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現在を知る

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愛努民族的現在

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오늘날의 아이누 민족

Айны в современном обществе

現在のアイヌ民族の人口は数万人ともそれ以上ともいわれています。多くは北海道に住んでいますが、就職や進学、結婚などをきっかけに、東京や大阪など各地にくらしの場を移した人たちもたくさんいます。北海道でも、ここ札幌市をふくむ各地にくらしています。現代では、アイヌの人たちが住む村のようなものがあるわけではありません。現在のアイヌ民族は日本のほかのひとと同じ地域のなかで、ともにくらしているのです。

While the current Ainu population is not precisely known, it is thought to number in the tens of thousands. Most reside in Hokkaido, but much of the Ainu population has migrated to Tokyo, Osaka, and other regions throughout Japan in pursuit of careers, education or marriage. Hokkaido's Ainu population live in various regions throughout the island, including Sapporo City. However, this does not mean that there are communities populated entirely by Ainu people. In contemporary society, the Ainu live side-by-side with the other residents of Japan.

Morning at Sapporo Station

This picture was taken at Sapporo Station during one morning in 2014. People are headed to work or school. Ainu living in Sapporo start their day out in a similar fashion, commuting to work or school, or heading out shopping. Some people unfamiliar with the Ainu may have the preconception that the Ainu live in separate, isolated communities. In fact, the modern-day Ainu people are part of the same communities as the other residents of Japan.

The Ainu in Contemporary Society

Today, most of the Ainu population of several tens of thousands, perhaps more, live in Sapporo and other communities across Hokkaido. A large number of Ainu have also moved away from Hokkaido to live in other cities such as Tokyo or Osaka for school, work, or marriage.

Generally, the lifestyle aspects such as clothing, diet, dwelling, and occupation of the modern Ainu do not significantly differ from most other residents of Japan. Each Ainu person has a unique perspective of the traditional culture and history which composes his or her heritage. Some eagerly pass on traditions, so that the Ainu culture can be cherished in the future. Many are not so conscious of their heritage in their daily lives, but consider their history and culture to be of great importance.

The Story of One Ainu Family

This exhibit depicts a fictional Ainu family, following a first-person narrative of an elementary school student who hears the story of his family's history from his grandfather and grandmother. The goal of this exhibit is to share peoples' way of life from the Meiji period (1868-1912) up until now from the perspective of the Ainu.

Here is an example of a fictional husband and wife five generations ago born during the end of the Edo period. They would have lived a traditional life, learning wood carving and embroidery. At a young age they would have been hired by a Japanese to fish, experiencing harsh working conditions and many difficulties. Around the time they married, the era would have shifted to the Meiji period (1868-1912). As their lifestyle began to undergo great change, they would have made efforts in order to live in this new era, such as working in agriculture and having their children learn to read and write Japanese. This husband and wife, their friends, acquaintances, and children would work in agriculture, fishing or hunting. Others would have supported road and railway development as surveyors, while others would have used their knowledge of horses to work in horseracing. In this manner, they would select their profession, way of learning and way of life, while undergoing many difficult and challenging experiences. I will learn about the people of various eras as well as their way of life and way of thinking through the stories of my family told by my grandfather and grandmother.



Regional Differences in Ainu Culture

When discussing Ainu culture, one must use an approach of multiculturalism and multicultural understanding. However, the key is to remember that there is not just one uniform Ainu culture. Actually, there are many. Sakhalin Ainu and Hokkaido Ainu use different vocabularies and grammar, and have different oral traditions and names. The language of the Kuril Islands Ainu is also unique. Even within Hokkaido, various differences can be seen between regions.



Regional Differences in Ainu Language

This map illustrates the differences seen among the Ainu of Hokkaido and Sakhalin in language, oral traditions, main genres of songs and dance, as well as the names used for these and traditional garments.

Let's compare the word used for "lullaby" in several different regions. The word *ifunke* is used in Obihiro, Asahikawa and Shirai, but in Mukawa Town Mukawa and Hidaka Town Monbetsu it is *iyonruika*. In Biratori Town, located between Mukawa and Monbetsu, the Ainu word for lullaby is *iyonnokka*. On Sakhalin and other areas it is *iyunke* or *yunke*.