

Totemism in North Asia



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UiS Scholarly Publishing Services
November 2024



<https://doi.org/10.31265/USPS.298>

ISBN: 978-82-8439-320-9

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been written without the assistance of a large number of people. Among those who need special mention are: Olga Gjerald, Stein Roar Mathisen, Irina Rosugbu, Marit Selstad, and Richard Zgusta. Countless others have helped me on the way, and are gratefully acknowledged in toto here.

It has always intrigued me that ‘modern’ people do not understand totemism. Even my colleagues and teachers in anthropology found it hard to understand or even talk about totems. Maybe I learned the hard way, in a ‘sink or swim’ situation. As I was about to enter the Shawnee dance ground for the first time in 1979, I was told that I had to have a totem in order to stay there. ‘What animal are you?’ In desperation I said ‘wolf’, which was accepted, since wolf men were scarce at the ceremonial ground. The accommodation and support of my informants in North Asia and North America deserve the greatest thank you; niyâwe.

Preface

‘... I had no clear idea of the magnitude of the task’ (Czaplicka 1914: v)

There are many reasons why this work has taken 30+ years to complete. A major factor is language. Sources are written in a plurality of related and unrelated languages. Most cultural and ethnographic studies in North Asia are written in Russian, which unfortunately is not one the author masters. Other languages used in the sources are Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Finnish, Estonian, Czech, Polish, Swedish, Norwegian, French, German, English, and many more. With few translations and lengthy texts this makes the study of the North daunting.

Another major obstacle is the style of writing in early and later studies. Texts are often highly abstract and academic, interspersed with selected data. There is a tendency to go into extreme detail, and to become highly argumentative when alternative views are proposed. Did the Ket come from Altai, the Urals or maybe from Mongolia? Such basically academic debates sidestep substantive research. When scholars in addition have no idea about a topic, such as totemism, or have a strong bias about kinship, such as against matriliney, untangling data from arguments becomes a tortuous process.

A third obstacle is time. Teaching full time in colleges and universities in Norway, has left few periods for in-depth research. My longest tenure has been at the University of Stavanger, teaching tourism at the affiliated Norwegian School of Hotel Management since 2006, with associated research into tourism in Norway and Spain. All this has contributed to restricted time pursuing my favorite topic of totemic studies. So basically the material has been sitting on my shelf for the last decades.

The author wanted to write a book that is pleasant to read. Such was not the outcome. The available information is too heterogeneous and scattered to allow a simple analysis. For this the author apologizes and asks the reader’s indulgence. Consider this a ‘thesaurus’ where all kinds of information is brought together. The book can be perused in bits or as a whole. Hopefully the reader will obtain some insight from the text, in spite of its shortcomings. There will certainly be dubious parts that the reader is asked to reflect upon and criticize – without dismissing the claims outright. As noted elsewhere this is not a definitive work, but a tentative outline of a topic that has intrigued me for years, totemism, in a setting I am partly familiar with, the northern parts of Asia and Eurasia.

In many ways the book will appear as a pastiche of sources and materials. This was partly accidental. Around 1993-1998 I wrote a short treatise on Arctic cultures (Selstad 1998a). This was based on the fairly general literature that was available to me at the time. The impetus for this work was my beginning of employment at Finnmark University College in 1993. I wanted an overview of northern cultures. Unfortunately I did not include detailed references to the sources in my writing, since I thought I would expand on the work subsequently and include more detailed sources later. Once the current writing began, it took time for me to locate the older sources, and by then I had already translated and transferred most of my earlier writing into the new document. In doing this I used fixed sections, ecology, history, etc., giving the text a fragmented character.

Yet our knowledge of the North is fragmented, in particular when going back in time. Much has to do with historical developments over the last 500 years. Indigenous peoples used to be in peaceful possession of large areas of land, native homelands. In a dramatic colonial history

all territories were lost to major societies, mainly Russia, but Norwegian, Japanese and other colonizers as well. Epidemics, military aggression, starvation and land theft were among the factors that destroyed native societies. In a matter of centuries native life was broken down and reduced to fragments and memories. What remained of native social structures often has to be studied in retrospect with sources that often are unavailable or limited.

The task then has been to sift through and reconstruct what information has been available over the last 30 years. More sources are constantly becoming available, but perusing them would take another 30 years, a task that is left to future scholars. The aim has been to show how totemism and totemic organizations formed a central part of the social structure of virtually all native societies in the North. For comparative purposes an 'ethnographic present' has been set at 1250 AD – give or take 200 years. Also for comparative purposes a predication or axiomatic claim has been made, that all northern societies were totemic at or before 1250 AD. Whether such a claim holds water will be a matter for further research to determine. At present all that can be done is to present what evidence is available to explore the once flourishing totemic organizations in North Asia.

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Introduction

Every beginning is difficult, - this applies to all science (Marx 1867)

Totemism is a form of social organization whereby families in a local community distinguish each other by means of natural tokens called totems. A totem is a symbolic ancestor in the shape of an animal, plant or some other phenomenon. Typical totems can be bear, wolf and eagle. The theoretical supposition is that local totems complement and supplement each other. There is a certain number of totems in each local community, for instance 12, and the number of local families have to correspond to this number. The basic premise is that local resources, forests and wildlife, had to be preserved and used in a sustainable manner, and by restricting the number of totemic units, here called totem clans, it was possible to limit the number of people who exploited the local resources, thus preserving them.

The basic assumption underlying this work is that totemism once was a global ideology. Two qualifications that must be made concern chronology and social complexity. In terms of chronology, roughly 10,000 years ago totemism was nearly global and universal in human societies. Today this is different. Truly totemic societies are few and far between. In relation to social complexity, societies where people are in less contact with nature usually are without totemism or show it only in vestigial forms. And in relation to chronology, most researchers assign totemism to a time period that no longer exists. This is in spite of the fact that even today thousands of people belong to totemic societies. The modern researcher simply cannot imagine that people identify themselves as animals: 'I am a wolf'. This becomes a conceptual blind-spot, and is a basic case of ethnocentrism. We cannot imagine things that do not belong in our lifeworld. Put more bluntly: we cannot imagine the lifeworld of other people.

Yet totemism has been a universal paradigm and a model for social organization across the globe for most parts of the prehistoric and historic eras. People have been bears, eagles and turtles for most of human existence – comfortably so. One reason why this is not known, is that it makes modern people uncomfortable, and nobody are more queasy about this issue than social scientists. This book lays queasiness aside and bluntly asserts that people were totemists.

North Asia or Eurasia has a central location as far as the global distribution of totemism goes. Yet scholars may awkwardly claim that native societies are not totemic. Hence it is necessary to qualify and document to what extent totemism can be found in the region. The basic premise, that totemism is a global phenomenon, will remain as a starting point. This will be a sort of premise or axiom in this book, that all or nearly all North Asian societies were totemic around 1250 AD.

An objection would be that this is un-scientific. Research should start by collecting empirical data and proceeding from there to making theories, such as about totemism. The reason for bringing out totemism at the start, is that many researchers in the North have the opposite starting point, that there is no local totemism and perhaps never was. Their task then also becomes un-scientific, to avoid all evidence of totemism by simply not recording it or avoiding the issue all together – people do not descend from animals. The reason why the contrary viewpoint is taken here, is then to get around this avoidance and tease out any information, however obscure or ignored, to investigate in what way totemism was a part of northern life.

The research then becomes fiercely empirical. Every time an investigation uncovers a person-nature relationship it must be recorded, preferably in a precise local and social context. That such information is spotted, to say the least, makes it all the more important to discover what can be learned about people's use of natural tokens in each society.

It goes without saying that this is tedious work. Academic works dealing with North Asia are written in Russian, Japanese, Polish, Estonian, French, German, English – and numerous other languages related to the north. And they are often written in a very tedious and circumspect academic style, for example criticizing each other's work while revealing little knowledge of native life. Or adding detail upon detail on everything from food and clothing to religion and rituals without really providing an overview of native society. It must be added that the author's own research also is spotty, related to a few research trips between 1993 and 2003. In fact the present work should be seen as simply a first approach to studying totemism in the area. Hopefully others will follow up with more pervasive studies of local cultures.

At the same time it is hoped that this work will contribute to a more extensive knowledge of North Asian societies. It is claimed that a knowledge of totemism and local totemic organizations will improve the understanding of native society and history. From a stable and largely peaceful existence communities in the North faced tremendous challenges in modern times, challenges that threatened their very existence. Information about the totemic organization of these communities will contribute to the understanding of what these changes were about. These were not shifting and unsettled societies, floating around the northern world in groups of clans or bands. Totem clans were well established local units, in a complementary relation with other clans in the community, together providing a stable and sustainable use of local resources. Only in the modern era of colonialism and an aggressive take-over of resources by outside interests, would clans become 'shifting'. So totemism is an important element in understanding what native societies were about, as peaceful and stable communities, and what changed in their later history. These claims may sound pretentious, but it is left to the reader to critically assess the usefulness of this contribution.

Historical population loss would affect the social organization of native peoples. North Asia covers an area of roughly 15,000,000 km². With an estimated population density of 1 person per 6 km², this would give a total population of 2,500,000. A loose estimate by language groups would give (with modern figures around 2000 AD in parentheses; sp. = speakers):

Finno-Ugric 1,000,000 (1,200,000; 680,000 sp.)
Samoyedic 200,000 (42,000; 26,000 sp.)
Ket-Yeniseyan 200,000 (10,000; 10 sp.)
Mongolian: Buryat 200,000 (500,000; 400,000 sp.)
Tungusic 200,000 (100,000; 18,000 sp.)
Nivkh 20,000 (6,000; 200 sp.)
Ainu 50,000 (35,000; 100 sp.)
Yukagiric 200,000 (1,000; 10 sp.)
Itelmen 25,000-50,000 (3,000; 100 sp.)
Kerek 5,000-10,000 (100; 10 sp.)
Koryak 30,000-60,000 (9,000; 2,000 sp.)
Alyutor 5,000 (500; 200 sp.)
Chukchi 50,000-60,000 (9,000; 2,000 sp.)
Aleut 20,000 (9,000; 700 sp.)
Eskimo 200,000 (110,000; 75,000 sp.)

What happened to the native population was a general depopulation between 1300 and 1900 AD. The main cause of population loss was epidemics such as the Black Death ca. 1345-1356. There would be many other epidemic episodes over the centuries resulting in a population decline of 50-100%. As will be seen peoples in the West and the Buryat fared better. But there were other destructive factors related to the historical expansion of Russians, Mongols and others that would affect local continuity. Military, trade and agricultural expansion were part of the invading forces. Many places were so reduced that they had too few people to maintain a totemic system. Instead there might be a few 'totemic' families left, vestiges of the former social system.

Russian scholars were circumspect about criticizing the national authorities, not least during the Communist era. One scholar in 1928 complained about 'the complete or partial extinction of the Tungus groups', and 'the pressure exercised on them by the new policy of assimilation, as adopted by the present government'. Yet this was carefully hidden in a footnote (Shirokogoroff 1979: 125).

Writings by modern scholars on the cultures of northern people are filled with ethnocentric stumbling-blocks. One area of misunderstanding concerns kinship and marriage. The areas of misconception may be termed 'primitivization' and 'self-identification'. One major area of primitivization concerns the notions of 'group marriage' and 'primitive communism'. This involves basic misinterpretations of kinship terminologies, such as mother (Mo) and mother's sister (MoSi) being known by the same term. The biased scholar reads this as evidence of 'promiscuous' marriages, while the actual relevance is that a Mo and MoSi belong to the same family. Furthermore, native villages would control a distinct territory and protect its resources. This is 'communist' in the sense that people share the same streets of a city. The 'self-identification' issue is that scholars, when they recognize something an informant says, tend to interpret it in their own social context. So what is 'appropriate' in terms of marriage, polygamy, and so on, is based on the scholars own preference and upbringing, rather than what informants may hold to be proper. There is a confusing mixture of the scholar's moralism and assumed superiority set against the views that native informants are trying to get across.

A typical example is the issue of 'endogamy' and 'exogamy'. Native societies were basically exogamous, people should marry outside their group. Yet scholars, whether Western, Russian or Japanese, come from cultures that are endogamous: people are allowed to marry close kin, sometimes as close as uncle and niece. This leads to a kind of 'schizoid' analysis, where the scholar learns about exogamous rules, but insistently looks for endogamous incidents. In most native societies first cousin marriage was frowned upon. It could be that even second cousins were not allowed to marry. In spite of this scholars might insist that 'cross-cousin marriage' was the norm, and that people practiced a form of endogamy where a few families intermarried continuously. Two comments can be made about this. One is that during late history with population loss and colonial repression, formerly strict marriage rules might be lessened, simply because it was not possible to find external partners any more, unless they came from the colonist group, that might be less desirable. The second comment is that 'cross-cousin marriage' mostly is a scholarly construction, akin to 'group marriage' and other myths. For instance, a scholar might claim that a man should marry his mother's brother's daughter (MoBrDa). Yet in native practice this could merely refer to a Wi coming from a different clan than Ego's own, perhaps even from a distant and unrelated village. In practice a 'MoBrDa' marriage might never happen.

The consistent native view was that local groups were 'exogamous'. A person was not allowed to marry into his or her own kin group. Scholars would dutifully record that social units such as clans, sometimes even collections of clans referred to as phratries and moieties, practiced exogamy; that 'members of the same clan' were prohibited from marrying each other (Shirokogoroff 1979: 120). At the same time the scholars, obnoxiously, will question this and hint that such exogamy is not practiced, since their own culture is endogamous.

Social organization in general was a stumbling-block. Russian scholars tended automatically to assume that native clans are patrilineal, that membership is reckoned through men from father (Fa) to son (So). 'The Northern Tungus clan is a group of persons which is united by a consciousness of common origin from a male ancestor, or ancestors' (ibid.). That the 'ancestor' might be female is simply ignored. There also is a bias against nature. The ancestor is implicitly specified as human, as 'male', which would exclude totemism, the descent from animals or natural beings. Yet there is a partial reservation in the definition. A clan need not descend from one ancestor, but can have many progenitors, which neatly fits into a totemic idea, since animals such as wolves are found everywhere in the north and can fill the role as clan forebears. Except that this relationship is not acknowledged. The researcher tends to insist that an ancestor must be human. It will be noted in different parts of this work that such a male and human bias is shared by nearly all researchers, whether Russian, Western, Chinese, Japanese, or other modern scholars, even those of native origins. Strong ideological mechanisms induce modern people to distance themselves from nature. In the case of totemism the result is devastating. Scholars write as if totemism does not exist, even if met with direct statements of totemic ancestry: 'My family descends from a wolf'. This creates the frustrating but also challenging task of trying to sift through the hang-ups of scholars in order to find references to totemism in the often overwhelming material. Informants constantly talk about their close relations with nature, while the scholar creates a theoretical and conceptual distance from such statements.

