



Rokkasho Museum Exhibition



1 Entrance Hall

(1) **Seal** : In 2010 a spotted seal pup was found in the pond in Obuchi. It was named “Mei” and in 2018 and 2020 Mei would give birth in the aquarium in Asamushi. The stuffed animal displayed is a harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*). This kind of seal is widely spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, however it is the only member of the seal family that inhabits Japanese coasts.



(2) **Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)** : Rokkasho summers are cooler, so some swans stay here and give birth, instead of flying back to Siberia. One swan lays about 4~7 eggs, which are incubated for about 40 days. Within two month the fledgling flies for the first time. Commonly seen swans are whooper swans (*Cygnus cygnus*), tundra swans (*Cygnus columbianus*) and mute swans (*Cygnus olor*).



2 Exhibition Hall

(1) **Rokkasho Diorama** : The area of Rokkasho is rich in different landscapes. The north is a mountainous area, the south is a wide plateau with five big lakes. In the east are swampy low lands and beaches and the northern coast is a Rias coast, where shore fishing is popular. Industries include fishing, upland farming and dairy farming. In the vast plateau area, horses have been bred for the last 1,000 years. In the surrounding ocean and coastal areas sea urchins, abalones and squids are fished, and konbu seaweed is collected. In the sandy beach areas, seine fishing for sardines and herrings is popular, while clams are fished in Lake Ogawara. In the plateau area in the south, Chinese yams and Daikon radishes are cultivated. Japanese Nuclear Fuel Ltd. (JNFL) is located in the same area. By emphasizing wind and solar energy, JNFL lays the foundation for environmentally-friendly energy for the next generation.



(2) Archeology Corner

① **Shell Fossils** : These are 16 million year-old shell fossils from a sea bed excavated from a site in the Tanazawa area (450m above sea level).

From this we know that eastern Japan used to be under the sea.

The sea floor was lifted through underwater volcanic activity and the tectonic influence of the northern American plate.

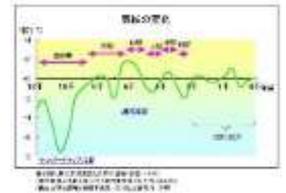


② **Stone Tools** : The area that is now the Takahoko Bird Park is also known as the kobata excavation site. It is located on the right bank of Takahoko swamp. In a small area of 50 m² Chojakubo and Mikoshiba stoneware from the early Jomon period



have been excavated. Such stoneware is very rare in Aomori prefecture. Remains of housing sites were

not found. It seemed that this site was a base camp where people would gather regularly in a time before humans settled down, when hunting was the predominant activity.



③ **Holocene Glacial Retreat Panel** : When the ice age ended, about 10,000 to 3,000 years ago, it got very warm and the sea levels rose by six meters. Many ruins from this time were found around the lake in Rakkasho. 665 pitfalls were found, indicating that the area was rich in food resources.

④ **Uplifted Line Crest Pottery** Omotedate (1) Site Early Jomon Period (approx. 12,000 years ago) Important Cultural property of Aomori Prefecture 「Prefectural Treasure」

This is one of the oldest pieces of pottery in the world. This vessel was used for cooking, which shows a change in eating habits. The bottom of the vessel is shaped like a female breast and along the sides are 37 lines carved into the material using a bamboo spatula.



⑤ **Hand- and Footprint Pottery** Oishitai(1)Site Late Jomon (approx. 4,000 years ago) Important Cultural Property

Hand- and Footprints of newborns and toddlers in clay. These plates may have been used to remember the birth of a child and to wish for healthy growth. They have holes for strings to carry them around. One hand print has round patterns like a magatama that may represent life or the birth of a child.



⑥ **Jade Stone Flute** Kami Obuchi(2)Site Late Jomon (approx. 4000 years ago)

These jade stones from Itoigawa (Niigata prefecture) have vertical and horizontal cross holes, which might indicate that they were used as whistles. Stone flutes were excavated at the Tominosawa (2)site. It makes a high pitched sound. In old Shintoism, flutes were used to greet the spirits.



⑦ **Pottery Mask with Bent Nose** Kami Obuchi(1)Site Late Jomon (approx. 3,000 years ago)

Five pottery masks with bent noses were excavated in different spots along the pacific coast of Aomori and northern Iwate prefecture. These masks all have noses bent to the left side. However, only the mask shown here has its nose bent to the right side. It may have been used for special events and shamans.



