

History of Ainu Race and Background

The Ainu race is an indigenous race that lives in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago, particularly in Hokkaido Prefecture, with their unique language and culture. The Ainu people are believed to have maintained the original form of Japan's ancient culture called "Jomon Culture" that flourished between 15,000 B.C. and 3000 B.C. to some extent as opposed to other races in Japan, which were exposed to the influence of foreign cultures such as Chinese and Korean cultures.

The Ainu culture is particularly known for its beautiful patterns on their traditional clothes and the oral culture known as "Yukar". A number of present-day people have been inspired by the Ainu's unique world-view and have come to recognise the Ainu culture as the important cultural asset of Japan. The Ainu people, who suffered greatly from Japan's modernisation policy in the past, have regained their pride and are taking a step forward to disseminate their culture to the world.

The Japanese Diet has unanimously adopted the resolution to recognise the Ainu as "Japan's indigenous race" in 2008 and established the Office to Promote the Ainu Culture in the office of Prime Minister. The Japanese government plans to establish the National Ainu Museum in Hokkaido by 2020, when Japan hosts the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The Ainu Traditional Dance Performance

The Ainu traditional dance is one of Japan's significant intangible folk cultural assets. It is also registered as the World Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO in 2009.

The Ainu people use only a handful number of instruments such as Jew's harp and harps that resemble Japanese harp, which itself signify the Ainu culture is extremely old. Their traditional clothes for dancing have unique patterns and their movements are derived from the movements of birds and other animals.

The Ainu people consider themselves as part of the nature. They regard things that exist in the world such as animals, plants, water, and even diseases as Kamui, or the gods, and Kamui and humans live together by supporting each other. Therefore, when the Ainu people dance, they express their feelings of joy and sorrow to share them with the gods.

Prgram of Traditional Ainu dance Performance

- 1

Tapkar (Stamping Dance)
- 2

Upopo (Sitting Dance)
- 3

Cyapiyak (Rain Swallow Dance)
- 4

Ku Rimse (Bow Dance)
- 5

Hararki (A crane flying in Sky)
- 6

Iyonnokka (Lullaby)
- 7

Anna Hore (Birds Dance)
- 8

Emus Rimse
- 9

Sapo Tapkar (Children playing with baby sparrows)
- 10

Hararki (Crane playing in Wetland)
- 11

Yaisama (Impromptu Song)
- 12

Horippa (Ring Dance)

The program is sometimes changed without notice.

Performer, Biratori Ainu Culture Preservation Society Japan

KAWANANO KAZUNOBU	KIBATA SACHIKO	KAIZAWA KOICHI
TOYOTA REIKO	KAWANANO EIKO	FUJIKAWA MACHIKO
SEKI MOTOKO	KAIZAWA HIROKO	HIRAMURA HARUMI
KIMURA HIROMI	MURAYAMA RUMIKO	OIKAWA NAOMI
SORA YUKO	ORITA KUMIKO	NAGANO IKUMI
SEKINE KENJI	KAIZAWA TAICHI	ARAI MIKIKO

Program

Thursday, November 28 Kolkata

- Ainu Performance
- Guest Program : Purulia Chhau

'Chau' is a vigorous form of martial dance and drama popular in the Chotanagpur plateau area of Eastern India. There are more than 500 Chau groups in Purulia .Tribes like Bhumij, Mahato, Munda, Ho, Santhal, Oraon, Dom perform this dance. Elaborate masks, dazzling costumes, rhythmic drum beatings, powerful acrobatic movements and somersaults in the air make the dance a marvel to watch. Traditional Chau dance was based on stories from Indian epics and mythology. Chau dancers are now developing innovative productions based on Shakespeare's Macbeth, Tagore's Chitrangada and Kal Mrigaya.



Saturday, November 30 Mumbai

- Ainu Performance
- Guest Program : Ms. Penaz Masani

A ghazal may be understood as a poetic expression of both the pain of loss or separation and the beauty of love in spite of that pain. Those beautiful feeling is sung melodiously in the most extraordinary way to touch the heart of the listener.

Penaz is known as the Queen of Ghazals and her Guru is the very talented 'Madhurrani " ji.



Monday, December 2 Delhi

- Ainu Performance
- Guest Program : Enka singer Chadha

Enka is a popular Japanese music genre which resembles traditional Japanese music stylistically. The first non-Japanese singer of enka is Sarbjit Singh Chadha from India. His enka album was released in 1975 which became a success in Japan, selling 150,000 copies. He went back to India a few years later, but returned to Japan in 2008 to continue singing Enka.



- Guest Program : Seraikela Chhau

Singhbhum - an area that finds reference in the Puranas as a part of the ancient region of Utkal. Seraikella, from where the unique masked dance form of Seraikella Chhau originates is in part of eastern India. This energetic and spirited dance evolved from martial art techniques that were earlier practiced in this region by soldiers of the royal army. The etymology of the word chhau, itself explains the nature of this art form. This word traces its origin to the Sanskrit word Chhaya which means shadow. The thematic contents of the compositions arc mostly abstract and are steeped in symbolism. SHASHADHAR ACHARYA is the fifth generation in the family of traditional performers who have significantly contributed in the evolution and development of this art form.