One important point that Russian scholars managed to convey is that clans are a basic institution in North Asian societies. 'A clan is a social form without which the Tungus ethnical unit', the society, 'could not exist'. It 'forms the basis of the whole social organization of the Tungus' (Shirokogoroff 1979: 120). If only the scholars had been able to understand what a 'clan' is, then the presentation would be perfect, but they would automatically revert to patriarchy, 'self-reproduction and self-preservation' (ibid.). What is missing is to see the clans in relation to each other, that they are part of a wider social system that in its combinations and complexity constitutes the native society. Instead scholars would get into endless speculations about 'clans', what they are called and how they originated, without necessarily relating this to conditions on the ground.

To scholars it was important to view each clan as an independent unit, since this was how they viewed social groups or incorporations in the modern world. 'Every clan has its own history'; it exists 'independent of the ethnical unit' (Shirokogoroff 1979: 121). At the same time it is not clear what such a 'history' is, it is 'sometimes short, sometimes long' (ibid.). That a clan needs to be understood in relation to other clans, in particular within a totemic system, tends to be ignored by the scholars. Every bear clan would have a 'history' or clan story, both similar to and different from the clan stories of other bear clans, and closely paralleled by the origin stories of other clans. The scholar's view that every organization, such as the bear clan, should have 'one' originator, comes up against the shifting composition and co-existence of clans that together make up the social fabric of each native community. Of course it is tempting to see all members of a clan as related. I met a Norwegian man named

Bjørn (bear), who was proud that his name was also found in Russia, Medved. This is basic to totemic thinking, that people who share a totem also share a relationship, usually thought of as siblings. But whether Russian ‘bears’ would have the same opinion is dubious.

It will be shown in this book that totemic organizations are universal phenomena in North Asia. First of all this concerns the composition of each local community or native village as a collection or series of distinct totem clans, such as salmon, seal, crow, eagle, bear, wolverine, and so on. Secondly the totemic organizations share certain premises. These are not random collections of totemic groups. For one thing totems tend to come in pairs or as complementary symbols. A wolf can be contrasted with a dog, a lynx with a panther. The canines, wolf, fox and dog, contrast with the felines, lynx, panther and tiger. Such contrasts and groupings are found everywhere in nature, and provide the symbolic ‘tools’ of totemic systems. Most particularly this concerns units such as totem clans, paired clans, phratries and moieties. Many social relations are dyadic, such as husband-wife and other paired roles. But relations quickly become complex. A phratry is a group of similar totem clans; different phratries could be fishes, birds, or animals. Phratries typically represent a tripartite division. Moieties by contrast represent ‘dual organizations’, two similar units, typically representing the two sides of a village settlement. The phratries will span this divide, so that each moiety has a similar number of totem clans from each of the typically three phratries. This creates a 2x3 pattern of totem clans for local settlements, that can easily be expanded to 12 clans, or if chiefly clans are added, 14 totem clans in a village. Immediately it must be added that this is one possible totemic organization in a local community. There will be countless variations and exceptions, which is the subject that this book tries to explore.

The structure of the book

Each major ethnic group is given a shorter or longer chapter in the book. While the emphasis is on totemism and totemic organization, a full range of social and cultural adaptations is presented for each group. This is because the totemic organization is thought to be intertwined with social and cultural life, including the ecologic adaptation and habitat.

The presentation of each ethnic group will start with the ethnonym and its variants. The territory, prehistoric and historic population, and local communities or settlement forms follow next. For each group there will be sections headed: Ecology, History, Economy, Kinship, Differentiation, Politics, Religion and Summary – with some variations. The emphasis will be on differentiation, also referred to as social organization and integration. Based on the available information this section may be further subdivided into sub-sections on totems, clans, phratries, moieties, settlement integration, and similar headings. The aim is to paint a fairly full picture of the prehistoric and early historic totemic organization of each ethnic group in North Asia, with the caveat that this picture will always be tentative and open to revisions. Science, as I see it, will always be ‘work in progress’, testing, refuting, and nuancing what is known. Yet science is also work. We cannot be satisfied with not knowing, just as a carpenter cannot be satisfied with almost making a chair. Like a dog with a bone, a scientist should continue chipping away at the sources, gathering more information. This is a never-ending task.

Two chapters in the book are based on original research and fieldwork. Peoples in the Amur-Sakhalin region were visited in 2000 and 2003, though all on the mainland. The Ainu of Hokkaido were visited in 1993, along with subsequent visits to an Ainu cultural center in Tokyo. As will be noted, one starting point was the ‘clans’ and ‘phratries’ of the Amur

Tungus. Another intake is the rich totemic and cultural documentation of the Ainu people. Yet another are the experiences and limited knowledge I gained from residing 13 years in Finnmark, the northernmost part of Norway and an ancient Sami territory. These angles, expanded to include northern peoples as a whole, should provide a fairly extensive view of regional totemism.

A separate Conclusion tries to bring together what has been learned about North Asian totemism. Some patterns of totemic organization are suggested that are highly tentative. Yet the claim is that such an organization helped each community manage and preserve its resources for decades and centuries in fairly peaceful and sustainable ways. Some totems are found in almost every community across the North, such as bear and hare. Their main significance is in the local distribution of totem clans, a complement of family units, each with its totem, that together handle local resources. These local organizations in turn point to a wider distribution and relevance of totemism in fields of totemic organization reaching up to the tribal and national level. The local level is basic, but totemism was a part of the large-scale formation of northern societies for thousands of years. Every facet has to be examined, from the individual up to trans-national alliances, and hopefully the present book contributes to such an examination. The aim is to bring totemism as a form of social organization into focus.

Some notes and clarifications

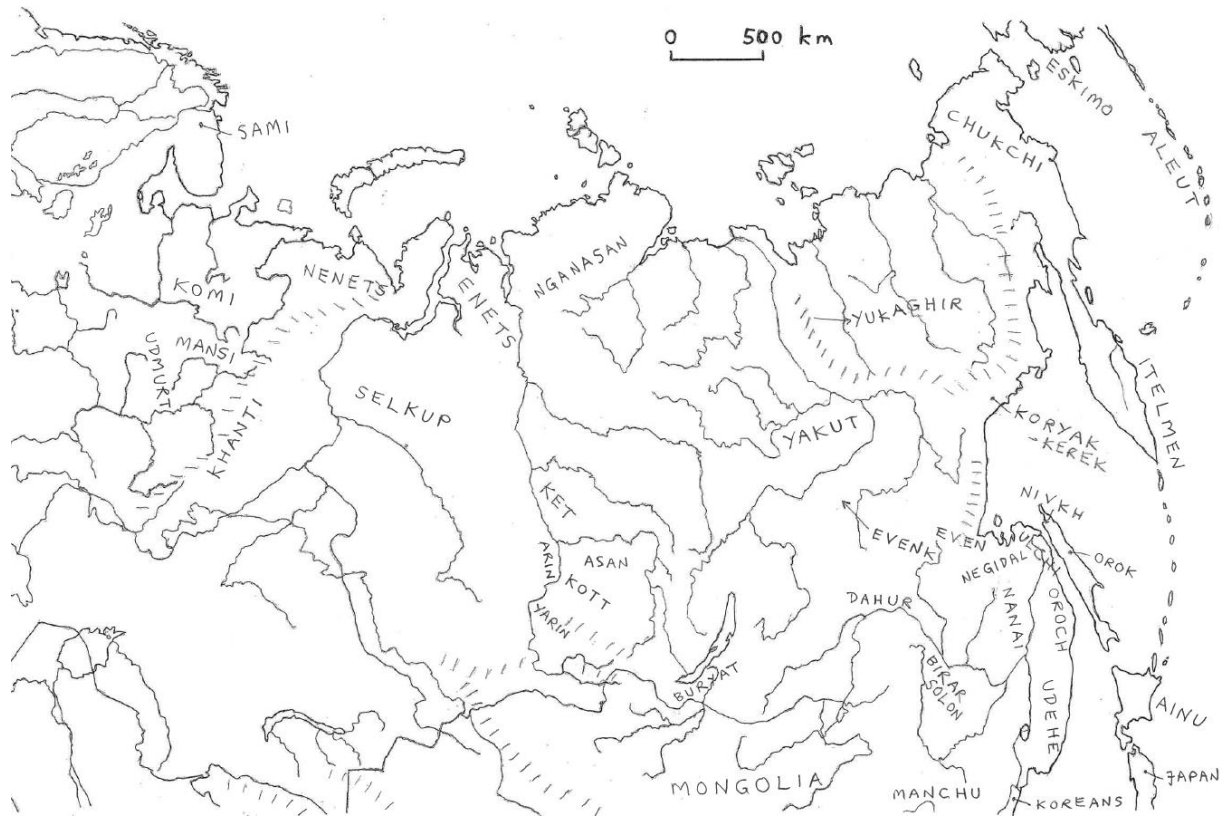
At various points in the book lists of native clan names and totem designations are presented. These are given in an ad hoc ‘phonemic’ order. The basic distinctions are: labial-dental-velar and stop, affricate, gliding, nasal and semi-vowel sounds; p-t-k-č-s-l-m-n-y-w-V (for vowel). All sounds are pushed into this mold; p with b-f-v, t with d-dh, k with kh-x-g, č with ch-ts-dzhy, s with sh-z-zh, l with r, y with j-ȳ, w with v, V with h-i-e-a-o, etc. Since many names appear in the sources in a random vernacular or impressionistic manner some liberties have been taken in placing such names in a list; the reader’s indulgence is requested.

In order to avoid confusion and to simplify totem lists, composite animal names are written with a hyphen, e.g., white-fox. Please note that the word ‘chiefly’ is used to refer to a chief’s affairs, e.g., ‘chiefly totem’.

For kin terms the following abbreviations are used: Br = brother (pl. Brs); BrLa = brother-in-law; Ch = child (pl. Chn); Da = daughter; Fa = father; GrFa = grandfather; Hu = husband; La = in-law; Mo = mother; oBr = older brother; Pa = parent; Si = sister; So = son; stepMo = step-mother; Wi = wife; yBr = younger brother; etc.

When population figures are cited they are usually estimates, and often low counts; for this reason many figures will be followed by ‘+’, e.g., ca. 500+ people, indicating that a population of roughly 500 is suggested, but it might be larger. This is to remind the reader that the quoted figures often are minimal, and may have been (considerably) larger.

Common abbreviations include: E = east; km = kilometer(s); km2 = square kilometer(s); m = meter(s); N = north; R = ruble; S = south; W = west; etc.



Native ethnic groups in North Asia

Totemism in Western North Asia or Eurasia

While Finno-Ugric people are mostly outside North Asia, they are part of the North Eurasia region, and have many points of contact with people to the East. As is well known Siberia includes the regions east of the Urals, but it may also be said to have an outlier west of the mountains. This is one reason why the Sami and related people are included in the present survey of totemism in the North.

Another reason for including the northern Finno-Ugric speakers is that their relations with the environment closely mirror those of people farther to the east. Many of the same animals and other natural beings are found here. Also the main adaptations were similar, people relying on hunting, fishing and gathering natural resources. There were also similar developments and new ways of life, in that people took up reindeer herding in the far north. This should allow for several points of comparison across this wide area.

The similarities extend to totemic organizations. While totemism as such is not known among the modern Sami, there are hints at the former existence of local communities or villages where each community included a series of descent groups or totem clans. Totemism in the area would be found by 4000 BC, and may have persisted among the Sami until 1300 AD. In other Finno-Ugric societies the evidence is much clearer. The Udmurt have retained memories of totem clans, phratries and moieties until the present, and in some ways maintain a social system based on complementary kin groups. They provide a basis for comparison that can be extended throughout the North, not only in North Asia, but in North America as well, a Circumpolar occurrence. This being said (or written), a closer look at each society in turn will be taken, hopefully to get a substantive grip on the complex topic of totemism.

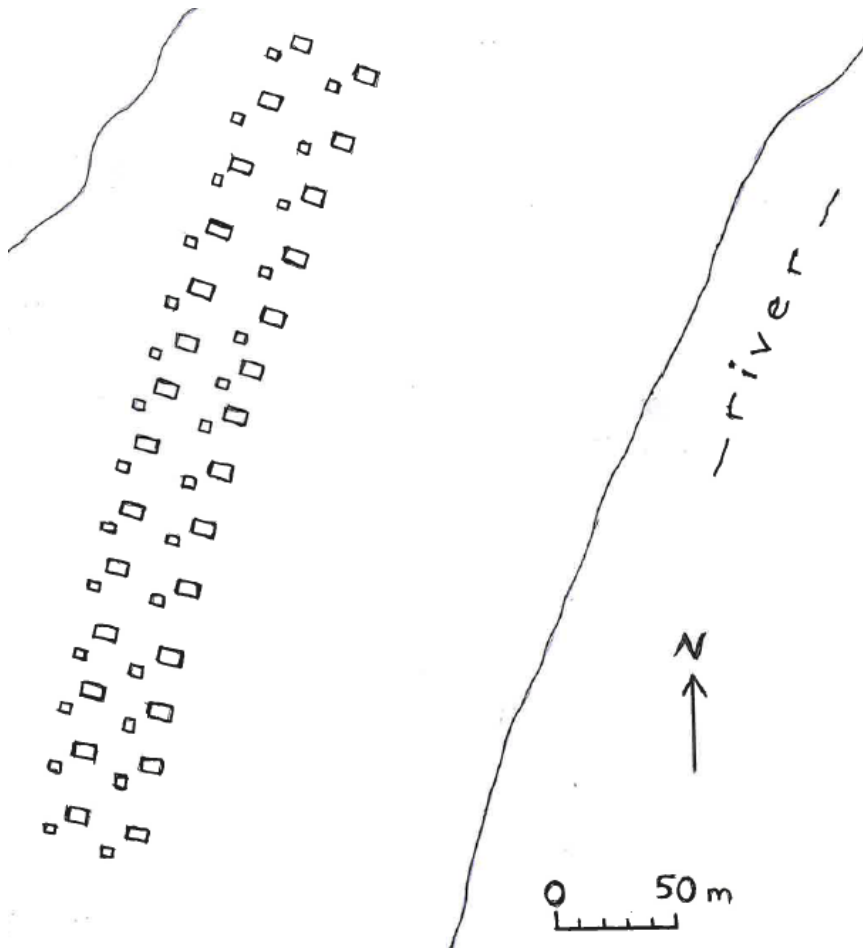
The Sami and Northern Scandinavia

Aka: Saami; formerly called Lapp, now considered derogatory; etc. There are at least 4 Sami languages: Kola Sami, North Sami, Lule-Sami and South Sami.