⑧ **Urn with Jomon Woman** Iyasakatai (1)Site Late Jomon (approx. 4,000 years ago)

In 1971, an employee of the agricultural experiment station found an urn when plowing a potato field in Iyasakadaira with a tractor. When the employee opened the lid they saw human bones and therefore called the police. Later it was found out that this urn is from the Jomon period. In this urn were the complete remains of a then approx. 20 year old woman, who died about 4000 years ago, in the late Jomon period. The head was reconstructed and can now be seen as the robot Jomon Yoshiko in the Rakkasho Museum. Jomon Yoshiko can tell you more about the Jomon site.



⑨ Red Carved Pottery

with Lid Oishitai (1) Site Late Jomon (approx. 4,000 years ago) Important

Cultural Property of Japan

In the late Jomon period there was a great variety of shapes of pottery. They can be divided into deep pots, jars, shallow pots, jugs etc. After finishing the vessel, the top was cut open, so it could be used as a lid. Its usage however is unknown. It was colored in red paint (red iron oxide). It was excavated as one of the grave goods. It is very rare that such a big relic is excavated without major damage.



⑩ Hokkaido Style Earthenware (Nakacharo Style) Hacchazawa(1)Site Early Jomon (approx. 6,000 years ago)

Hokkaido style earthenware. Excavated in Omotedate(1)site. The materials for the clay is known to be from Hokkaido. It is unknown whether this relic once crossed the Tsugaru bay or if only the material were imported, however, it shows that there was exchange between people in Aomori and Hokkaido.



⑪ Cylindrical Upper Layer B Type Earthenware and Tominosawa Site

Tominosawa(2)Site Mid Jomon (approx. 4,500~4,000 years ago)

Of all the vessels found, this is the most impressive. This kind of earthenware was found in the areas in between the northern Akita and Iwate Prefecture and the Oshima peninsula in southern Hokkaido. Ornaments made from clay strings and geometrical patterns made by pressing ropes against the clay were applied. On the body of the vessel characteristic Ujo-Jomon patterns were applied.



(3) Yayoi Corner

① **Oishitai Style Earthenware** : Earthenware from the mid-Yayoi era. Lined up arc shaped patterns were carved on the vessels. Because this type of vessel was first excavated in the Oishitai(1)site, it is called Oishitai style earthenware. When you look closely, rope patterns (Jomon patterns) can be seen. It is said that Yayoi earthenware in the Tohoku region is strongly influenced by Jomon cultures (Epi-Jomon).



② **Epi-Jomon Earthenware** : On the left side is Kouhoku C2 and D type earthenware, and on the right you can see earthenware with similarities to Esan style earthenware. Both are strongly related to Hokkaido. This type of earthenware was found in the northern Tohoku region and Hokkaido. It is believed that some of the people who made the Kouhoku C2 and D type earthenware probably brought the place names in Ainu language to the northern Tohoku region.



(4) Heian Corner

① **Hajiki** : Simple earthenware without patterns. It is made by stacking clay strings and shaping them with a spatula or it might have been made by using a method that is different from the Jomon period, such as using a potter's wheel.



② **Sueki** : Compared to Jomon and Hajiki style earthenware this type of earthenware was baked in an oven at high temperature. The technique of baking pottery in an oven was imported from China in the Kofun era. The luster on the pottery occurs when ashes of the fuel fall onto the pottery and are then vitrified into the surface at a temperature of 1,200°C. This Sueki vessel was used to store water, rice, millet, barnyard grass, etc.



③ **Ironware** : Agricultural tools etc. made of iron were excavated in the village. The long knife was probably carried by a higher ranked government official. It is also possible that some officials were able to write, since a Tosu - a long narrow knife used to erase characters from wooden boards - was excavated in the area.



(5) Nature Corner

① **Day Lily (*Hemerocallis dumortierii*)** : The official village flower. They are seen around plateaus such as the Ozenuma pond in Nikko and Kirigamine in Nagano prefecture. In Rokkasho, thanks to its cooler temperatures, the day lily can be found around the early summer times in areas such as the Hiranuma wetlands and the Tomari coastline. This flower only blooms for one day.



