

**BRIDGING CULTURES THROUGH RITUALS:  
ANALYSIS OF AINU INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S CEREMONIAL BOWS  
IN HOKKAIDO, NORTHERN JAPAN**

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Indigenous cultures are significantly different from the public in that they are always deeply committed to their nature, regardless of how difficult it may be to be a minority in certain countries. Throughout history, the *Ainu* hunted, fished, and gathered and brought together people who inhabited Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Archipelago. Ainu indigenous ritual practices have their origins in rich cultural, historical, and spiritual traditions that are diverse among nations in Japan. Bridging cultures through rituals is a focal point of this analysis of Ainu indigenous people's ceremonial bows, which is an advanced continuation of my research publication in 2021, *Ethnoarchaeology of Indigenous Material Culture: A Comparative Study on Hunting and Fishing Tools with reference to the Sri Lankan and Japanese indigenous people*. Republic of Moldova, Europe: Eliva Press. Ethno-archaeological findings are often collected far from their original sites, especially the perishable materials like bows and arrows, making interpreting their functional, ideological, and symbolic meanings challenging. The purpose of this analysis is to compare hunting bows and ceremonial bows regarding the cultural rituals and their entertainment on a border basis rather than the analysis of archery. This will investigate the insights that can be obtained from bridging indigenous cultures through ritual practices like *Iyomante*, a ceremony to send the spirits of bear cubs to the divine world, to identifying and applying modern cultural practices and customs which are more inclined analogies for historical behavioral patterns. Cultural bridging shapes collaborative content and enhances social bonding, mutual understanding, and trust between distinct cultures by disseminating cognitive, emotional, and behavioral relationships. Therefore, by analyzing the form and construction of bows, this study investigates how this ceremonial bow is distinct from other bows, and how the Ainu's material culture relates to the political, philosophical, economic, or social events and how it bridges cultures of the globe. The study considers applying the ethnographic analogy that uses anthropological data to reconstruct uncertain human societies, combining imaginative thinking with formal analogies to constrain archaeological interpretation.

**Keywords:** *Ainu*, ethnoarchaeology, ceremonial bow, ethnographic analogy

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