The Sami are indigenous peoples of the 'North Calotte', the area between the White Sea and the Norwegian Sea, with living areas in Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The region comprises 700,000+ km², comfortably accommodating 80,000+ people.

Population estimates: 1250: 70,000+; 1600; 25,000+; 1890: 30,000+; 1959: ca. 40,000, of whom 30,000 speakers, including 1,800-2,200 Sami in Russia, with 1300-1400 speakers; 1970: ca. 60,000, with 25,000 speakers; including ca. 1,900-2,500 Sami in Russia, with 1,000 speakers; 1980: ca. 75,000, and 20,000 speakers; including 2,000-3,000 Sami in Russia, with 600-800 speakers; 1998: ca. 100,000, with ca. 15,000 speakers, including 2,500-3,500 Sami in Russia, with 400-700 speakers.

Ancient Sami villages may have consisted of 6-30+ houses placed in 1-2+ rows along a river, sometimes persisting into modern times (Dikkanen 1965: 14).



Tentative layout of Sami village at Sirma around 1250 AD

Ecology

The North Calotte offers a mixed landscape of mountains, tundra, forests, rivers, lakes and coastal areas. Like several other people in North Eurasia, many Sami have shifted from a

hunting and gathering adaptation to reindeer herding. While only a part of the Sami population are occupied as reindeer herders, this has become an identifying occupation for the ethnic group. At the same time, most people of Sami descent live near the coast and engage in a fishing-farming life style as well as other occupations.

History

The Sami have been on the North Calotte for at least 6,000 years. They spread to southern Scandinavia in prehistoric times, possibly as early as 1000 BC. In historical times they were subjected to colonization by the state powers of Russia, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

Early residents in Northern Norway probably were totemists. An interesting site is a place called Gropbakkeengen in eastern Finnmark, Norway.



Gropbakkeengen ca. 3400 BC

(havet = ocean; myr = swamp; fjellfot = foot of cliff; verkstedplass = work area)

My interpretation is that there are 10 totem clans in this location, divided into 2 moieties, north and south, and 3 phratries, fish, animal and bird. The distribution of clans, starting in the northwest and moving east, south and west, can be suggested as: (1) seal, (2) bear, (3) duck, (4) snipe, (5) swan, (6) salmon, (7) reindeer, (8) loon, (9) raven, and (10) eagle. Other distributions are possible. The intention is simply to show the distributional aspect of totemic clans.

The ancient population of Northern Norway was assimilated into the Sami population over the course of centuries.

By 500 AD the Sami had expanded their population over the inland and mountains to Southern Norway. By this time an invading Germanic population was expanding from the South, ancestral to ethnic Norwegians. Full-scale Danish-Norwegian colonization of northernmost Norway began around 1600 AD. From around that time the Sami peoples faced relentless encroachments and assimilation efforts from the major societies to the South. This would only relent in 1988, when the Sami right to self-government was decided in Norway, other countries somewhat hesitantly following suit.

Economy

The Sami in prehistoric and early historic times had a mixed adaptation. One is a livelihood based on coastal fishing, hunting, gathering and agriculture, represented by so-called Coast Sami. There also was inland hunting and gathering. This latter way of life was gradually supplanted by reindeer herding, as the Sami picked up this adaptation from people in Siberia to the east.

These diverse livelihoods entail that there is considerable variation in how Sami culture and society have developed. Both scholarly and popular interest has focused on the reindeer Sami, with a colorful and distinctive nomadic lifestyle in the tundra and mountains. Yet both the coast and the inland must be considered in order to understand how Sami society has developed over time.

Kinship

The Sami have an interesting kinship system that is partly bilateral and partly generational. The generational aspect, where kin terms distinguish groups with a patrilineal bias, may be mostly related to the adaptation of reindeer nomadism. The basic pattern seems to be bilateral, akin to the Hawaiian or Iroquoian terminologies (Harris 1975).

Differentiation

Bird clans are frequently found among Finno-Ugric people, as elsewhere in the north. This is because birds are both visible and prevalent, and hence useful as totems. A contrived example would be 'pigeons' and 'hawks' as political metaphor. Totemic ideas are absent among the modern Sami yet must have been common in ancient times.

Old totems that can be suggested include: fish (guolli), cod (dårski, rudnut), coalfish (sáidi), pike (hávga), perch (vuskun), salmon (luossa, doaddjin, duovvi), snake (gærbmaš), worm (matto), seal (njuorjo), whale (fális), killer-whale (fákkan), small-whale (båssu, nisso), bird (låddi), sparrow (cicci), titmouse (gazzet), wagtail (beštur), woodpecker (čaihni), cuckoo (giekka), ptarmigan (rievsat, girun), woodcock (hurri), capercaillie (čukča), crow (vuoražas), raven (gáranass), loon (gákkur, dâvta, dâktag), snipe (čoavžo), cormorant (skarfa), duck (suorsi), goose (čuonji), swan (njukča), crane (guorga), owl (skuolfi), eagle-owl (lidno), hawk (falli), buzzard (boaimaš, biekkán), eagle (guoskin), fish-eagle (čiekča), bear (guovža), wolverine (gætki), otter (čævris), marten (nætti), weasel (časki, nætti), ermine (buoida, goaigi), wolf (gumpe, navdi, stalpi, gakšo), fox (rieban, njállá), dog (bæna, bædna, rakka, hárta), lynx (albas, gaupr), cat (bussa, gatto), animal (haddai), reindeer (boazo, gáddi, sarvis),

deer (sarvag), elk-moose (sarva), mouse (sappan), beaver (maddjit), squirrel (oarri), hare (njoammil), tree (muorra), pine (bæcci), grass (rássi, suoidni), sea (mærra, appi), sky (albmi), thunder (bajan, dierbmis), earth (æna, ædnam), sun (bæivaš), etc.

Sami family names are interesting because they resemble ‘clan names’ among the Tungus and others. There is a possibility that some names were shared throughout the North, possibly with an ancient totemic significance. (F = Finnish; N = Norwegian; S = Swedish):

Bigga, Bækka	biekkan (buzzard-kite); bæggo (hazel-grouse)
Basso (F)	båssu (small-whale); boazo (reindeer)
Besko	baiski (gull); bižos (plover)
Baal, Palo (name: Paul)	falis (whale); falli (hawk); albas (lynx); albmi (sky)
Balto, Pelto	falisbeštur (wagtail); boazo (reindeer)
Pulk (‘sledge’)	falis (whale); fakkan (killer-whale)
Bals (‘grass mound’)	falis (whale); basso (small-whale)
Buljo, Pulju (uncertain)	buoida (ermine); bajan (thunder)
Pentha, Beanta (‘supporting stick’)	bædna (dog)
Bongo	biekkan (buzzard-kite)
Punski	bæna (dog)
Boine, Poini	boaimaš (buzzard-kite); buoida (ermine); bæna (dog)
Pava, Påve	buoida (ermine); bæivaš (sun)
Turi, Daur (name)	dåvta (loon); doaddjin (salmon)
Triumpf (loan word)	čoavžo (snipe); dierbmis (thunder)
Tomma	dabmut (trout)
Kitti (F)	gætki (wolverine); gáddi (reindeer)
Kukkea, Kukim (‘long’)	gákkur (loon); giekka (cuckoo)
Gaski, Kaski	guoskin (eagle); gætki (wolverine); gakšo (wolf)
Kussan	gazzet (titmouse); guoskin (eagle)
Garro	girun (ptarmigan); garanass (raven); guorga (crane)
Kurrak	guolli (fish); guorga (crane)
Korvatus (‘meek’)	gærbmaš (snake); skuolfi (owl); guovža (bear)
Kemi, Giemma (place)	gumpe (wolf)
Gaino, Kaino, Kainu (‘rope’)	gumpe (wolf)
Kuva, Qwiwe (name)	guovža (bear)
Gaup, Kaup (‘trade’)	gaupe (N), albas (lynx); guovža (bear)
Kuoljok (‘rammed’)	guolli (fish); guovža (bear); goaigi (ermine)
(Chuda -> Sjudda)	cicci (sparrow)
Spein (name: Swen)	sappan (mouse); sæibi (tail)
Sikko, Sikkof (‘wipe off’)	skuolfi (owl); čiekča (fish-eagle)
Sokki, Sokea (‘blind’)	čiekča (fish-eagle); časki (weasel, marten); (wood-hen)
Skaal	skuolfi (owl)
Skolp	stalpi (wolf); skuolfi (owl); skarfa (cormorant)
Skum	skarfa (cormorant)
Skind, Skinna	guoskin (eagle)
Siri (N name: Sigrid)	suorsi (duck); sarvag (deer); čævris (otter)
Sara, Sarak (uncertain)	suorsi (duck); sarvis (reindeer); sarva (elk-moose)
Somby, Sombio (place)	čuonji (goose)
Sunna (name: Susannah)	čuonji (goose); čaihni (woodpecker)
Zangol (‘long’)	čuonji (goose)
Sjudda, Chuda (people: Chud)	saidi (coalfish); čukča (capercaillie); suoidni (grass)
Sevä	čoavžo (snipe); čævris (otter)

Svonni, (uncertain)	čuonji (goose)
Labba (uncertain)	rieban (fox); albas (lynx); albmi (sky)
Logje ('meek')	lådđi (bird); lidno (eagle-owl); rakka (dog); (seal)
Luuso, Lossua, Luvso	luossa (salmon)
Rist (name: Christine)	rassi (grass); rievsat (ptarmigan)
Rust, Raste	raste (thrush)
Lindi ('blind')	lidno (eagle-owl)
Lango ('long')	rakka (dog)
Rimpi ('big belly')	rieban (fox)
Reis (place)	rievsat (ptarmigan)
Magga (name: Margaret)	madjit (beaver)
Motka, Muotka	matto (worm); madjit (beaver)
Mienna	njoammil (hare); muorra (tree); mærra (sea)
Nutti (N name: Knut)	nætti (marten, weasel); navdi (wolf)
Nango ('long')	njuorjo (seal)
Niia (uncertain)	njuorjo (seal); navdi (wolf); njalla (fox); (hare)
Jatko	njukča (swan)
Juuso, Jukso ('bow')	njukča (swan)
Jannok (uncertain)	njukča (swan); njoammil (hare)
Warta, Vars ('young horse, colt')	vuoražas (crow); oarri (squirrel)
Valio	oarri (squirrel)
Vinka (uncertain)	ædnan (earth)
Hætta, Haetta	haddai (animal); havda (common-eider)
Utsi ('small')	cicci (sparrow); hårti (dog)
Oskal	vuskun (perch)
Omnia (S name: Anund)	albmi (sky); æna (earth)
Eira (name: Eric)	hurri (woodcock); oarri (squirrel)
Huuva, (uncertain)	havga (pike); havda (common-eider)
etc.	

These are just a few Sami last names, included here to indicate how an impressionistic comparison with totem terms can be done. A more comprehensive comparison will be attempted for other ethnic groups later on, where the totemic link is more explicit.

This is the first of a series of comparisons between 'clan' or family names and potential totem emblems. These are tentative comparisons. Several scholars claim that so-called 'clan' names are not totemic. Yet the names are mostly untranslatable, so the question of reference is open. Most totems are kept secret, so references are usually indirect or hinted at.

The mixed origin of names seems clear, variously based on personal names, place names, nicknames and more. Conspicuously missing in conventional etymologies are totemic references. All totemic indications would be removed following the external colonization of Sami lands after 1600. Modern Sami personal names are almost all of Nordic or Biblical origins.

Several family names are supposed to be based on female names, Sigrid, Susannah, etc. Whether this hints at matrilineality is unclear, but matrilineal residence probably was common in the early days.

Based on a highly impressionistic view of totem animals and family names, the following series of totem clans can be suggested in a prehistoric Sami village (as a hypothesis): salmon, small-whale, goose or swan, eagle, bear, marten, wolf, fox, reindeer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, sky, and earth. This would be a tentative series or complement of clans in a village such as Sirma, but considering the large number of potential clans, local variations or permutations would be common, such as hawk taking the place of eagle. The totem list is provisional, and must be considered in relation to the more firmly established totemic systems further east.

Politics

Sami leadership was broken by external colonialism after 1600 AD. In early history there is mention of Sami 'kings' or leaders, but this independence was brutally broken in colonial times. A new age would dawn with the establishment of the Sami Parliament in Norway in 1988. This has been followed by similar parliaments and institutions being established in neighboring countries. This would give the Sami a new-won freedom and opportunities for strengthening their way of life, culture and language.

Religion

The native Sami religion was nature based, with spirits ranging from the sun, moon and earth to various animal species, including reindeer. As with many other northern people, shamanism became a prominent form of worship after the area had been colonized by outside forces. Forced Christianization meant that people no longer could celebrate their annual ceremonies openly, while the shaman could operate in private.

Culture

One striking cultural artifact is the Sami shaman's drum. These are covered with natural symbols including the female creators of the environment and humans, besides animals, trees and natural entities.

The Sami adopted non-native names at an early date, such as Pierra, 'Peter'. A few family names may indicate a totemic origin, such as Kuva for bear or Skolp for owl, but this would depend on careful scrutiny of documented spellings. Names as a potential source of totemic information will be noted throughout this book, usually to indicate how limited our knowledge is of this cultural artefact.

Summary

There are several reasons why Sami people abandoned a totemic organization in early historic times. The nomadic adaptation changed their relation to nature in some ways, with a heavy reliance on one animal species, the reindeer. External colonization played a major role in the cultural modification, with a loss of autonomy and forced Christianity after 1600. Yet behind the many changes a near-totemic background can be hinted at for the Sami communities. This will provide a limited and tentative basis for comparison as this work continues on to more firmly totemic North Asian cultures.

Komi

Aka: Zyryan, Zyrian, Komi-Zyryan, Saran, Izhma, Komi-Vojtyr, Permyak, Perm, an appellation shared with Udmurt, etc. Komi is the self-designation for the people (Wikipedia n.d.).