② **Japanese Serow (*Capricornis crispus*)** : Serows are closely-related to goats in the bovidae family. It's an endemic species to the mountainous and forest areas on Honshu. Females as well as males have horns that never stop growing. A serow has a cloven hoof on each foot, which helps it move quickly even on steep rocks. They can also be seen around Rokkasho Museum.



③ **Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)** : Their breeding was first seen in Japan in 1972 in Ichiyanaginuma pond. Males and females spread their black headed plumes and their brown neck feathers on the surface of the lake as courtship behavior and build floating nests.



④ **Japanese Marsh Warbler (*Megalurus pryeri*)** : In 1884, this bird was identified as a new bird species. It is only found in China and some parts of Japan. It is estimated that there are only about 2500 birds worldwide, and they are very hard to find. They live in the reed fields around the ponds in Rokkasho. These birds are known for singing while flying in mountainous curves over their territory.



⑤ **White-Tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*)** : The official bird of the village. This is a brown eagle with long, wide wings and a short wedge-shaped white tail. It is the biggest eagle in Japan. These birds typically eat daces and other fishes in the pond, as well as swans and ducks. The bird on display is a "Mountain Hawk-Eagle". It is also called "king of the forest" and it has a wingspan of about 160cm. These birds were used for falconry in the Tohoku region in earlier times.



(6) Folklore Corner

① **Coins from Edo to Showa periods** : Donated by Mrs. Hiroko Sato from Rokuhara on September 26th, 2017. She had a tin filled with 64 old coins. When looking the coins up, it transpired that the coins were not only from different years, but they also differed in size, material and design. A study of one coin alone can give a glimpse into the period it was made.



② **300 Yen Bonds for Soldiers** : Soldiers who returned from the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 were issued with interest-bearing government bonds. The bond-holder was to receive interest payments of 3.65% over a period of 20 years. However, in July 1946, after Japan lost the war, these papers became worthless.



③ **Cradle** : A straw-basket with a hole in the bottom for holding a baby. It was filled with straw and some old cloth on top. The bottom was filled with ashes to soak up urine etc.

④ **Thresher** : In the late Meiji period, the treadle-rice thresher was developed by the Saiosha company. This machine was way more efficient than doing it by hand.



⑤ **Winnower** : A machine that would separate grain using wind power. It was used for a long time throughout the Meiji, Taisho and Showa periods.



⑥ **Dugout Canoe** : Dugout canoes like this were made by hollowing out big trees such as the Japanese beech or Japanese Judas trees (160~170 year old trees) . The bottom of the boat would be the part where the annual rings would be dense. As a dugout canoe that was used in the ocean, this one together with a boat on the Oga peninsula in Akita Prefecture are the only surviving ones in Japan. Dugout canoes in Tomari were mainly used for abalone fishing in the rocky waters in winter. It was said that there were so many that every man in the area had one of these boats. They were made in great numbers in the Meiji and Taisho eras. In the 1950s and 60s the big trees needed to make these boats became scarcer and completely disappeared. Instead people would build so called “kakkobune” ships, consisting of two different pieces.



3 Lobby

(1) **Noh Masks** : Donated by the Futamata Residents' Association on March 30th, 2018. In 1934, 15 Noh masks were donated by the Noh Association in the Fukkoshi district of Yokohama town, followed by a Noh performance in Futamata. Afterwards the masks were stored in the shrine in Futamata, but soon they were



forgotten. Only when the shrine was cleaned out in 2018 were the masks found again. The masks then were donated to the Rokkasho Museum. Initially the masks were stored at Mr. Gentaro Akito's house, the head of the shrine. However, it was soon decided to store them at the shrine instead. Currently Noh dance is no longer practiced in the Futamata area.

(2) **Arm Pump** : This pump was bought by the village in 1939. This is a fire pump with a mechanism that manually moves the piston to discharge water. In 1875 the Tokyo Metropolitan Police department imported a pump like this from France, which then became a commonly used object in Japan. Then in 1884, Japan produced a similar machine modelled after a German pump. This machine was made at Okazakiya Mohei Manufacturing in Yokoyama-cho, Tokyo. There are only a few existing arm pumps left in Japan, which makes this pump extremely rare.

