

The Sumi People

The Sumi people are the indigenous people of northern Kamalia inhabiting what is known to Kamalians as “Sumiqtunatupiakuq” (Land of tundra and frozen ice caps). Their ancestral lands span an area the size of India in the frozen north. The Sumi people are among the largest indigenous ethnic groups on Poseidon, second only to Kamalians. Their traditional languages are the Sami languages, which are classified as members of the Finno-Lappic group of the Uralic language family.

Traditionally, the Sumi have used their environment to sustain life in an otherwise inhospitable terrain in a variety of ways, including coastal fishing and fur trapping. However, the best known Sumi livelihood is nomadic edo herding – with which about 89% of the Sumi are connected. For traditional, environmental, cultural, and political reasons, anything above the Sumiqtunatupiakuq line which divides the Kamalian continent in two is left for the various Sumi tribes’ political control and remains untouched by Kamalian society.

There are many distinct groups of Sumi living on the Kamalian tundra, each consisting of a chief, possibly a few other tribe officials, and the tribe’s nomadic settlers. These tribes set up temporary tipi-like structures in camps near an edo heard. Because few other animals are fit for the conditions found on the tundra, the edo is extremely important to the Sumi lifestyle. In many tribes, men are the typical hunters but women are also free to take part in the

hunt. A traditional hunting group consists of four or five hunters, equipped with the necessary equipment, and a few trained dogs whose sense of smell may be useful for the detection of edos. Although edos form the primary source of food, they are not always used for consumption. If a very strong, large, edo is found, it may be trained to pull some wheeled vehicles that often come in handy for transporting the group's supplies and tents. In some tribes, an edo may serve as a sort of "tribe pet" where it is kept tied near the campsite for children to play with.

The Sumi follow mainly a shamanistic belief system in which each type of animal represents a certain spirit or god of a force in nature, some positive, some negative. These beliefs change only slightly as one observes one tribe after another. For example, some tribes see the tundra wolf as the spirit of destruction and chaos because they are often a threat to the edo herds which are the main source of food for many Sumi. Others will say that they are spirits of sickness, as humans are susceptible to some diseases that wolves are immune to.

Today, with the rapid industrialization of the Kamalian Counties, some former tribe members have forsaken their nomadic lifestyles and migrated to Kamalia's cities. But the most Sumi still find their home among the edo in the vast tundras of Kamalia's Sumiqtunatupiakuq.