

Experience

A k a n k o

Ainu Culture Booklet

vol.1



Akanko Red Salmon Festival

Kapatcep Nomi

The star of the Akanko Red Salmon Festival, the kokanee salmon is a member of the Salmonidae family that inhabits the lake. The Ainu call it *kapatcep*, which means thin fish.

The 'Akanko Red Salmon Festival – Kapatcep Nomi' is a ritual in which the Akan Ainu give thanks to the gods for the blessings of the lake's native salmon.

Kokanee salmon



Kokanee salmon
(landlocked variety)



Sockeye salmon
(migratory variety)



Kokanee salmon is a plump, tasty fish. If it were to swim to the sea, it would become a sockeye salmon. The reason why the kokanee salmon is so tasty is because it's a member of the same family as the sockeye salmon. Kokanee salmon also inhabit Lake Shikotsu, Lake Towada and Lake Ashino, but were brought in from Lake Akan, where they originated.

Kokanee salmon is sold at the Akanko Fisheries Cooperative, and is best eaten grilled with salt, as sashimi, or as ruike (thinly sliced frozen sashimi).

Akanko Fisheries Cooperative

Akanko Onsen 2-chome 7-ban 2-go,
Akan-cho, Kushiro, Hokkaido 085-0467
Tel. 0154-67-2750 Fax. 0154-67-2830
<https://www.akan-gyokyo.com>





At Kapatcep Nomi, visitors can come into contact with various aspects of traditional Aino culture, including traditional Aino dance, and the Kamuy Nomi ritual to pray to the gods for an abundant catch and give thanks for the blessings of nature. Why not come and experience it for yourself?



**Akanko Red Salmon Festival
Kapatcep Nomi**

- Period: Usually held on first Saturday in July
- Location: Specially established venue within the Akan Lakeside Parking Lot

Utensils used in the Kamuy Nomi

[prayers to the gods]



Inau (shaved stick used in offerings)

Kamuy Nomi is a ritual in which the Ainu pray (*nomi*) to their gods (*kamuy*) for various things. The *inau* is one of the utensils essential for the Kamuy Nomi, and is made by shaving willow or other wood. There are various forms depending on the god to which it is dedicated.

Tuki and Ikupasuy (vessel and carved ceremonial stick)

The lacquer cup used in rituals such as prayers to gods and ancestors is called a *tuki*, and the ceremonial utensil used to offer alcohol is called an *ikupasuy*. These utensils are believed to have the power to deliver the alcohol to the gods and ancestors, and supplement any deficiencies in the words of the prayers made by humans.



Food and the Ainu language



Ruipe

(thinly sliced frozen sashimi [ruibe])

Ruipe is semi-thawed frozen salmon flesh – a foodstuff closely associated with the Ainu. The word *ruipe* derives from the Ainu words *ru* (to melt) and *ipe* (food).

Ohaw (soup)

Ohaw is a traditional Ainu dish of hot soup; it is offered to the gods in Ainu rituals. Hokkaido's local dish of *sanpei-jiru* is said to be based on *ohaw*.



Kitopiro (wild garlic)

