

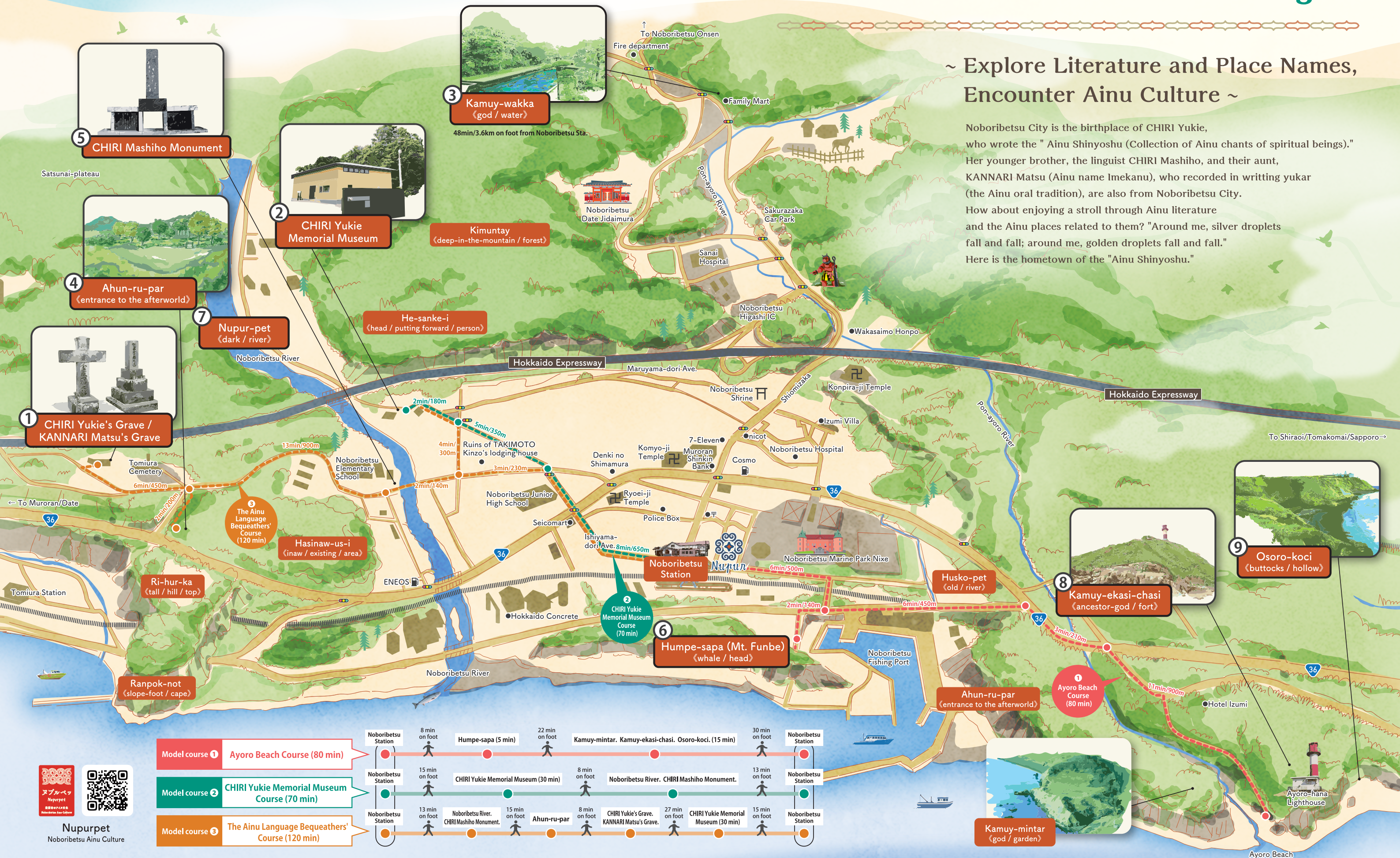
Noboribetsu Ainu Culture Travelogue

~ Explore Literature and Place Names,
Encounter Ainu Culture ~

Noboribetsu City is the birthplace of CHIRI Yukie, who wrote the "Ainu Shinyoshu (Collection of Ainu chants of spiritual beings)." Her younger brother, the linguist CHIRI Mashiho, and their aunt, KANNARI Matsu (Ainu name Imekanu), who recorded in writing yukar (the Ainu oral tradition), are also from Noboribetsu City.

How about enjoying a stroll through Ainu literature and the Ainu places related to them? "Around me, silver droplets fall and fall; around me, golden droplets fall and fall."

