

Agriculture in Ainu Communities

Ainu life traditionally centered on hunting, fishing, and foraging, but people also cultivated crops. The climate was unsuitable for rice cultivation, so Ainu focused on hardy grains such as millet.

Each household typically maintained a small plot of land where women performed most of the farming tasks, from sowing seeds in the spring to harvesting in the fall. In addition to iron tools, they used sharpened shells as blades to harvest grain. The staple crop was millet, a cold-resistant cereal with a short growing season. Ainu families also cultivated beans and turnips, and foraged for berries and lily bulbs, which are a rich source of starch.