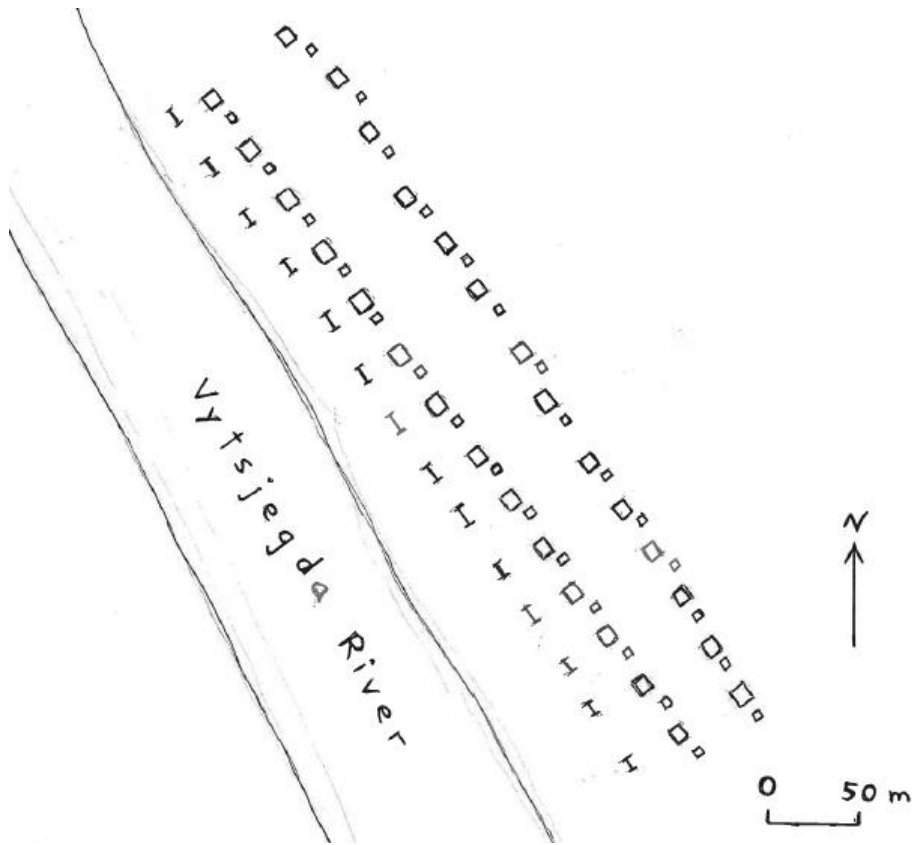
The Komi could have been a great nation. They occupy northern Russia and western Siberia, basically the northern part of Russia west of the Urals, except for Karelia and the Kola Peninsula. The area comprises 1,000,000+ km². Today's Komi Republic covers 415,900 km². Yet control everywhere is held by Russians, and the Komi language and culture is threatened. Based on the original territory, it can be assumed that the Komi population was 330,000+ in 1250 AD.

The Komi nation constitutes the largest of the so-called 'small people groups' in Siberia. Population estimates are: ca. 1920: ca. 260,000; 1959: 287,000, 256,000 speakers; 1970: 322,000, 266,000 speakers; 1979: 480,000; 1989: 344,500; 1994: 285,000 speakers; 2002: 520,000; 2010: 330,000, 160,000 speakers; 2020: 99,609+ speakers.

The Komi people are divided into 2 main groups, Zyryan or Northern Komi and Permyak or Southern Komi. These are further subdivided into numerous groups. For the Northern Komi: Komi-Zyryan (several groups); Kola-Komi; Izhma-Komi (aka *Ižvatas*, *Izhamesky*); Nenets-Komi; Ob-Lyapin-Komi; Mezen-Vashka-Komi (aka *Udorasa*, *Udorski*); Vym-Komi (aka *Emvatas*, *Vymsky*); Ob-Komi; Pechora-Komi (aka *Pečorasa*, *Pechoran*); Vychegda-Komi (aka *Ežatas*, Lower, Central and Upper *Vychegdan*); Syktyvkar-Sysola-Komi (aka *Syktyvsayas*, *Prisyktyvkarsky*, Upper *Sysolan*); and Luza-Letka-Komi (aka *Lusza*, *Luzsko-Letsky*). And for the Permyak: Komi-Permyak (aka Northern Permyak); Yazva-Komi; Upper-Kama-Komi; and Southern Permyak. Several of these groups must be assumed to be displaced or moved away from their old areas, such as the Ob-Komi. The many groups and dialects indicate the ancient and wide distribution of the Komi people.

The Komi settlements consisted of 'large, multi-courtyard' villages, 'which were typically constructed along or close to a river'. The houses were made of wood and were 'square-shaped' or slightly oblong. Two square house types are called 'Sysol' and 'Vym'. In tundra-like areas people live in 'chum' or tipi tents (Wikipedia n.d.).

Precisely how a Komi village looked is difficult to know precisely, but 1-2+ rows of houses along a river can be envisioned. Each house might be 6-8 x 8-10 m. 'The villages look as they did before: grey log houses in rows near the river' (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 202). Considering the villages were 'large', they may have held up to 60+ houses.



Conceptual Komi village on Vytsjegda River



Komi village (Sputnik Mediabank, Internet)

Ecology

The vast land of the Komi consists of rivers, lakes, forests or taiga, tundra to the north, and mountains far to the east. This area provided ample resources for hunting, fishing, gathering and other nature-based harvesting practices.

History

The Komi had a fairly independent existence until 1200 AD. By that time Russians had begun to arrive along the rivers and gradually made settlements at places such as Arkhangelsk, at the mouth of Dvina. Still Komi in the inland continued to live relatively freely for hundreds of years.

Apparently the Komi avoided most of the epidemics that racked Europe in the period 1345-1560. Perhaps this was due to their fairly isolated and secluded location and the stability and self-sufficiency of their communities. It may also be that Komi people moved away from areas affected by epidemics, concentrating in the eastern part of their territory near the Urals, farther away from European centers and Russian towns.

Significantly the Komi obtained some independence after Russian clergy fought to control the tribute tax around 1385. A local bishop was allowed to stay in control. He also invented a writing system for the Komi language, and people became literate after 1390.

Later the Komi would experience a hard Russian colonization. 'In the 1500s, many Russian migrants began to move into the region', starting a long process of colonization and 'attempts at assimilating the Komis'. Ust-Sysolsk, renamed Syktyvkar around 1930, was set up 'as the chief Russian city in the region in the 18th century'. The Russians established 'penal settlements in the north for criminals and political prisoners. There were several Komi rebellions in protest against Russian rule and the influx of Slav settlers, especially after large numbers of freed serfs arrived in the region from the 1860s. A national movement to revive Komi culture also emerged' (Wikipedia n.d.).

During the Revolution the Komi tried to establish their own state with the help of political prisoners. Once the Communists took control in 1919 they had a mixed view of the natives. They partly supported Komi culture with a policy of 'indigenization' (korenizatsiya), but increased collectivization and industrialization 'damaged the Komis' traditional way of life'. 'Stalin's purges of the 1930s devastated the Komi intelligentsia'; the region was used for prisons or concentration camps, Gulag. The Komi became 'a minority in their own lands', and 'Komi language and culture were suppressed' into the 1950s. 'Since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Komi have reasserted their claims to a separate identity' (Wikipedia n.d.). In spite of this the number of Komi speakers continues to drop, and suppression continues.

Economy

'Hunting, gathering and fishing have long been the main source of food for the Komi people'. Resources included meat, fish, berries and mushrooms (Wikipedia n.d.). People must also have had knowledge of domesticated plants and animals for a long time. Some grains such as wheat and rye may have been cultivated and used for porridge, dumplings and beer. Other products could be traded from the Russians and other people to the south. It is thought that the Russian national dish 'pelmeni' originated with the Komi and Udmurt (ibid.).

The main hunting season was from October to March, when people stayed in hunting camps. From April to September they stayed in villages and fished in the rivers. It is worth pointing out that in Soviet times fighting broke out over hunting areas, because local territories were not respected. Before this, hunters would cut totem marks (pas) on trees to indicate their use of local resources. Unfortunately the design of such marks, also referred to as kin signs, is not known (Siikala & Ulyshev 2016: 211).

Kinship

Unlike the Udmurt, the Komi did not preserve a traditional tribal society. In modern times family and kin ties were reckoned patrilineally, yet traces of matriliney can still be noted.

Because of the Orthodox Christian influence the Komi kinship system and marriage institutions today are similar to those of the Russians.

It is assumed here that the Komi originally, i.e., ca. 1250 AD, had a kinship system with a matrilineal alignment. Children would be considered to belong to their mother's house and family. Beyond this the bilateral tendency might be strong, that people on both sides of the family were considered of equal importance. Nor was patrilocality excluded, a So might well occupy the house if no married Da was present.

Differentiation

Potential Komi totems include: fish, pike, bird, fowl, grouse, wood-cock, cuckoo (kök), woodpecker, thrush, nightingale, wagtail, swallow, duck, loon, gull (kala), crow (kyrniš), raven (krynnysh), hawk, eagle, bear, ermine, wolf, dog, fox, lynx, cat, roe-deer, reindeer, elk-moose, cow, ox, horse, sheep, squirrel (ur), hare, house, axe, ski, grass, fern, tree, fir, birch, forest, taiga, red, blue, white, black, shadow, water, river, stone, earth, thunder, sky, sun, etc.

Of Komi totemism little is known other than there tended to be several bird totems, such as sparrow, grouse, duck and eagle. Otherwise there may have been a full range of totems, including fish, pike, sturgeon, salmon, bear, wolf, roe-deer, reindeer, elk-moose, horse, cow, hare, water, sky, and more. As noted elsewhere, birds are prominent in the northern landscape – both by sight and sound. A central aspect of a totem is that it is present in the environment, both physically and symbolically, and birds fit this requirement.

There are hints that certain animals bore a special significance. For instance, it is noted that the pike and duck are sacred animals. If these animals in particular are held as distinct, this may point to an underlying moiety structure, where the noted animals represent the two sides of the village, subsuming all the totem clans found on each side. Yet the information is much too sparse to state this clearly – it is merely a hint.

References to 12 brothers in myths may indicate a system of 12 local totem clans. Based on very scanty evidence the following totem clans can be suggested in a Komi village: pike, trout, duck, eagle, bear, sable, wolf, fox, deer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, sky, and earth. This would ignore a case where a village might have several bird clans, sparrow, grouse, duck and eagle, in which case the other totems might be reduced accordingly, pike, trout, bear, wolf or fox, deer, hare, sky, and earth. Which option is more likely would depend on careful scrutiny of all extant sources. 'Sky' and 'earth' are thought to represent chiefly clans, that could also be represented by other totems such as duck and bear or pike.

The duck frequently appears in Komi mythology, and can almost be spoken of as a national totem (Konakov et al. 2003). That totemism extended beyond the local totemic organization in villages is further known from many northern societies. Each village would be represented by a chief and a totem, in a group of villages or a district one totem would be assigned to a leader, and so on up to the national or tribal level.

Politics

The traditional political system of the Komi nation is not well known. It can be assumed that local leaders would get together and form regional and tribal confederacies. For the last 300 years or so people could not practice their political independence. The Komi have been trying

to reassert their national identity since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Siikala et al. 2016). Hopefully there will be room for people exercising their own political aspirations.

Religion

In the ancient religion nature was controlled by a number of master-spirits (ajka). The main such spirits or creators were associated with the sky and earth. Otherwise little is known about the native gods, since people were Christianized early on.

The pre-Christian Komi religion is not well known. The creators En and Omyol have been documented, thought of as a good and bad spirit. It has been noted that Komi religion focused on the natural world. En may represent the sky, and Omyol the lower world. Other deities could be the sun, moon, earth, wind, thunder and more. Around 1385 the Komi ancestors or elders 'had many deities, whose wooden images stood in dedicated cult sanctuaries for higher-ranking deities, while those of domestic deities were kept in Komi dwellings' (Wikipedia n.d.). Precisely who or what the wooden images represented is not known. What little is known is that sacred animals were honored in Komi culture, such as the pike and the duck. The bones of these animals were used to make protective amulets.

In the old days the Komi had a cycle of annual ceremonies. At a fall festival in October there were games such as swings. There was a little known festival in January to celebrate the new year. 'Being Orthodox believers' in historic times, 'the Komi went to' local 'houses and sang' songs 'at Christmas' (Konakov et al. 2003:282).

At a spring festival in March-April rituals included a Nightingale Dance. There also were games such as swings, similar to the fall, indicating a connection between the two festivals. It is even possible that the two festivals may have been related, women organizing the swings in the fall and men in the spring.

In the summer several rituals took place. There was a horse festival in July-August, with a horse race along the local river. Women were not allowed to attend, perhaps a recent development. Anciently there may have been foot races as well.

After Russian clergy fought for control of tribute, taxes and power in 1385, the Komi would be subjected to extensive Christianization. They were known for having constructed their own churches, often with a tented-roof style (Wikipedia n.d.). This may have been an attempt to control the rampages of priests and other Russians by keeping control of the church-building.

The view of the afterlife was that 'time stops forever' and people are constantly aged 25-30 (Konakov et al. 2003: 279). This is a pleasing prospect, and shows that people had a relaxed attitude to life, as long as they were allowed to carry on their manner of living.

Culture

Popular foods included fish-pie. The Komi dress reflects the many external elements they have been subjected to in historic times. Garments show Turkic, Nenets and Russian influences. Carvings and pictorial art is poorly documented. Mention has been made of totem marks (pas) that hunters left on trees; how these looked is not clearly known.

Also the verbal arts are poorly disseminated. ‘Most Komi myths are related to shamanism and paganism. The most widespread myths are about the creation of the world as a result of the struggle of two gods’, En and Omyol (Wikipedia n.d.). Later these would be confounded with God and Satan, Christian deities. People who objected to forced Christianity fled to the forest, were called ‘chudins’, and maintained native traditions. These appear in hero tales as Jirmak from Sindor, Joma, and others. Animal tales are not well known. One myth concerns a giant fish, possibly a pike, with totemic implications. Myths include a marriage of the sun’s and moon’s children (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 276).

Summary

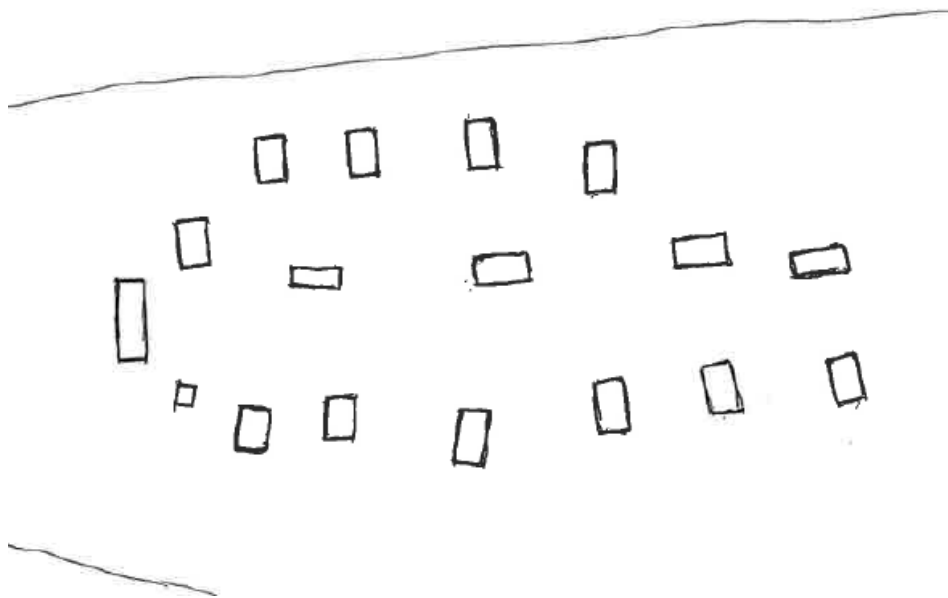
The Komi occupied a vast and free land, but quickly came under Russian occupation after 1500 AD. Since then their culture has changed from one of hunting, gathering and dependence on nature, to a modern life under the control of a dominant, external state. This has left little room for preserving what might remain of native beliefs and social practices. Among forms of social life to be eradicated was the totemic organization that must once have permeated native society. Hence what little is presented here has the form of a tentative reconstruction. Yet there are ample indications that the Komi lived in large totemic villages, where people took part in a native way of life stretching for 100s of km in every direction.