Here is the hometown of the "Ainu Shinyoshu."





KANNARI Matsu
(Ainu name/Imekanu)



CHIRI Mashiho



CHIRI Yukie

CHIRI Yukie and the "Ainu Shinyoshu"

Noboribetsu (Nupurpet) is the birthplace of CHIRI Yukie (1903–1922), who authored the "Ainu Shinyoshu." In the preface of the "Ainu Shinyoshu," she wrote, "A long time ago, this vast Hokkaido was our ancestors' world of freedom." Her birthplace of Noboribetsu could be supposed as her earliest recollections of this "world of freedom." One could say she wrote the expression while thinking about the distant activities of her ancestors who lived happily amidst the sea, mountains, and pristine forests.

Yukie was born in Noboribetsu in 1903 and lived there until she was seven years old. She mainly lived in an area along the Noboribetsu River. The "related lands" where Yukie and her parents, younger brothers (Takanaka and Mashiho), and younger sisters lived was a quiet riparian forest, the traces of which remain today. Following the dying wish of Yukie, her aunt KANNARI Matsu, who recorded an extensive amount of yukar, also lived in the area for 30 years until her death.

Yukie also experienced living alone with her grandmother in the mountains around the Okashibetsu River. She spoke in the Ainu language while living with her grandmother Monashinouku, and absorbed the language, her mother tongue, before entering elementary school. One could say that it was the foundation for her transcribing and translating Ainu literature shortly after. Noboribetsu is a significant place for Yukie, one that fostered the groundwork for the "Ainu Shinyoshu."

One could say that the world of the epics that interweave the characters in Yukie's "Ainu Shinyoshu" was written using the abundant nature of "Noboribetsu" as material. Gods of animals that may have inhabited the area before such as Blakiston's fish owls, otters, and wolves, as well as animals that still appear in front of humans such as orcas, foxes, and rabbits, and cultural gods such as Okikirmui or Samayunkur, whom the Ainu believed in, were vividly animated in these epics. Within the humorous relations between the kamuy (gods) and humans, the reverence towards nature, and the lessons taught to the mischief-making animal gods lie the ethics of Ainu society (the sense of coexistence with nature).

The time in which Yukie lived was a harsh time for the Ainu, as described in the preface. However, her thoughtful penning of the anthology betrays nothing of it and invites us into the wondrous world inside Ainu literature.

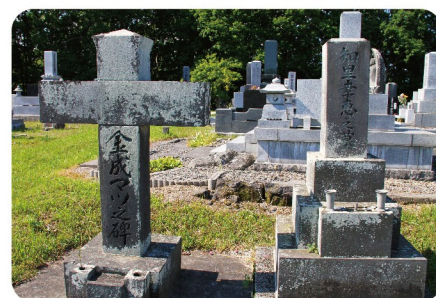
If there were to be a new way of strolling around Noboribetsu, wouldn't it be nice to add searching for Ainu literature while following the footsteps of CHIRI Yukie, who penned the "Ainu Shinyoshu," exploring nature which traces the vivacity of the Ainu language by strolling through place names?

(A reorganization of the back-side text in "Yukie's Hometown Travelogue")

① CHIRI Yukie's Grave / KANNARI Matsu's Grave

There is
an explanation
board

The graves of CHIRI Yukie, who died in 1922 (reburied at the current site in 1975), and KANNARI Matsu, who died in 1951, situated in Tomiura Cemetery.



■ Parking Lot Tomiura Cemetery

② CHIRI Yukie Memorial Museum

A museum that widely conveys the achievements of Noboribetsu City-born CHIRI Yukie and the Ainu culture grasped through her.

■ Opening hours:
9:30 am - 4:30 pm (admission is until 4:00 pm)
■ Admission fee:
¥500 for adults,
¥450 for groups (10 or more),
¥250 for Noboribetsu City residents,
¥200 for high school students,
¥100 for elementary/junior high school students
■ Days closed:
Tuesdays (excluding national holidays),
winter season (December 20 - end of February)
■ Tel/Fax 0143-83-5666



③ Kamuy-wakka

There is
an explanation
board

An Ainu place name that means "water of god" ("kamuy" means god, "wakka" means water), spring water is found here. It is also introduced in the records of MASTUURA Takeshiro, who traveled around Hokkaido in the Edo period(the 19th century). Water gushes out from the location of the small building behind the pond next to the convenience store, and this water becomes the Pon-ayoro River.