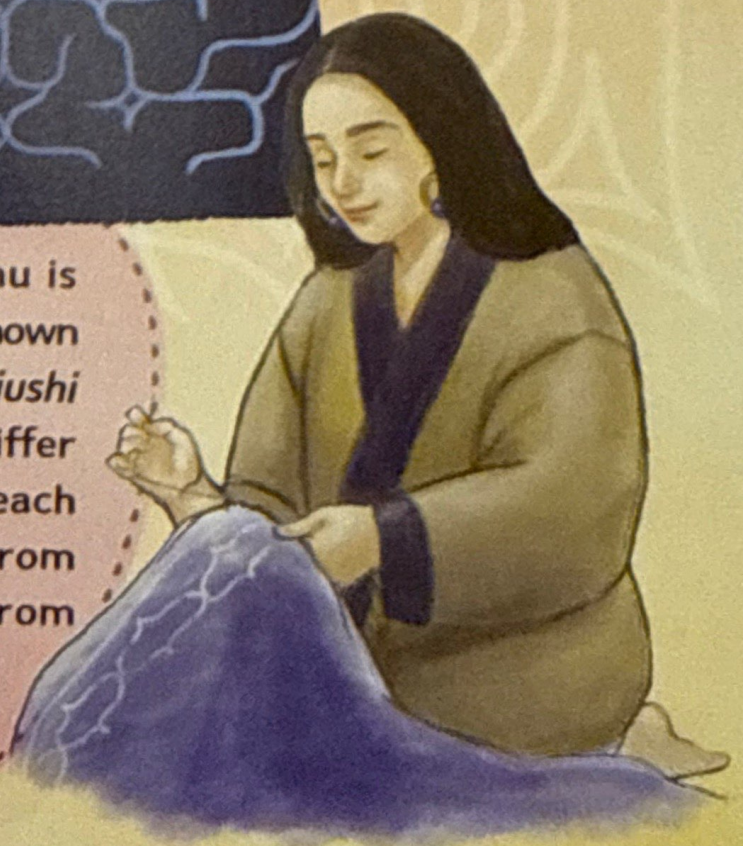
Wild garlic, one of Hokkaido's most typical wild vegetables, has been used as a medicinal herb and nutritious food by the Ainu since ancient times. In Hokkaido, it is used as an ingredient in various dishes including *jingisukan* (lamb barbeque).

Ainu patterns

(Embroidery)



The clothing worn by the Ainu is decorated with unique patterns known as *moreu* (spiral shapes) and *aiushi* (spiky shapes). The patterns differ according to each region and each family, and are passed down from grandmother to mother and from mother to daughter.



Ainu cultural facilities

Tradition & Creation

Onne cise

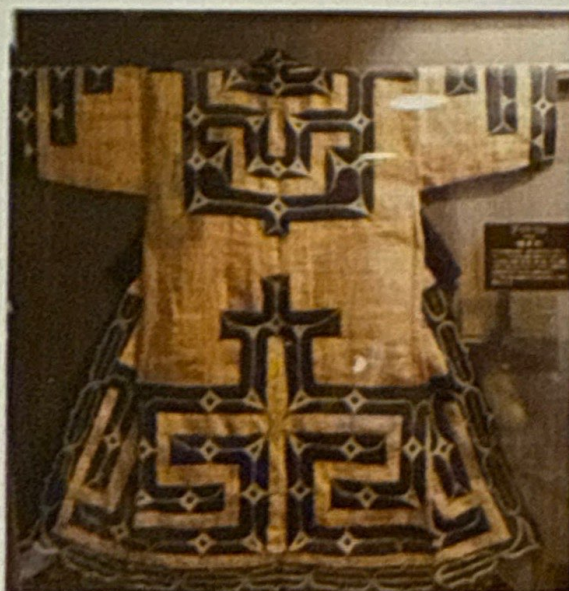
Located at the top of the slope of the Akanko Ainu Kotan, 'Onne cise' exhibits traditional utensils used in rituals, household items, crafts and artwork of the Ainu.



Attus

(garments made from tree-bark fibers)

Attus, a traditional garment that is seen at rituals, is made from fibers from the barks of Manchurian elm trees and the like. Such garments can be seen at 'Onne cise.'



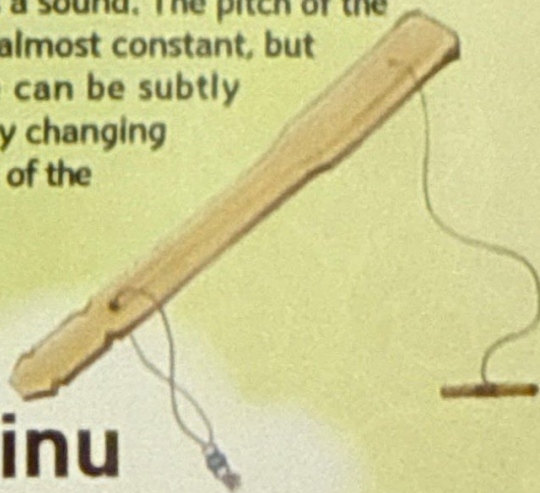
Tradition & Creation 'Onne cise' website ▶





Mukkuri (mouth harp)

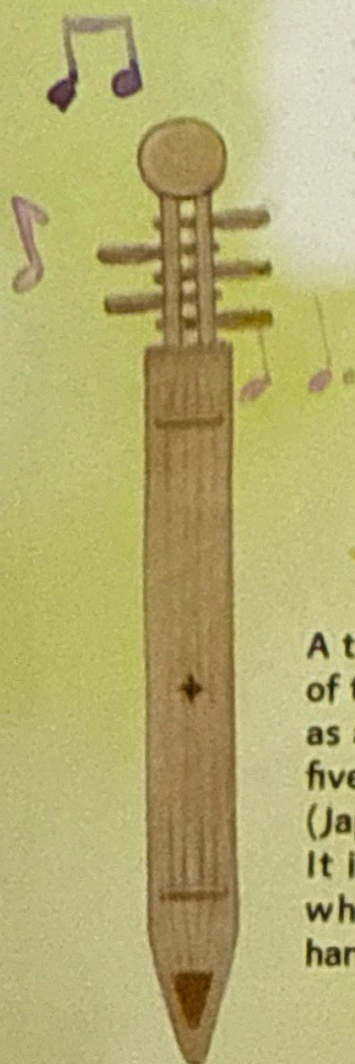
The *mukkuri* is an Ainu musical instrument made from a thin strip of bamboo with a string attached; it is held in the mouth and when it vibrates it produces a sound. The pitch of the sound is almost constant, but the tone can be subtly altered by changing the shape of the mouth.



Traditional Ainu musical instruments

Tonkori (5-stringed koto)

A traditional stringed instrument of the Ainu, it is usually translated as a 'five-stringed koto' as it has five strings and is similar to a koto (Japanese zither-like instrument). It is made of wood and hugged while being played with both hands.



Traditional Ainu dance

Futtarecuy

'Black hair dance/
pine tree dance'



Futtarecuy is a dance in which the women wildly shake their long black hair while swaying their supple bodies. It is also known as the heart attack dance as it represents a pine tree swaying in the wind and is danced intensely for a long time.

Lake Akan Ainu Theater 'Ikor'



The theater offers a wide variety of Ainu dance performances, including 'Lost Kamuy' and 'The Epic Story of the Fire God' expressed via a fusion of projection mapping and ancient dance. It is a facility that satisfies intellectual curiosity and is packed with entertainment.

Lake Akan Ainu Theater 'Ikor'



Animals and the AINU language



Kotan kor kamuy
(Owl)

Owls are worshipped by the Ainu as gods that protect their villages. Large monuments of Blakiston's fish owls are displayed at the entrances to the Akanko Ainu Kotan and the Ainu Theater 'Ikor.'

Kimun kamuy (Brown bear)

In the Ainu language, *kimun* means 'from deep in the mountains,' and *kamuy* means 'god.' To the Ainu, the brown bear is a special creature that is the god of the mountains. In the traditional Ainu *lomante* (bear sending) ritual, the spirit of the bear sent back to the land of the gods.



Yuk (Yezo sika deer)

The forests of Lake Akan are home to countless Yezo sika deer, which are often seen by the sides of the roads. The meat is used in venison dishes, and the horns and fur are processed into Ainu handicrafts and souvenirs.



Autumn event

Marimo

Festival

The Marimo Festival, which takes place at Lake Akan every October, has been held since 1950. The festival was started in order to protect the environment by enlightening people about not gathering marimo – a special natural monument of Japan – without permission, and also to respect the natural environment of the Ainu, who have lived in harmony with nature.

The Marimo Festival is an impressive event that involves returning marimo to the lake, as well as Ainu people gathering from all over Hokkaido to perform a torchlight parade and take part in an Ainu 'dance-off.'



MAP

Lake Akan

Akanko Red Salmon Festival venue

Specially established venue within the Akan Lakeside Parking Lot

Lake Akan
Ainu Theater
'Ikor'

Yuku no Sato
Tsuruga

Lake Akan
Tsuruga WINGS

Hotel
Gozensui

Akan Lakeside
Parking Lot

Minshuku Ginrei
(guesthouse)

Tradition &
Creation
'Onne cise'

Akanko
Ainu Kotan

(Tentative name)
Akan Ainu
Craft Center

Akanko
Fisheries
Cooperative
Factory Shop

To Kitami/Ashoro



Merging
national
highways

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