Udmurt

Aka: Votyak, Votjak; Perm, an appellation shared with Komi; etc..

The Udmurt live in central Russia. In recent times they have been expelled from their ancient republic and sought refuge further east. The native territory around 1250 AD is hard to determine precisely, perhaps comprising 350,000+ km². With some farming this would allow a population of 500,000+ people.

Presumably the population declined over the period 1350-1650. Yet it may quickly have regained its size during the years 1700-1900. Some population estimates include: ca. 1920: 500,000+ people; 1980: 715,000, 550,000 speakers; etc. The population in 2015 was reported as 700,000 (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 293).



Tsheganda, a village in the Udmurt region ca. 0 AD (adapted from Lindrot 2003: 24)

Here we see what is rarely reported in North Asia: round villages, where the houses are placed around a central plaza with one or more ceremonial structures near the center. Round villages are otherwise found rarely in the North, but have been reported in northern Scandinavia and among the prehistoric Ainu. At one time the circular towns may have been fairly common throughout the North, though houses placed in one or more parallel rows are more common, with no central plaza. In such cases, people would have a meeting place or ceremonial ground next to the village. A closer look at Udmurt villages will be taken below.

Ecology

The Udmurt occupied a rich temperate area in North Russia. They bordered on the closely related Komi in the subarctic lands to the north, and are included here for comparison and because of their interesting totemic history.

History

Udmurt history is dramatic, as with most northern peoples. Here only the briefest of summaries is suggested. The people had their own land, Udmurtia, later turned into a Russian

province. The Udmurt came under Russian domination by 1550, and since then have been among the national minorities. The distance to Moscow was not great. In spite of this the Udmurt have managed to preserve many of their social and cultural traditions, including aspects of a totemic organization.

Economy

The Udmurt combined hunting, fishing and gathering with some agriculture. As with all other northern people their adaptation was closely linked to nature and its creatures. Over time their adaptation became quite advanced, ranging from craftsmanship to trade, with a fair degree of integration into the Russian market economy.

Kinship

The Udmurt kinship system apparently was basically bilateral. Some kin terms are: ay (Fa), mummy (Mo), nunia/ agay ('man older than ego'), ryn ('man younger than ego'), apay/ akay ('woman older than ego'), suzer ('woman younger than ego'), etc. (Czaplicka 1914: 67-68). My suggestion is that Udmurt anciently had a Hawaiian or Crow type of kinship terminology.

Differentiation

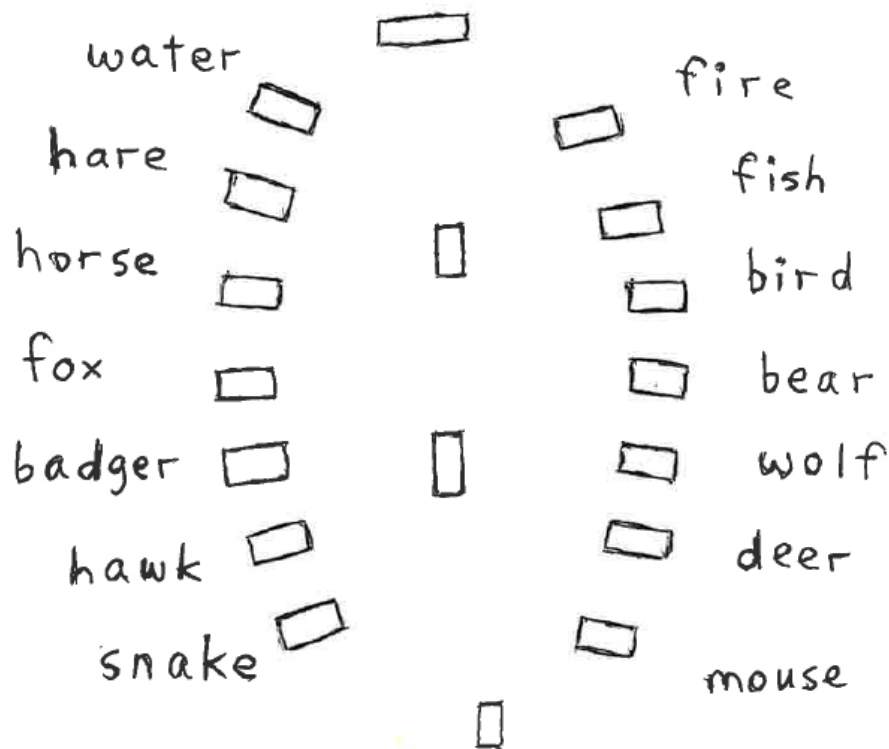
Among the Udmurt totemism in some form has been kept alive until the present. Potential totems include: fish, snake, bird, white-bird, goose, hawk, eagle, bear, badger, wolf, fox, deer, horse, mouse, hare, fire, water, etc. A word for 'clan' may be 'eli' (Czaplicka 1914: 68). The totemic system in each community or village can be broken down to a set of totem clans grouped into phratries, containing clans with related totems, and moieties, occupying two sides of the village. While individual clans and phratries are poorly known, the moiety system has persisted and can be described.

Moieties

As noted, moieties occupy the two sides of a village or settlement, often referred to as a 'dual organization'; moiety means a 'half' part. In relation to ritual life, there is an interesting reference to different families that are divided into two sides, 'bear' and 'wolf' (Lintrop 2003: 220). The bears are the Bektemõr, Nazar, Juldash and Pilka families. The wolves included the Jarmak, Kuso, Lozõr, Baktõ, Nakõr, Kosko and Jurtai families. In addition two other totems are noted, hawk and mouse (ibid.: 220-1). This echoes the presence of what may have been totem clans averaging 6 households at one settlement, Idanakari (below), indicating that the matrilineal groupings have persisted into historic times. A similarity to Sami family names may be noted – a topic open to future study.

Today it is said that the moieties in a major Udmurt village, Kuzebaev, are endogamous. One moiety worships Inmar in a kuala-grove, the other worships Keremet in a lud-grove; the latter is said to carry a 'Tatar influence' (Siikala & Ulyshev 2016: 295). Presumably the two groups have been neither endogamous nor exogamous, since they embrace clans from different phratries, which by themselves are exogamous, but where exogamy need not be extended to the clans across phratry lines. Endogamy may be more dependent on the colonial situation, how easy or difficult it would be to find Udmurt spouses in other villages, under Russian control.

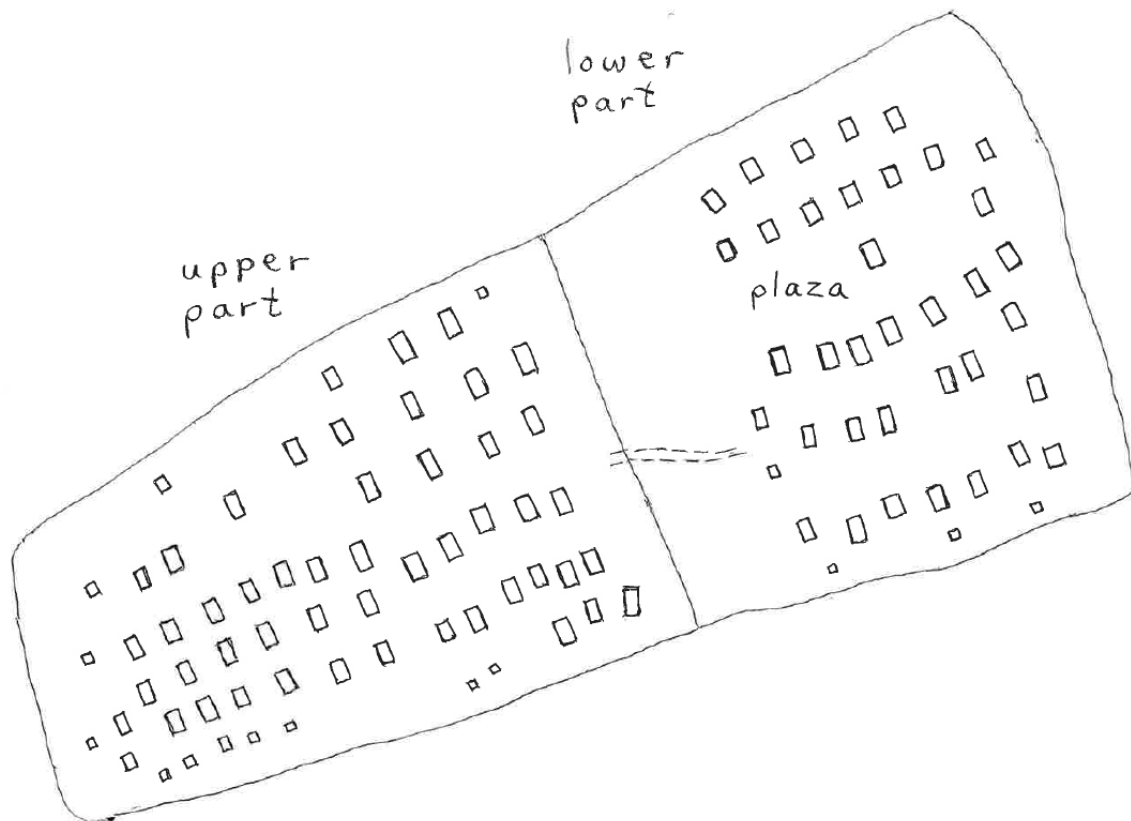
The clan system of the village as a whole



Conceptual Udmurt village ca. 1000 AD

Based on the appearance of roughly 14 houses around a plaza in prehistoric villages in the Udmurt area, a tentative distribution of totemic clans has been suggested. Only a few of these clans have been historically documented and are known to the author. The rest are based on ritual and mythological information, concerning the prominence of creatures and elements such as horse, water, fire and more. Hence this must be seen as a first approximation to outlining local totemic clans among the Udmurt. Much more information must be out there, that sadly is not available to the general reader, such as Lintrop (2003), in Estonian.

Due to such limitations mistakes and misunderstandings will appear in the material presented here. For instance, a potential 'glitch' is that the bear and wolf clan are placed on the same side of the village plaza, in the same moiety; while indications are that they belong to opposite sides and stand for the two respective moieties. Hence 'wolf' and 'fox' should change place in the diagram, the fox being next to bear, the wolf next to badger. Yet there could be considerable variation on this point, in other places 'mouse' and 'hare' might represent the two sides or moieties. So the tentative and 'erratic' model is left here as a basis for conceptual and substantive investigation, and hopefully as a starting point for discussing local totemism and its varied forms.



Idanakari, a hill fort or hill town in the Udmurt region ca. 1250 AD (adapted from Lintrop 2003: 31)

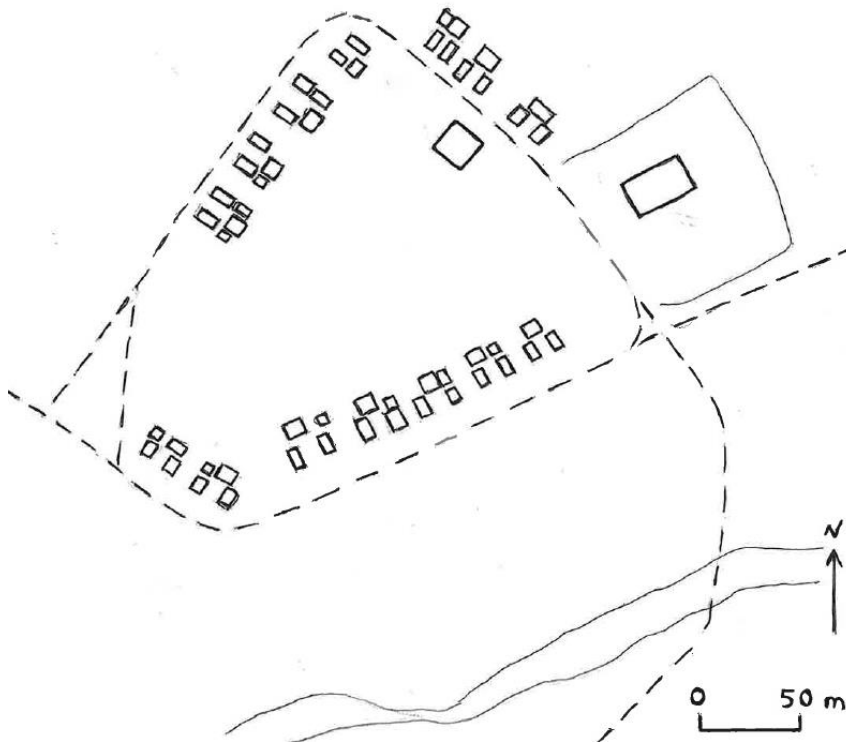
At Idanakari the totemic system has begun to break down, though still extant. Presumably there is an extension of the 14 clans represented by the houses next to the plaza, with additional houses spread out in the rest of the village area, that presumably are affiliated with the 14 'mother' clans. The society is here considered to be matrilineal, going through a 'Crow' or 'Hawaiian' phase, a particular type of kinship terminologies associated with matriliney. What is noticeable is that there is no longer a restriction on the number of houses; they are no longer limited to those around the plaza, but extend into an 'upper' residential area. Yet the plaza may still represent the 'old', totemic village.

Each totem group now has on average 6 houses in the village, corresponding to 30-40 people. These houses need not be related in any other way than sharing the same totem, e.g., wolf. The village has grown beyond its former limits, as represented by the houses around the plaza. The population could reach ca. 500 people. In this expansive condition, each family will be operating as an independent unit, and it would be difficult to prevent new families from settling as long as they share one of the 14 totems, and as long as there is space within the stockades.

Precisely why this expansion of the village happened is difficult to assess, but more intensive agriculture and husbandry, plus increasing pressure from the outside in the turbulent Middle Ages, may have led people to congregate in larger, fortified villages for protection.