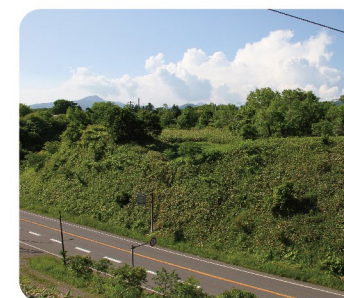


④ Ahun-ru-par

There is
an explanation
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An Ainu language place name that means "the place that leads to the afterworld" ("ahun" means to enter, "ru" means path, "par" means gate). Caves are common, but here lies a rare pit. The cave Ahun-ru-par is found at the Noboribetsu Fishing Port. It is also said to be a place that should not be approached as it leads to the afterworld.

■ Parking Lot Tomiura Cemetery



⑤ CHIRI Mashiho Monument

There is
an explanation
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After the death of CHIRI Mashiho, an Ainu linguist from Noboribetsu City, and CHIRI Yukie's younger brother, a monument to honor him was built in 1973 by volunteer city residents and fellow alumni of the former Muroran Junior High School. Engraved on the pedestal is an inscription by YAMADA Hidezo, Mashiho's friend and an Ainu language toponymist.



⑥ Humpe-sapa (Mt. Funbe)

There is
an explanation
board



In the Ainu language, "humpe" means whale, and "sapa" means head. It is a large rocky mountain and is called Mt. Funbe by locals. A folk tale associated with Humpe-sapa that still remains in Noboribetsu City tells of an otter god exterminating the whale-like monster fish, Siyokina, using a sword. There is a walking trail(about 20 min).

⑦ Nupur-pet (Noboribetsu River)

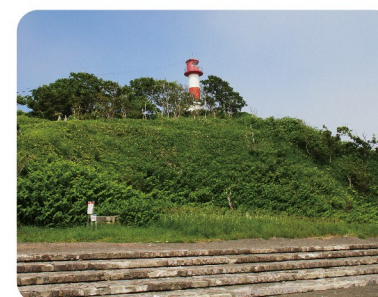
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An Ainu language place name that means "dark river" ("nupur" means dark or containing spiritual power, "pet" means river). The name of Noboribetsu City originates from it. Because the hot water from Noboribetsu Onsen flows into it, it is sometimes white and cloudy even when it is not raining. In autumn, many salmon go upstream.



⑧ Kamuy-ekasi-chasi

A fort, ceremonial location, or sacred ground known as a chasi. In the Ainu language, "kamuy" means god, "ekasi" means elder, and "chasi" means fort. It is located at the mouth of the Pon-ayoro River and is currently where the Ayoro-hana Lighthouse stands. It has a wondrous view of the Pacific Ocean.



⑨ Osoro-koci

A hollow on the shoreline visible on the left side from the Ayoro-hana Lighthouse on Kamuy-ekasi-chasi. In the Ainu language, "osoro" means buttocks, while "koci" means hollow. It is said that this is the mark of the buttocks of the creator god, who was surprised when the skewer broke while he was roasting a whale on a wormwood skewer.



Places to learn more about Ainu culture

Noboribetsu City Historical Museum

6-27 Katakura-cho, Noboribetsu City

■ Tel/Fax 0143-88-1339
■ Opening hours April-October, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm *For November-March, until 4:00 pm
■ Days closed Mondays, the day after national holidays, December 29th - January 3rd
*Open on Mondays that fall on national holidays
■ Admission fee ¥190 (¥150) for adults, ¥60 (¥50) for elementary and junior high school students
*Prices inside the parentheses are for groups of 20 or more



Noboribetsu Bear Park (Yukara Village)

224 Noboribetsu Onsen-cho, Noboribetsu City

■ Tel 0143-84-2225
■ Fax 0143-84-2857
■ Business hours There are irregular holidays
Please check the official website for details.
■ Admission fee ¥2,650 (¥2,350) for adults,
¥1,350 (¥1,200) for 4-year-olds
up to 6th grade elementary school students
*Prices inside the parentheses are for groups of 10 or more



Upopoy (National Ainu Museum and Park)

2-3 Wakakusa-cho, Shiraoi Town

■ Tel 0144-82-3914
■ Business hours 9:00 am - 5:00pm (admission is until 1 hr before closing)
*Can be extended depending on the day of the week and the season
(Please check the website for details)
■ Regular holidays Mondays / December 29th - January 3rd
*Open on Mondays that fall on national holidays
■ Admission fee ¥1,200 (¥960) for adults, ¥600 (¥480) for high school students
*Prices inside the parentheses are for groups of 20 or more

