

## **Kussharo Kotan from Prehistory to Written Records**

This section of the museum focuses on Hokkaido's human history from the Jomon period (10,000–300 BCE) until the first written record of Kussharo Kotan in 1858. A timeline-style display features artifacts from throughout the epoch.

Historical records offer little information regarding when Kussharo Kotan was first established, but pottery found near Lake Kussharo dating back nearly 7,000 years shows evidence of early inhabitants. Displayed here are knives, pipes, coins, and utensils made from bone, all from after 1300, that have been excavated in Teshikaga.

### *Development of Ainu society*

Ainu culture began its development around the thirteenth century. Like Kussharo Kotan, most Ainu villages were established next to rivers or other water sources, and trout and salmon were major sources of food. Ainu were mostly hunter-gatherers, but they traded deer pelts, sable pelts, and hawk feathers for items such as iron, cotton fabric, lacquerware, and beads for necklaces with other peoples in Japan and China.

### *Ainu names across the land*

The first written record mentioning Kussharo Kotan is from 1858, when Matsuura Takeshiro (1818–1888), a Japanese explorer, writer, and illustrator, surveyed present-day Hokkaido. His map, “Mountains and Rivers from East to West,” references the village of Kussharo Kotan and includes the Ainu names of each district in the village. Visitors can see a replica of this map on display. The Ainu names of mountains such as Atosa-nupuri (Mt. Io) and Kamui-nupuri (Mt. Mashu), as well as Ainu names for other geographical features, are still used in Teshikaga today.