It should be added that large villages based on totem clans are known elsewhere, but they usually follow a pattern where clans are placed within clearly defined house rows that limit the expansion of each clan. In the Udmurt region such limits are broken by 1250 AD, and

each family, though still totemic, becomes an independent unit that must find stability and security on its own. What is known is that over time the Udmurt villages are broken up and change their outlook. Some might partly continue as rows of houses, others are broken up into neighborhoods or farms. This would particularly be the case after 1917, when collectivization and Russification set in. Though in some cases, apparently, a traditional village layout was kept up.



A modern Udmurt village – the center of Kuzebaevo

At Kuzebaevo there is an intriguing similarity to Creek Indian villages in Alabama, with clusters of houses around a plaza. There still is an ‘apparent’ moiety structure, with 7 house clusters N and S of the plaza. ‘Apparent’ is here noted with inverted commas, since it is not known if any totemic significance remains.

Apparently wider units such as tribal divisions or districts (mer) also had totemic names (Czaplicka 1914: 68). The use of totemic emblems tends to expand from its local prevalence, to groups of villages and districts up to a tribal or national level. What the national emblem of the Udmurt was is not known.

Politics

The Udmurt nation was sidetracked by the rise of Russian power, later persisting as a large minority in the area without clear representation. Russian divide and rule policies meant that people were not allowed to live in ethnically homogeneous villages; there always had to be other people, in particular Russians who would control the area population. In Udmurt villages people spoke Udmurt, Tatar, Mari and Russian (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 293). It can be assumed that in the old days there were Udmurt chiefs and rulers.

Religion

Udmurt religion was thought to have vanished by the 1980s, but was still practiced (Siikala & Ulyashe 2016: 291). Orthodox Russians had tried to eliminate all native religion, but people would meet secretly at sacred groves and ritual grounds. The native beliefs were referred to as a 'nature religion' (op. cit.: 294).

The annual cycle of ceremonies is not well known. What is known is that local clans or kin groups, originally totemic, together would carry out the village rituals. As noted, families are divided into two sides during rituals, called 'bear' and 'wolf'.

A spring ceremony is little known. The main ceremony was in July, celebrating the sky god, Inmar. In a forest clearing a row of fires were burning. Geese were sacrificed and eaten. People gathered in a ceremonial hut (kuala) for the sacrificial ceremony. At night there was another sacrifice to a god (Keremet) in a sacred grove (op. cit.: 292). There also were sacrifices to the 'guardian of the fields' (op. cit.: 294). A subsequent fall ceremony is not well known. In addition to village ceremonies, each family would have sacred sheds (kuala) near their house, used for family rituals and summer cooking.

Culture

The Udmurt preserve a rich arboreal culture, with ritual places and expressive carvings and handcraft. The incredibly rich verbal culture of the Udmurt people embraces cosmology, mythology, animal tales and much more, but will only be noted here.

Summary

Scholars have noted, without exaggerating, that Russia became 'an unstable society' after 1991 (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 17). This potentially poses a threat not only to the Udmurt but to all small peoples of the North – not to mention the World. Scholars, in particular cultural researchers, do not know how to deal with such issues. Their ideal is of a peaceful and stable society. There is a simple hope that peace will prevail and that people will be allowed to continue their lives undisturbed. Whether this is a realistic hope only the future can tell. This is hardly a satisfying summary, but Udmurt history remains to be written, which extends to its tantalizing totemic traditions.

Mansi

Aka: Vogul, Maniza, Ostyak, Ostjak – along with the Khanti, etc. (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 511). Note that older Russian designations did not distinguish clearly between native peoples.

A prehistoric territory may have measured 90,000+ km², with room for 35,000+ people. During the period 1300-1800 AD the population must have dropped to <6,000 people. Various population figures include: 1897: 7,476+ people; 1926: 5,750-6,500+ people, 5179 speakers; 1959: 6,450, 3,800+ speakers; 1970: 7,700, 4,000 speakers; 1979: 7563+; 1980: 7,800-9,000, <4,000 speakers; 1989: 8461-8500+, 3154 speakers; 2020: 12,000+, 2,200 speakers.

Mansi settlements today are spread as a result of Russian colonization. Local areas associated with tribal groups were: in the north Lyapin, North Sosva, etc.; in the south (upper and middle) Konda, (upper and lower) Lozva, southern Sosva, etc. Noted settlements include: Lopyngus aka Lopyng-vozh (Lyapin band); Nakhrachi aka Nakhratsky (Konda band); Kondinsk; Belogorye; etc.

Historically, native communities were described as a neighborhood or settlement (paul) with 1-10 residential houses plus some houses of other uses (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 525). This would be a minimum compared to the communities that once existed, that may have counted 6-30+ dwellings. Houses measured roughly 4-5 x 9-10 m (ibid.) Houses faced the same way, indicating that villages were built in more or less straight rows (ibid.). A village of 2-3 parallel rows of houses can be envisioned. There is also a possibility that ancient Mansi villages were circular based on a distribution of totem clans.

In early historic and prehistoric times settlement sizes could well reach 175+ people. It can be assumed that they would be several times bigger and more organized than later. It is further assumed that the organization in the not-too-distant past was totemic. When and how totemism declined as an organizing principle will be a matter for future research, looking in detail at the social makeup of settlements over the last 200-300 years. For now, all we can do is look at some of the information that has been published about the organization of Mansi communities.

Ecology

The Mansi now occupy the sub-Arctic lowland east of the Ural Mountains at the Ob and its western tributaries. The Mansi used to live west of the Urals, at Cherdyn, Vishera, etc. The region consists of taiga or coniferous forests with a rich wildlife. The traditional adaptation was hunting, fishing and gathering with some agriculture.

History

An early Mansi homeland may have been on the upper Kama River. At some time after 1000 AD they would drift across the Urals into the western Ob drainage, following external pressure. Around 1300-1800 the population was decimated by epidemics and other calamities from 35,000+ to <6,000 people. The population would never be allowed to recuperate, and the Mansi became a threatened ethnic minority. Russian scholars would self-consciously note that native history 'has not been adequately studied' (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 513).

Mansi history includes traumatic periods when most of the people were displaced by Russian colonists and settlers. Most Mansi found refuge east of the Ural Mountains in the drainage of the Ob River. Some of them took up reindeer herding as learned from the Nenets people. A Russian trade colonization went on from 1550 to 1850. There was a native Mansi uprising in 1592 under Ablegirim, and they supported a Khant rebellion in 1609 (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 515). These revolts were put down by hard and bloody means. This was followed by a Russian peasant colonization from 1690, forced Christianization around 1700-1751, and severe repression of native protests. Native rights were further repressed under Soviet communist control 1919-90, and people experienced a gradual assimilation to Russians. Such external impacts over a 1000-year period provide the historical background for reinvestigating Mansi society and culture.

Economy

As noted, the traditional economy was one of hunting, fishing and gathering, combined with basic agriculture. In the north reindeer herding was resorted to, starting in the 1400s (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 521). Other economic forms would be present and gradually develop, such as trade and metal working.

Historically people would trap fur animals in January-April. The hunting season was October-December and January-April, with a break in mid-January when people returned to their villages for New Year or midwinter celebrations (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 518). A 'very old group method' was to set up hunting fences with gaps and traps for catching elk-moose and deer. Supposedly such fences could be 70 km long, though probably these were the fences put up by several communities that partly aligned with each other. The implication is that each village had one major hunting fence for the use of all its members (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 520). Bears were killed in dens in winter, and the catch was celebrated with a bear festival. Birds such as ducks were hunted in spring and summer (ibid.). Fishing included fish traps, weirs, nets, fish lines and more. The catch included salmon, trout, pike and smaller fish (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 516-8).

Gathering, often overlooked in ethnographic summaries, provided important plant foods and materials. Gradually the practice of collecting plant foods was supplemented by crop cultivation. Agriculture was mainly adapted from Russians, with crops such as barley, oats and potatoes.

The native technology became more advanced over time. It included metal tools such as knives and axes, pottery manufacture and goods acquired in trade. In particular the effectiveness of iron tools would alter people's relation to the environment, and was one element, along with upheavals and epidemics, that would weaken totemism over time, starting around 1000 AD. People became more self-reliant, and the intense bonds of community were gradually weakened. Yet people would retain as much as possible of their social relations, in spite of technological and economic changes, as seen in the survival of totemic traditions, including moieties, into the 20th century and beyond.

Kinship

The Mansi household occupied log or wooden houses. The door could face to the south, towards a river bank or in the same direction as other local houses. In front of the houses stood a pole used for tying animals. A local community could have 30+ extended families.

These are referred to as 'joint families', hinting at the existence of a totemic system, local totem clans being joined by a series of distinct and complementary totemic emblems (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 534). In historic times settlements with 4-6 descent groups were common, though sometimes with as few as 2-3 families. This could be mainly due to population loss in late prehistoric and historic times. Extended families included parents with married sons and daughters. Cases 'of matrilineal residence were not rare' (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 534).

Descent may have been generally bilateral. Marriage traditions included bride price and bridal service, the newly married man spending years helping his wife's parents. This may indicate that there also were matrilineal or matrilineal tendencies in the kinship system.

Soviet scholars would deprecate the Mansi by referring to 'patriarchal slavery' (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 534). Obviously 'slavery' was never set up as an institution by the natives; this was merely an excuse for Russian dominance. Probably the reference was to families adopting new members and servants to help with household tasks.

Differentiation

When describing 'social structure' the Russian scholars took an outside view, describing 'tribes' and regional distribution, rather than focusing on local life (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 532). No doubt such as 'distal' view made it easier to relate the people to Russian settlements, while avoiding looking at the distinctness of native local life.

Potential Mansi totems were: fish, small-fish, catfish, pike, salmon, snake, frog (porygpan), insect, butterfly, bird, sparrow, cuckoo, partridge, black-grouse, wood-grouse, hazel-grouse, raven, gull (halev), loon (pahot), waterfowl, duck, goose, swan, owl, falcon, hawk (hortahan), eagle (yusvoi), bear, wolverine, marten, sable (nyohos), ermine, otter, wolf, dog, fox, polar-fox, lynx, deer, reindeer, elk-moose, horse, cattle, sheep, pig, beaver, squirrel, hare, tree, cedar, larch, birch, plant, water, river, earth, thunder, sun, etc.

Comparatively little is known about the social organization of Mansi people. Reportedly the society used to have totemic clans. Clan totems mostly were animals, including birds and fish. Some known totems include: fish, frog, butterfly, bird, falcon, bear, dog, deer, hare, birch, etc. The totems were described as 'ancient', perhaps indicating that the totemic organization had been modified or weakened over the years. In one view each 'clan' had a 'special sign' or 'brand'; unfortunately this was not explicated in detail (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 533). Each clan also had a 'reserve of names' (ibid.). The biased scholars complained that 'the number of these clans was extremely large', making them hard to trace, and posited that 'in ancient times' there were 'fewer' (ibid.). Rather there would be many more 'clans' in 'ancient' days, since each village would be composed of a complement of 6-12+ totem clans. With 100+ villages there would be 1000+ clans, but the same or similar totems were found in each village, so the actual number of distinct totems would be 15-80+. The scholars would not see this composite organization at all, since they saw 'descent' as a physical act, not a matter of symbolic classification, both intensely local and trans-local.

In Russian times totemic clans were supplanted by family names, usually named after ancestors. This 'familiarization' of social units would be found in most areas under Russian colonization, where former clan names and personal names were adopted as family names.

Phratries

The Mansi had phratries and moieties similar to those found among the related Khant people. Little is known about the phratry structure, consisting of a group of similar totem clans, such as deer, reindeer and moose-elk, though it can be assumed to have been exogamic. Basic phratry divisions would be fish-bird, carnivores and herbivores.

Moieties

Far more is known about the moiety structure of Mansi villages. There were two tribal halves or moieties called 'mos' or 'mosh' and 'por'. On the 'mosh' side were totems such as: fish, frog, bird, eagle, butterfly, sable or marten, fox, 'kaldash' (white female hare), birch, etc. On the 'por' side were: fish, bird, gull, loon, hawk, bear, wolf, and other totems.

The 'mosh' side was identified with hare, butterfly or birch, while the 'por' side 'traced its descent from a bear', child of the sky god, and parent of 'the first woman'. Each side, 'mosh' and 'por', would include a number of distinct totem clans, fishes, birds and animals. The figure 7 seems to have been associated with each moiety, perhaps referring to its number of totem clans and the moiety leader on each side (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964; Sainakhova 1995).

Supposedly the moieties were exogamic in the old days, their members being classified as 'brother' and 'sister', but this would be a form of extended kinship embracing unrelated descent group. At the same time the exogamic rules may hint at extensive forms of marriage restrictions in native society, all the way up to the level of a village or local community. It was claimed that 'communities were strictly exogamous' (Sainakhova 1995: 410). Yet to what extent such extensive prohibitions on marriage were exercised is uncertain. In modern times exogamy broke down, conforming more to endogamous Russian practices.

Based on the available information an ancient Mansi village could have the following totem clans: In the Por (bear, sky) moiety: fish, gull or loon, bear, wolf, deer, and beaver. In the Mosh (hare, earth) moiety: frog, eagle, sable or marten, fox, elk-moose, and hare. This would allow for 14 totem clans in each village, including the Por and Mosh moiety leaders, presumably serving as second and first chief, with 'sky' and 'earth' totems.

In general it is indicated that Russian influences led to the disintegration of Mansi society. The Russian trade and peasant colonization created unfreedom, poverty, and inequality among the natives. In Soviet times this was augmented by collectivization, displacements and assimilation. Conditions have not improved; in 2020 some 2,200 speakers were reported, a loss of 45% in 50 years.

Politics

In prehistoric times the Mansi seem to have been extensively organized, with local, regional and tribal chiefs. Each local tribal group had its own center, its own chief (otyr) and war leaders. Other designations for leaders were 'elder' (urt) and 'prince' (kniaz) (Czaplicka 1914: 68). This would indicate a system with head and second chiefs in each local community. The two chiefs would represent the local moiety structure.

An example of known native communities is Lyapin, with a center at Lopyng-us aka Lopyng-vozh. In the community center all the festivals of the tribe were held, such as war dances, etc.

This would be an arena for the exercise of leadership. Other community centers included Nakhrachi at Konda and many more. None of these centers seem to be extant today. More generally, native political leadership would be thwarted as people came under Russian rule from 1750 onwards. During war threats in historic times 'some of the tribes entered into alliances for joint action' or defense (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 532). This would end under Russian control; as an ethnic minority or 'small nation' the Mansi would lose their voice.

Religion

The main deities were a sky goddess, 'Zlata' or 'Kaltesh-ekva', and her son the sky-god, Numi-Toruma. The female god could be represented as a goose or waterfowl. Other deities would be associated with the earth and natural beings and phenomena. A historic emphasis on Numi-Toruma may have been in emulation of Russian monotheism (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964).

