special rights. They may even be said to be more privileged in certain ways than Dalit because they have their own culture, their own languages. But the so-called Dalits and Burakumin in Japan are those people who came to accept the dominant culture and came to be placed in the subordinate positions in society. Compared to the so-called indigenous people, they don't have their distinct culture or language. But I think our aim would be to consider all kinds of discrimination against the subordinated: These include not only the indigenous people but also the Dalit and Burakumin as well as those who are discriminated against because of their gender and sexuality, etc. This made me think how to think of all these discriminations together. There are different forms of discrimination, and while we think of one, perhaps we should also be thinking of other forms of discrimination together.

Second, the topic of this symposium was about the relationship between indigenous knowledge and modern knowledge. It's extremely an interesting topic. In the second session especially, we learnt how there are different experiments and academic contents to connect the

two. I think in the first session we talked about there are two aspects of politics involved here. One is more related to the modern institution of enlightenment, which is to do with people's rights and about knowing things scientifically. This has on the one hand the positive aspect of granting people with their due rights, giving them appropriate place in modern institutions, but on the other hand it has the effect of always putting the so-called western advanced countries ahead of those who have to learn and acquire knowledge and rights.

So I feel what we have learned today is that there is another aspect to indigenous knowledge that modern knowledge tends to forget. I think the songs and dances remind us that there is something beyond just reason and rights in our human relationship. This is about our relationship with our hearts and souls that really touches us, that really transforms our relationships. So I think our logic has to be two sided. On the one hand, we must insist on equality of human rights. On the other hand, I think there has to be deep politics, deep cultural understanding to connect ourselves as singular beings – in communication with heart and soul that really will change and deepen the relationships between us, not just giving rights to individuals. I think this politics of relationships have become extremely important today.

Thirdly, I would like to thank Tomonaga-san and all the participants from all the places because it has really been a transformative experience for me. I worked in Kyoto University and now in the University of Tokyo University, which are both ex-imperial university and are about accumulating knowledge, you know, which is a kind of detachment from the reality of our everyday life which consist of human relationships. But, in today's conference, I felt that our knowledge really must be re-contextualized in the reality of our life which consist of many different people living in this world and I really felt that we need to develop such language and ways of communication to transform ourselves together to learn to live together. It has been really a learning experience for me, very touching experience for me and I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you.

Thank you so much.