

Hokkaido's Ainus

THE LIGHT-SKINNED, hirsute Ainus, fast-disappearing descendants of Japan's earliest known settlers, are to experience some of the amenities of modern living that few of them have known.

Such is the plan of the Hokkaido prefectural government, which has charge of the few remaining Ainus. The Ainus, whose origin is indefinite, once were the sole occupants of this country. The approximately 16,000 who are left live in a few settlements on Japan's northernmost main island.

Once such group of about 1,000 dwellers in Shiraoi, a village whose name in the Ainu language means "Place of Many Horseflies."

The Hokkaido authorities concerned with Ainu affairs are putting the finishing touches on a five-year program to improve the lot of this mysterious, dying race. With an expenditure of 144,000,000 yen (about \$400,000) the prefectural government hopes even-

tually to bring all the Ainus out of their ramshackel villages and settle them in more comfortable housing with electricity, and communal cooking and bathing places. These facilities are enjoyed by few Ainus today, although they are available to virtually all the 92,000,000 Japanese, whose warlike ancestors drove the Ainus north.

Now it is the Japanese official problem to make the Ainus happy, and keep them that way. Giichi Asari, the Japanese Mayor of Shiraoi, a town that contains one of the largest Ainu communities, says that the Ainus generally have little liking for the settled, industrious life of modern Japan.

At the same time, there is little chance of deriving a satisfactory livelihood, by Japanese standards, from the traditional Ainu occupations of hunting and fishing. Formerly confined to reservations, the Ainus are discouraged from pursuing their old nomadic way of

life, even if it were practicable in a country where nearly all the land is occupied and industries are developing fast.

Mayor Asari said about 1,000 Ainus of Shiraoi live a typically casual existence. The men will work three days at fishing or cutting firewood, for which they earn about 1,100 yen (about \$3). This will keep them in comfortable idleness, satisfactorily lubricated with sake (rice wine) for the next five days, the Mayor said. After the money is gone, he added, they report for work again for two or three days.

SOME LIVE WELL by their own standards, with even less exertion. An example is Tomoramu, the hereditary chief of the Shiraoi Ainu clan. The 53-year-old, heavily bearded patriarch and his wife, whose lips have been deeply outlined in the blue tattooing that once was a universal fashion among Ainu women, earn their living by posing for tourists' cameras and showing their traditional Ainu house. The one-room thatch house has a single door and window and an altar to the Ainus' primitive deities. The Ainus religion is animistic, ascribing souls not only to men, but also to animals and inanimate objects.

The efforts of the United States occupation authorities on Hokkaido to improve the Ainus' lot has shown few lasting results, Mayor Asari declared. The Ainus enjoy the equal voting and other civic rights decreed by the occupation forces and still honored for all Japanese citizens, but the benefits of the land redistribution ordered by the United States military regime failed to interest many of these non-agricultural people, the Mayor said.

The land reforms under the occupation gave the Ainu families of Shiraoi with about 1,800 acres, he said, but nearly all of it now lies abandoned. At the same time, according to Government records, slightly more than half of the dwindling Ainu community depends partly upon the Government dole for support.

Many younger Ainus have drifted away from the home settlements to work in Tokyo or elsewhere. These often marry non-Ainu girls and are rapidly being absorbed into the Japanese population. But the older folk, Mayor Asari said, remain simple, uneducated, and apparently unable to comprehend modern principles, such as the value of property ownership and regular work.

While their race is rapidly disappearing, these anachronistic people live out their days as either feckless casual workers or as living museum pieces for the education of tourists. It is hoped by Hokkaido officials

that the prospective five-year uplift program will bring the remaining Ainus into closer attunement with the bustling life of the new Japan that is passing them by.

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Carbon Materials for Missiles

Diamonds, apart from being a girl's best friend, are among the hardest things known and find many industrial uses. They are a form of carbon. Graphite, another form of carbon, also finds many uses in atomic reactors, in lubricants, and in pencils.

Now another form, pyrographite, has been developed by the Raytheon Company sponsored by the Navy Bureau of Ordnance, as a possible answer to some of the problems in missile construction.

The material, a high purity form of graphite, withstands temperatures up to 6700 degree Fahrenheit higher than any other known element, and remains strong, chemically inactive and impervious to gases.

The secret of its great heat stability is that heat is conducted along its surface 500 times better than through it, thus preventing any excessive build-up of heat.

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