The ceremonial life of the Mansi is poorly known. As noted there was a ceremonial meeting ground and dance square in each community. Two roads led to the dance square, one for each moiety.

In midwinter people left the hunting ground and gathered in their village to celebrate the solstice. Historically this was also time to visit Russian markets to pay taxes and obtain purchased goods.

As among the Khant and other northern groups there was a bear festival, but poorly described. A few songs from the bear ceremony have been recorded, lauding the bear as a totem animal and protecting forefather (Sainakhova 1995: 411-2).

Ceremonies included dances and ritual gatherings in summer, such as war dances. In the Mansi capital, Lopengwos, all-tribal 'festivities with war dances were periodically organized' (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 532). This must have been an important ceremony, yet the sources barely mention it.

Under Russian rule native worship became hidden. Family shamanism had some significance in recent times to offer comfort and healing. Yet most native beliefs and practices, such as local festivals and dances, were no longer openly performed. Whether this will change in the future is for history to show.

Culture

Mansi clothing had both a practical and symbolic significance. Male and female belts or girdles had a role in conveying gender and social identities. It is known that a belt (entap) was an important part of men's dress, for tying knives, fire-tool, etc. The woman's belt (veruy) was worn from puberty to death, similar to Ainu practices noted later (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 528-531). Women wore 'tin badges' that they made themselves (op. cit.: 530). Unfortunately the symbolism of clothing and ornaments is not further explicated.

Expressive culture included music and arts. The 'chief colors' were white, blue, black and red (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 531). In historical times string instruments became popular. Presumably people also had drums, flutes and other instruments.

A kind of totem pole was erected near dwellings. These were 'special poles' that were 'set up in front of each house opposite the door'. They were 'decorated with carvings of human faces, animals and birds' (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 526). Here it would be critical to know what the carvings showed or how they looked; but all that is noted is that in modern times people used them 'for tying reindeer and horses' (ibid.). Based on subsequent notes on sacrifices and local visits it can be surmised that the carvings included: fish, snake, grouse, goose, eagle, bear, reindeer, hare, etc. Near each village there also was a 'sacred clan site' with ancestor effigies and a 'clan treasury' or sacred store-house (op. cit.: 533). Descriptions of such places are sadly lacking.

The mythical universe of the Mansi is poorly known. There were quasi-historic hero epics about Ekvapyrish, related to the ancestral parent of the 'mosh' group. He fought against Russian colonization and the new differences in Mansi society. Some stories are borrowed from the Russians, and are called 'Russian tales' (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964). The native mythology, such as animal and clan stories, is otherwise little known. Though in recent years native stories and folklore are gradually becoming available online. Animal tales and clan stories include protagonists and progenitors such as: fish, frog (porygpan-yhva), diver or loon (pahot-oika, shoiyg-otor), gull or seagull (halev-oika), hawk (hortahan-oika), eagle (yusvoi), bear, sable (nyohos), wolf, etc. (Sainakhova 1995: 410-2). Much remains to be found out about the natural and totemic universe of the Mansi people.

Similarly there is little information about life courses. Native names were supplanted by Christian-Russian names at an early date. Among recorded male names were: Taustei, Nahratch, Ablegrim, Obaitko, Utshyut, etc. A few family names and group names have been preserved: Sardei (frog), Shominon (loon), Shoi or Shoiyng (loon), Menseng (eagle), Manon (sable), Hurumpaul (hawk), Oruin (gull, wolf), etc. (Sainakhova 1995: 411). An investigation into ancient Mansi names await further study.

Summary

The Mansi nation became an ethnic minority in Russia from the 1600s. Between 1400 and 1750 the Russians conducted holocaust-like wars against the natives, burning the villages and killing the inhabitants. The land was taken by Russian settlers, the surviving natives retreating to the diminishing hinterland. In the Soviet era the situation was exacerbated by collectivization, forced relocations, training in the Russian language and the loss of native culture. This was a fate they shared with their kindred nation, the Khant, and other northern nations.

The prospects look bleak for Mansi survival. And yet the people are there, sharing in the proud tradition of northern living and contact with the environment, including a rich totemic heritage. Totem clans, phratries and moieties form part of this heritage. The cultural richness is something that cannot be taken away from the people, and hopefully Mansi culture will see a renaissance over the next 100 years. As will be shown, native totemism has to be seen in a regional perspective.

Khanti

Aka: Khant, Khanty, Chanty, Hanty, Ostyak, Ostjak – same as Mansi, Ob-Ostyak, Surgut-Ostyak, Obdor, Berezov, Yugra, Jegra, Jugra, Ob-Ugrian, etc. (Prokof'yeva et al., 1965: 511).

The native territory near the Urals must have encompassed 100,000+ km², allowing for a population of 40,000+.

A dramatic decrease in population would take place in the period 1300-1900 AD, but precisely how strong and when it culminated is difficult to assess. By 1650 AD the Khanti may have counted 10,-15,000 people; <38%. People also seem to have become displaced, moving NE toward the lower Ob drainage.

Some population figures are: 1897: 17,221+ people; 1926: 17,800-20,000; 1959: 19,000, 14,600 speakers; 1970: 21,000, 14,500 speakers; 1979: 20,934+; 1980: 22,000+, 14,000 speakers; 1989: 22,521+; 2020: 31,000+, 9500-12000 speakers.

Outlining Khant settlements is not easy. Today they are scattered as a consequence of Russian colonization. Earlier there were local tribal groups, including a northern dialect of Obdor, Shuryshkary, Kunovat, North Sosva (Berezovo), Kazym and Sherkaly, a southern dialect of Altym, Leusha and (lower) Konda-Irtysh, and an eastern dialect at Salym, Surgut, Yugan, Agan, Vakh and Vasyugan, etc. Other resident groups were at Irtysh.

Apparently the Khanti in prehistoric times had villages with up to 300+ people. They could contain 10-30+ 'families' or descent groups, each descent group occupying 1-3+ houses. Historically, Khant people lived in settlements (pugol-kort) with 1-10 dwelling houses as well as other structures (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 525). Houses could measure 5 x 9 m (ibid.). All houses had doors facing the same way; it reportedly 'faced the river', which implies that villages consisted of houses built in 1-2+ rows along a river (ibid.). One group at Ob had summer camps in the salmon season, and inland camps in the hunting and trapping period in the autumn and winter. Temporary camps for utilizing resources within the territory of a local community or village would always be a part of Khanti life.

Ecology

The Khanti area includes the western branches of the Ob and Irtysh rivers up towards the Ural Mountains, their ancient home. The climate is characterized by cold winters with 2 m of snow for 6 months, flooding of the Ob lowlands in early summer and a short and hot summer. The environment contains taiga consisting of coniferous forests, and marshlands with a rich wildlife (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 512-3). This was a beautiful natural region.

History

The prehistory and early history of the Khanti are poorly known. Based on linguistic relationships they may have lived in the Ufa-Yekaterinburg area in an early period. At a later time, possibly starting as early as 1000 AD, though perhaps later, they would gradually move N to the E of the Urals, entering the Ob drainage, which would become their historic home.

The Khanti have a long and dramatic history relating to their encounters with Russians and other ethnic groups in Siberia. Trade relations were first with the Tatars and other Turkic

speakers, and from 1200 AD with the Russians. In view of historical developments, 1250 AD seems like a good point in time to set up an ‘ethnographic present’ for the Khanti.

The Russians destroyed 100 ‘Yugra’ villages in 1499 and killed countless people. The Khanti sought refuge in distant places and defended themselves, but would remain ‘subject to Moscow’ (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 102). After this time matters would remain dramatic once the period of Russian expansion and trade colonization took place around 1550-1850. The Russians would select prominent natives as trade partners, and exert control through trade debts, taxation and armed force. Some Khanti chiefs helped the Russians establish forts at Tomsk, Makov, and Yenisej, and were rewarded with their own tax regions in 1594. But when the Russians no longer needed their assistance, they themselves were made debt slaves in the fur trade. Indigenous Khant uprisings took place in 1607 and 1841. The leaders in 1607-9 included a woman-chief called Anna. The Russians responded by executing the native leaders – a tragic loss.

Contact with Tatars, Mongols, and Russians led to feudal and slave-like relations among the Khant in the 15-1600s. Later this was replaced with debt-slavery and labor for the Russians, and increased pre-emption of local control through trade and contact with Russian colonizers. From 1690 onwards there was a regular Russian trade and peasant colonization, when Russian peasants took the best land. In response to native protests Christian missions began around 1700, and by the year 1751 all natives had been forcibly Christianized. This was followed by a modern Russian intervention and expropriation from 1850 to 1920, amplified by forced collectivization and socialist rule in the Soviet Era 1917-1992. The circumstances and opportunities for native life remain restricted (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964).

Economy

Reportedly the early adaptation was one of hunting, fishing and gathering combined with reindeer herding. In economic terms the Khant have moved from an economy based on hunting, fishing and gathering, with some agriculture, to a mixed modern economy with some limitations, not least in today’s troubled world. Some Khant also were engaged in reindeer herding and pastoralism. During the salmon season in the summer people lived in summer camps by the river. This fishery was so valuable that it was taken over by the Russians. Plant foods gathered included berries. The basic form of agriculture included raising barley and keeping a few cows, pigs and sheep. After 1900 the native subsistence economy was replaced by monetary based wage labor (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964).

Kinship

Native houses and households were fairly large. The Khant had dugout ‘earth-houses’ (mygkat) as well as other houses built of wood. The hearth (rat) was in the middle. In front of the door stood a pole or post that could have carvings of human faces, animals or birds; a sort of totem pole (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 525).

A household could be complex, e.g., several brothers or siblings with family could live in the same or neighboring houses. Households would form an ‘extended family’ that consisted of (classificatory) ‘parents’, ‘sons’ and ‘daughters’. The women were in charge of household activities, stood for most household activities, and in general controlled what went on in the house. In spite of this Russian ethnographers claimed there was a subordination of women.

Local families, up to 30+ in number, resided in villages and apparently had a totemic organization (Prokof'yeva et al.: 1964: 534).

The rules of exogamy were extensive, and included fictive kin. 'The rules of exogamy are applied to persons who might be remotely related but who' share similar names (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 75). People with the same name were thought of as incarnations of each other; in the old days they would be considered totem siblings.

At marriage a man's parents would ask the woman's parents for their consent to the couple being married. The bride price was said to be large, and in the north included reindeer. Other goods paid included clothing and household goods. Both patri- and matrilocality was practiced. Men would do bride service, working for 3-5 years to help the wife's parents. If the wife had no brothers, the husband stayed in his MoLa's house. This strongly hints at a bilateral kinship system, where a married couple over time could choose to stay with his or her extended family (Prokof'yeva et al.: 535-6).

Yet modern ethnographers, mostly Russian, would claim that the Khanti were patrilineal. This would depend upon empirical evidence, of which little exists. In the matrilineal direction there are indications of female originators of clans. There could be patrilineal, matrilineal and bilateral tendencies. What is known is that local descent groups formed stable residential units referred to as clans, and were a part of villages with a number of such descent groups, presumed to be totemic.

The kinship terminology includes term for: parents' old male kin, aki; Fa, asi; mother, anki; father's young male kin; uncle, MoBr, 'cousin', ur-xo, urti, jaj; son, pox; GrCh, nephew, niece, xili; etc.

Differentiation and local organization

As with the related Mansi the early organization of the Khanti is fairly unknown. As noted, around 1750 AD as many as 30 married couples could live together in one place, a village (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964). The village apparently had a totem, as did each of the families. This would indicate a system with up to 14-16 totemic clans and ca. 2 families in each clan. The residents were further divided into phratries or groups of clans, and moieties or a dual division of the village. The village has been thought to be a moiety, though it should be identified for what it was, a village or local community. Yet it is conceivable that moieties lived in separate settlements adjoining each other, so that two separated moieties would form a local community. They would then have a smaller number of families, 12-14+. This is uncertain.

Over time village life would be broken down. Local settlements had been reduced to 4-6 families around 1870, and to 2-3 household around 1930, as outside control made it more difficult for native villages to stay together. Concurrently any remains of a totemic clan system would be broken down.

It has been claimed that different descent groups formed patrilineal exogamous clans among the Khant. To which extent such groups were patrilineal is an open question. Female creators and clan mothers by contrast point to matrilineal clanship. There also could be a bilateral tendency, where clanship was reckoned through mother or father.

Unfortunately Russian and other scholars did not distinguish clearly between ‘families’, ‘totems’, ‘clans’, ‘phratries’, ‘moieties’, ‘settlements’, ‘bands’ and other groups or units. There are references to ‘phratries’ divided into ‘family groups known by the river names’, and ‘big families’ that ‘lived in several villages’ (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 72). It is also unfortunate that modern scholars follow earlier Russian scholars in taking a negative view of totemism, where totems are explained away as ‘spirits’ or ignored completely, without describing the social organization (op. cit.: 76-77).

Potential totems and totem clans

What is known is that the clans were totemic. Each clan had totem figures, mostly carved animals, which were stored in a wooden structure, a clan shrine. Based on what is known about the structure of moieties and other information, the following totems can be suggested: fish (xul), white-fish, black-fish, pike (sort), perch, salmon, snake (vaj), frog, insect, butterfly, bird, jay or nutcracker (noxrletine), yellowhammer, small-bird (śiški), grouse, hazel-grouse (kusti-voj), wood-cock or capercaillie, crow (vorņa), magpie (savne), raven (xurex), gull, (xalev), diver or loon (toxten), duck, grey-duck (xanti-vasit), black-duck (rus-vasit), teal-duck (xansi), wigeon-duck (vujev), pin-tail-duck (kurek), goose (lut, kaltaś, śak-voj), swan (xoten), hawk, eagle, bear (tojper, mojper), wolverine (lolmakh), otter, wolf (jever), dog, fox (oxsar, voxsar), lynx, cat, deer, reindeer (uli, vuli), elk-moose, horse (lov), beaver, squirrel (laņki), hare (kaltaś), tree (jux), pine (noxras), cedar, larch (naņk), birch, fire (tut-imi, naj), water (jink), sky, cloud (paleņ), stone (kev), earth (muv, mir), star (xus), sun, etc. These are only some of the possible emblems found in the Khant human-nature interrelationship.

For the Eastern Khanti information is lacking, but known totems include: bear, elk, beaver, etc. These are said to represent ‘clans’ (sir), in Russian ‘rod’, a ubiquitous term for any kind of local or regional grouping. ‘The ancestors of the clans and phratries were thought to have been animals and birds, occasionally plants and even sometimes insects’, e.g., ‘butterflies’ (Prokof’eva et al. 1964: 536). The totems were viewed as ‘blood relatives’ (ibid.).

