

Abandoned Village Is a Reminder of Fast-changing UAE

今回は、アラブ首長国連邦（UAE）の、かつて人々が暮らしていた無人の村に関する話題です。この村は1970年代に建てられましたが、わずか20年ほどで住む人がいなくなり、今では砂に埋もれた静かな場所として観光客を引きつけています。タイトルや本文にも登場する **abandoned** は、「放棄された」「見捨てられた」という意味で、**abandoned house**（空き家）や **abandoned factory**（廃工場）などのように、長く使われず放置された場所を指すときによく使われます。人の営みの痕跡が残る場所から、どんな歴史や物語を感じますか？講師と話してみましょ



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

About an hour's drive from the tall buildings of Dubai is an empty village in the sands of the United Arab Emirates. It stands as a reminder of how fast the Middle Eastern country is changing.

Built in the 1970s, the village of al-Ghuraifa was left empty twenty years later. Oil wealth has turned the UAE, home to the cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, into an international center of commerce and tourism.

In recent years, the empty village near the town of al-Madam in the Sharjah emirate has become more popular with visitors.

The village, made up of two rows of homes and a religious center, "can teach us a lot of the modern history of the UAE," said Ahmad Sukkar of the University of Sharjah. Sukkar is part of a team studying the area.

Al-Ghuraifa was built as part of a public housing project after the 1971 establishment of the United Arab Emirates, a group of seven sheikhdoms. The discovery of oil 13 years earlier was just starting to reshape the country.

The village housed around 100 members of the al-Ketbi tribe, Sukkar said. They were one of several **Bedouin** groups that until then had led a semi-**nomadic** existence. They raised animals, traveled among the desert **oases** and visited Dubai and Abu Dhabi when they were small towns.

The modern cement houses were built with local details to ease the change to settled life. The inside walls were brightly colored, and some had mosaics. The homes also had spaces where village leaders could gather locals for meetings. One house had special paper known as wallpaper showing a land with green plants and trees - a big difference from the sandy environment outside.

It is unclear what exactly caused people to leave just twenty years after the homes were built. Some say that they were driven away by evil spirits. But Sukkar says it is more likely that people left to seek a better life in the UAE's fast-growing cities.

The village had limited electricity and water, and was often hit by sandstorms. Families would have also had to deal with long traveling times across the desert to reach government jobs and schools in Dubai.

Now, the desert is slowly taking back the village. Sand has blown into the homes. Only the religious center, or mosque, remains as it was, thanks to regular cleaning by workers from nearby al-Madam.

Some **descendants** of the camel-mounted Bedouin who once traveled the desert sands still live in the Emirates' rural areas. However, many now live in cities with tall buildings, large shopping centers, and modern roads.

Foreign nationals make up the majority of the UAE's population, and some have taken an interest in its history. It is also a place for them to record music videos and social media posts. On a recent day, groups of visitors walked through the **abandoned** village.

"I wonder why they left," said Nitin Panchal, an Indian living in the UAE. "Could it be a genie," could it be "black magic?" Panchal asked. "We'll never know."

The local government recently installed fencing along with a security gate, waste containers and a parking lot. Officials made the changes because past visitors had caused damage to the village.

The new measures have taken some of the mystery from the village.

Danny Booth is from the Isle of Man, a British Crown Dependency in the Irish Sea. He said he had decided to "come and have a look before things start to change here."

“Sometimes these places are better left undisturbed, as they lose their charm when they become crowded,” he said.

I’m John Russell.

Nick El Hajj reported on this story for the Associated Press. John Russell adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Source: Abandoned Village Is a Reminder of Fast-changing UAE

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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. bedouin (n.) a nomadic person who lives in the desert in northern Africa

The Al Murrah are a bedouin group that lives in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

2. nomadic (adj.) related to moving from place to place; not living in only one location

The people of Tuva lived nomadic lives for thousands of years.

3. oasis (n.) in a desert, a small area of land with drinkable water

We stopped at an oasis on our way back from a trip into the desert.

4. descendant (n.) a person who is born to an older generation

We are descendants of humans that left Africa hundreds of thousands of years ago.

5. abandoned (adj.) left alone, usually permanently

Bodie, a California town from the Gold Rush, was abandoned in the early 20th century.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

- 1. Who lived in the village of al-Ghuraifa? Please describe them.**
- 2. Why was the village originally built? How is it connected to the history of the UAE?**
- 3. What is the village like today? Why?**
- 4. What are some things that cause people to move away from small towns and villages in large numbers?**
- 5. Are you interested in visiting the desert? If so, why? What would you like to see or experience there? If not, why not?**