

## **Teshikaga Town Kussharo Kotan Ainu Museum**

This small museum on the southern shore of Lake Kussharo is dedicated to Ainu, the indigenous people of northern Japan. It houses an extensive collection of artifacts and exhibits on Ainu culture, heritage, and the history of the land on which they lived.

The Kussharo Kotan Ainu Museum stands on the former site of an Ainu village, known as a *kotan*. Exhibits detail the traditional Ainu way of life of hunting, gathering, fishing, and living in a natural environment. The museum covers a range of themes, from the area's natural and human history to Ainu tools, clothing, food, and religion. Some exhibits have English descriptions.

Visitors can watch a 25-minute video in English about Ainu history, describing the discrimination that Ainu people suffered during the Meiji era (1868–1912), the subsequent laws enacted to protect Ainu culture, and present-day efforts to pass on Ainu traditions. The video features Ainu community groups keeping the culture alive through song, dance, festivals, and language education.