There is an interesting distinction into ‘white’ or ‘grey’ and ‘black’ animals among the Khanti, based not on their color but on symbolism. The color ‘white’ is associated with natives, the color ‘black’ with Russians. The pike is a ‘black-fish’ because it is eaten by Russians (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 69). There may be a hint here at the ancient existence of dual or double totem clans, where one part was called ‘white’ and the other ‘black’, for instance ‘white-fish’ and ‘black-fish’, living next to each other in a village, belonging to the same totem clan, but representing two descent groups with symbolic ties to different sides of the village. Precisely how this would play out on the ground, or if such a system existed at all, is hard to say, but the ‘white’-‘black’ contrast is suggestive.

It can be assumed that each village or settlement would consist of a certain number of totemic clans, representing categories such as scaly animals, birds, carnivores, herbivores and other creatures. The local distribution of totems will be further discussed in relation to moieties, below.

There are remnant accounts of clan totems. Apparently totem animals were called ‘lukh’ or ‘spirit’, each with a ‘spirit image’, ‘lukh-khor’ (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 73). ‘The goose is the bird’ of the Nakhrachrev ‘family’, its ‘protector’ (ibid.). At the same time people were reticent on the topic of totems, such as noting that ‘other kins have other protectors’, without specifying (ibid.). The Longortov family totem was yellowhammer or goose (śak-voj);

Rusmilenko (or Schuchei) had pike; Toyarov (of the 'por' moiety) had a 'mauling beast', said to be a wolf, possibly a bear; the 'spirit image' was 'Old Wolf' (jevri-iki) (op. cit.: 73-4). A 'bear paw' used as a totem marker is noted (op. cit.: 73). Other totems included: Ozelov had wolverine; Alyaba had fox; Sevli had squirrel; etc. (op. cit.: 74). Other names are: Vozelov, related to Ozelov; etc. Totem symbols or 'spirit images' were kept in a locked storehouse (ibid.).

As the excited researchers asked to see the totem storehouse in Ovolynkort, they were 'not allowed to look inside', the keeper having taken the key and gone fishing (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 74). Secrecy and avoidance is basic to totemic philosophy. Contemporary accounts of totems are uncertain, such as a claim that 'dangerous animals as the wolf and bear' cannot show themselves as totems, while wolverine, fox and squirrel is fine (ibid.). Probably this was part of secret totemic lore.

Keeping the totem identity was pivotal. People told of the demise of persons who gave up their totem images. In early Soviet times the police began to arrest shamans and destroy their ritual objects. One family in Kievat gave up their images, and as a result the family came to ruin, 'they shot and killed each other' (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 74). Giving up your totemic position was dangerous. The few survivors would put 'everything right', following 'all the regulations' of clan secrecy, hence everything 'is in order' – except that the men spent time in Russian prisons (op. cit.: 75). Thus people sacrificed much to preserve their totemic and social membership.

Phratries

Before considering the totemic system in its totality the presence of phratries must be addressed. In each local community there would usually be 3-4 phratries. Each phratry appeared as a grouping of clans, varying in number from 2 to 8, and with each clan and the whole phratry being exogamous. This was because the clans in the group could be similar, such as all being birds, like grouse, duck, hawk, eagle etc., and then considered to be closely related, as brother and sister clans. People would then have to marry outside the group. In historical times phratries might be reduced to just one or two clans, leading to confusion with moieties or dual organizations. Yet in old times these would be distinct types of units or organizations.

Moieties

Moieties are prominent in local ethnographies. Both the Khant and Mansi were divided into two tribal halves, somewhat confusingly called either phratries or moieties. Since the distinction was two-ways, the term 'moiety' seems most appropriate. This was also called a dual organization (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 68). Among the Khant these dual halves were called 'moś' aka 'mon't' or 'monty', and 'por' or 'pur'. The 'order' of these moieties is not clear, they are referred to as 'Por and Moś'; perhaps because the informant was 'por' (op. cit.: 69). The word 'por' was associated with 'poslan', 'channel', and 'poxren', 'island', perhaps hinting at an association with rivers or water; there might also be a link to the forest and sky. The word 'pos' can mean 'symbol' or 'totem' (op. cit.: 74). The 'por' moiety was said to be 'stronger', because 'they were more numerous', but possibly indicating that they had the second chief, who might serve as a war leader (op. cit.: 69). The 'moś' moiety by contrast would be more peaceful. Each moiety consisted of several clans, from a minimum of 3 up to 6-7+. In cases of a reduced population there might be only 1-2 clans in each moiety; in which

case the number of phratries and moieties would coincide, perhaps explaining the later confusion about the dual organization (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964).

Knowledge about the names and composition of moieties has persisted among the Khant people, which is rare in North Asia where great social changes took place. In some ways, partly due to some degree of isolation, the Khants managed to preserve much of their social traditions until modern times.

What is known is that both a clan and a moiety had totemic ancestors that could be animals, birds, insects, plants, etc. More specifically, the 'mont' moiety had totems such as goose, butterfly, hare and birch; the whole moiety is represented by the hare or goose totem, called 'Kaltaś' (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 69). The 'por' moiety had frog, hawk, bear, dog, etc.; the moiety totem is bear. This information is highly significant, since it shows that moieties consisted of a mixed group of clans taken from different phratries, and presumably included the clans found on each side of a village, whether termed 'upper'-'lower', 'north'-'south' or by some other distinction. In a 'classical' totemic village the moieties would form rows of clan-based houses on each side of a village plaza or center point, and each moiety would contain clans from different phratries, that were split across the village divide.

With this in mind, a tentative layout can be suggested where one moiety, 'por', contained the frog, hawk, bear, wolf or dog, deer and beaver clans, while the 'mont' moiety had salmon, goose, otter, fox, elk-moose or horse and hare clans. It is here thought the 'butterfly' serves as a surrogate or secret version of a bird clan. The horse could substitute for elk-moose. The totem 'birch' could refer to a chiefly clan, perhaps with an 'earth' reference. A 'moś' ancestor is 'world-watching man' (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 69). 'Mont' could then be an earth moiety, while 'por' was a water or sky moiety, each with a chief's totem such as 'birch' and, perhaps, 'fire'.

One claim that needs to be examined is that in ancient times the moieties were exogamous. This need not always have been so, though it may have been practiced at various times and places. The implication is of a very extensive system of exogamy. It is even possible that not only clans, phratries and moieties were exogamous, but the village as such, since people were not allowed to marry close kin, not even on the moiety level, in which case it would be preferable to marry people from other villages, as most local partners were off limits.

There are indications that the moieties, and by extension the totem clans and phratries, were matrilineal. In one recent story a 'moś' and 'por' woman went on a hunting trip; they starved, and the 'por' woman killed and ate her child, demanding that the 'moś' woman do the same; but she cooked a rotten stump instead; as the hunters returned with meat, they found that the 'moś' woman 'had her child', while the 'por' woman 'had no child' (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 71). This sounds like a typical clan story, in which clan members tell jokes about each other's totems, except here the joke is on the moiety level, and with a very 'dark' point. It can be assumed that totem clan stories or jokes once were common, but following decimation and change only the moiety level remains, with a tragic backdrop. In a proper clan story the two women would be animals, say bear and hare, and the starving bear would eat her child but the hare would not, serving as a proper joke, because hares are vegetarians! The bear clan would then have to come up with a story of its own to even the score, such as hares not being able to swim and might lose their children in the river.

Supposedly there are many such stories about ‘por’ and ‘moś’ women. One reason may be that they belong to what has become different exogamous groups, and so are not related. It was said that ‘por’ women are wild and raw, forest-like and marginal. By contrast, the ‘moś’ woman is ‘civilized’ and proper. In real life this may be different, as each woman is proud of her own (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 71-72).

The so-called emic-etic perspective is important when discussing moieties and totemism. Native people have little knowledge why social distinctions exist; why people belong to one or the other moiety and cannot marry in their own group. They guess that these originally were separate people; in one view the ‘moś’ group were ‘pure’ or ‘local’ Khanti, while the ‘por’ people were fishermen ‘from the south’. That villages always had two sides eludes the native mind, the story does not explain the local distinction. This is the ‘emic’ view, the native perception of distinctions that need not be clearly understood. The scholar should contribute the ‘etic’ perspective, trying to see how the local distinctions make sense in a wider setting. But in relation to totemism most scholars are as mystified as the natives, and buy into the idea that the two moieties represent ‘ethnic groups’, without seeing that this is basically a local division into two sides in a village or settlement (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 72).

The scholars know even less than the local natives, and are more dim. They question whether the ‘moś’ are ‘pure’ Khant, since 3 of 5 ‘families’ on Synya River were Komi, called Longortov, Valgamov and Kurtyamov (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 72). This would be like questioning if Eastenders are Londoners, since many of them are immigrants. The ‘por’ group had 8 ‘families’, including Śaña or Senja, after Synya River (op. cit.: 72-3). In one place, on Kunovat River, the ‘moś’ moiety was divided into 3 phratries called ‘big’, ‘middle’ and ‘little’ ‘moś’, all represented by a carved figure (op. cit.: 72). Other local names are Pugurchin, Kulak, Nakhrachev, etc. More information is needed on the descent groups and moieties in each native settlement to outline the local organization.

Basically, the moieties referred to residence on opposite sides of a village. At the same time moiety membership was related to numerous activities and rituals, many of which are no longer known. What is known is that the moieties engaged in contests, games and sports; they were ‘always fighting with each other’ in competitions (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 69).

Village organization and transformations

Moieties lead to a view of the village as a whole. Investigators would note that the number of clans increased in historical times through contact with the Russians and their custom of using surnames and descriptive kinship. This would be something else than totemism, or a transformation, in which formerly contrastive and flexible totemic units became fixed as family names independent of the wider system. Under Russian rule it became common for each family group or clan segment to find its own name. Each clan originally had one totem or emblem, which was then divided up through small modifications in encounters, such as signatures in trade with Russians. Trade and Russian rule led to the dismantling of the clan system and the introduction of more individual-oriented genealogical relations in the 1800-1900s. This was something that would take place all over North Asia, as the primacy of local communities and belonging was transposed and broken up by the intervention of the modern states. Sadly this might lead to the total collapse of native societies, though the Khanti seem to have fared better than most, even retaining some of their totemic traditions. The bear is considered a national totem of the Khant, though modern people dispute it (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 92, 94).

In summary, the local distribution of totem clans in a Khanti village can be reiterated as follows: sky (por), frog, hawk, bear, wolf, deer, beaver; salmon, goose, otter, fox, elk-moose, hare, earth (mont). This would make a recognizable local organization that would make native members feel at home in each locality they went to for visiting, courting, trading or making alliances.

Politics

Russian scholars made a point of indicating that Khant politics was ‘primitive’ and revenge oriented, yet this depends on historic conditions. Khant society at the outset was peaceful and community or village based. Scholars would indicate that revenge could be transferred both through the maternal and paternal sides. This tragic practice is probably exaggerated. Yet here is another indication of a bilateral make-up of the native society (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964).

Fairly little is known about Khanti leaders. Local groups had leaders or chiefs (urt) with peaceful and military duties (op. cit.). Each local tribal group had its chief and warrior leaders. A village could then have a head chief and second leader, also termed ‘peace’ and ‘war’ chiefs, and perhaps respectively linked with the earth and sky totems.

There were also wider tribal alliances, and at one time the entire Khanti nation may have been united as a political union. Reported tribal centers were at Lopyng-vozh (Mansi), Berezov (Sugmyt-vozh), Yuilsky-Gorodok at Kazym, Belogorye, Nakhrachi, Kondinsk, Samarovo, Surgut etc. In the center location of the tribe there was a common ceremonial and dance space, often with two access roads for moiety members – a ritual statement of their division and unity. As noted the bear could be a national totem, though contested. Each tribe had its hallmarks of dress and skirts. In wartime, these groups could merge, as in the uprising against the Russian-Cossack colonization. During the Mongol-led rule in Siberia in the 1500s a Khant kingdom developed, the Koda principality. This was violently dissolved during the Russian colonization after 1610. So the unified polity that had once been became a target when outside interests took over (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964).

Religion

Traditional Khanti beliefs were nature-based. These would be intimately intertwined with the totemic organization of local society. All of this would come under attack under Russian rule when forced Christianization was conducted after 1700. In the traditional belief system the main deities were the moon, her son the sky god (Numi-Toruma), their creations the ancestors and animals, totemic forebears, and other elements in nature (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 536). Of interest is the white female hare and female bear that are linked to creation myths and the origin of moieties. They in turn were the originators of female clan mothers. This hints strongly at a matrilineal clan system, as opposed to the patrilineal claims of scholars. Myths of sacred beings mention: fish, bird, ptarmigan, bear, reindeer, elk-moose, beaver, tree, birch, ski, water, earth, sky, star, moon, sun, etc. The beaver is associated with the water-spirit.

People sharing a totem were seen as relatives. A clan member could not kill the totem beast unless going through certain purification rituals. A local community had a cult site or shrine where ancestral relics, totem figures, sacred objects, etc. were kept. Possibly this was a common meeting ground adjacent to the village. Seasonal sacrifices were made at the sanctuary, especially before the fall hunt. People would worship in sacred groves where gifts

of cloths hung on trees – a circumpolar tradition (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 61-62). There were separate worship places for men and women.

The annual round of Khant ceremonies is not well known. Best known is the bear festival, which was held when a bear was killed. The festival included dances, songs and satirical performances (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 536). The bear festival was one of the last rituals that people kept up after the Russian intervention set in. There are separate male and female celebrations in summer; possibly the use of liquor may have conditioned this. The summer festival today is led by a shaman.

With Russian colonization the native ceremonial life and annual cycle was broken. Religious survivals included shamanism, who offered some consolation and healing in the face of oppression. It is known that shamans had extensive knowledge of medicinal plants and healing practices. Unfortunately native beliefs were severely repressed by the forced Christianization and Russian colonization.

Culture

Both the Khanti and Mansi had rich material and expressive cultures. All the artifacts and practices will not be mentioned here. Only to be mentioned is people's close connection to nature, both in their daily life and in symbolic terms (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964).

The varied material culture can be briefly indicated. River boats could be 8-9 meters long, probably serving whole communities. Interestingly women had a loin-cloth and belt worn from puberty to old age, reminiscent of the Ainu 'kut'. Whether Khant clothing had a similar totemic significance is not known. Color symbols, red-blue, white-black, might have a totemic significance relating to dual clans, but here too information is scarce. Tattoos included birds and other clan marks placed on the arms and legs (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964). The Khanti had totem poles or ancestor statues similar to the Mansi, with carvings of fish, pike, bird, etc.

The oral culture was extensive. As noted there are three Khanti dialect groups, Southern, