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Contemporary Tourism Development and Ainu Community in Hokkaido

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Introduction

- Aim of this paper
 - To capture the contemporary relationship between the Ainu people and tourism in Hokkaido through an overview of this historical context
 - To present challenges and initiatives arisen from the recent tourism development.



Upopoy-National Ainu Museum



Panels at Sapporo station



Traditional Ceremony with tourists at Akan

Ainu people and Tourism: Three Phases

■ Meiji era (1868-1912) -

- the first phase in contact between the Ainu people and organized or industrial tourism
- nation building-Ainu portrait 'exotic' and 'primitive', attractions for and by *Wajin* (ethnic Japanese)

■ Hokkaido Travel Boom Time (1960s -)

- while domestic tourists flocking to Hokkaido, Ainu culture still treated as backward
- predatory exploitation by *Wajin* operators, Indigenous entrepreneurs criticized internally as 'tourism Ainu'
- vehicle for revitalizing traditional culture and fostering cultural successors

■ Current Phase (2008-)

- Japan's Ainu Policy Promotion and National Ainu facility '*Upopoy*' open at 2020.
- new phase for Ainu people and tourism development

■ Current Phase (2010s-)

- “*Irankarapte* (the Ainu greeting) campaign” since 2013



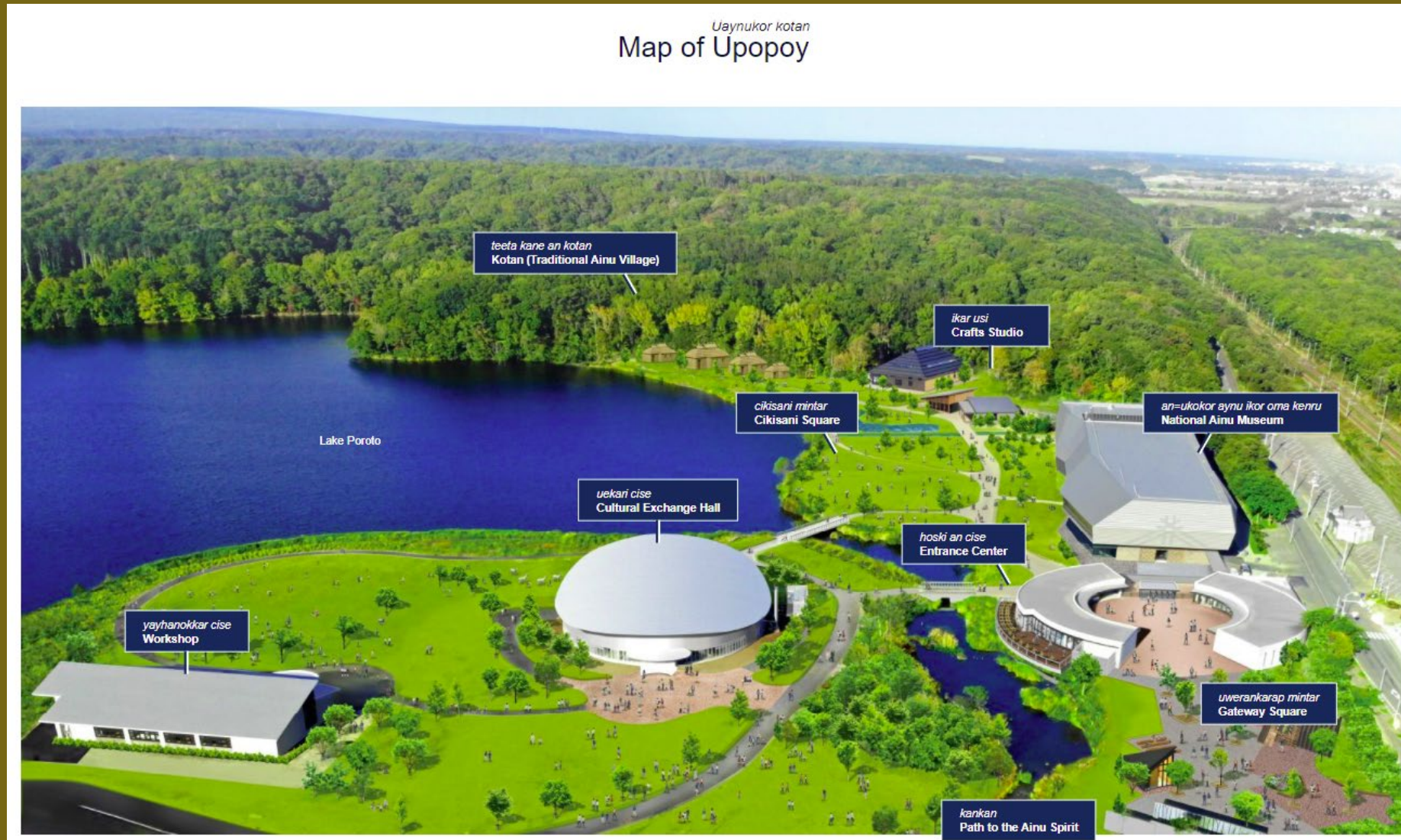
Irankarapte campaign at New Chitose Air port



Collaboration with Hokkaido Beer company

■ Current Phase (2008-)

- National Ainu facility ‘Upopoy-A Symbolic Space for Ethnic Harmony’ open at 2020



New phases for Ainu people and tourism development

■ *Upopoy's* primary role

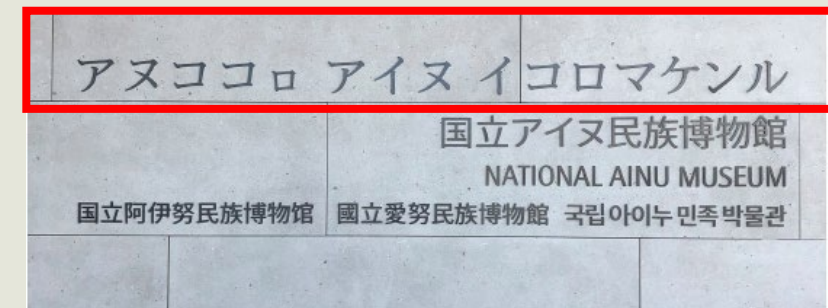
- National center for revitalizing Ainu culture
- National facility for promoting understanding of Ainu history and culture among a wider range of people



Exhibition of National Ainu Museum



Traditional dance performance at theater



Ainu language comes first at signage in Upopoy

New phases for Ainu people and tourism development

- Ainu policy promotion at municipality level and tourism
- 28+1 municipalities are implementing Ainu tourism promotion project, 7 have projects to promote branding Ainu culture

Target of subsidies for regional Ainu policy promotion

Promoting culture

1. Reproduction of traditional space for culture and living



2. Cultural program



Promoting regional industry

3. Ainu tourism promotion



5. Assisting transportation for regional accessibility



4. Branding Ainu Craft arts



6. Sustainable supply of forest resource for wood carving



Community Support

7. Public facility for Ainu community



8. Support for Ainu elderly



9. Children's learning support



阿寒ユーカラ
ロストカムイ
LOST KAMUY



■ Cultural promotion
through Tradition

Ainu Traditional Dance
+
Contemporary Dance
+
Digital Art



Images from <https://www.akanainu.jp/lostkamuy/en/>



■ A year-round guided tour by the Ainu people

Image from <https://en.anytimeainutime.jp/>



◇ tour 1: Forest Time
(Forest Walk Short Course)
Feel the Spirit of the Ainu
Living with the Forest

—
Visit a forest that has sustained the lives of the Ainu. Learn their beliefs and listen to the sound of the mukkuri.

[more →](#)



◇ tour 2: Lake Time (Forest Walk Long Course & Mukkuri Making)
See the Sights of the Lake
Cherished by the Ainu

—
Make a musical instrument and take a walk inside a forest to see the magnificent scenery cherished by the Ainu.

[more →](#)



◇ tour 3A: Craft Time
(Embroidery Making)
Enrich your Spirit through
Ainu Embroidery

—
Discover the joy of needlework and the spirit of the Ainu through Ainu embroidery passed down through generations.

[more →](#)



◇ tour 3B: Craft Time
(Wood Carving)
Feel the Wood and the
Craftsmanship of the Ainu



◇ Food Time (Option)
Savor the blessings of nature
through Ainu cuisine



◇ Premium Half-Day Plan
Experience Ainu Culture
together with Ainu Guides!

New challenges and initiatives

- Lack of an equitable partnership between the Ainu people and tourism industry
 - Due to rise of interest Ainu culture, Ainu language and patterns are now often used on commercial products without original cultural context
 - Some local Ainu organizations are trying to protect their intellectual property rights by establishing equitable collaboration with tourism enterprises
- No effective legal mechanism in place to protect traditional knowledge and lack of understanding on the part of business operators for the protection of intellectual properties of Ainu people

Conclusion

■ AINU people and tourism development

- Within the global Indigenous movements and Japan's Ainu policy promotion, relationship between Ainu people and Hokkaido tourism is shifting to a new phases.
- Noted that as a (post)colonial mindset has not been completely extinguished from tourism stakeholders, nor from the contemporary society of Japan.
- To realize sustainable and inclusive tourism development with, by, for Ainu people in Hokkaido, more efforts to establish ethical and practical scheme ensuring recognition, respect, and reciprocity.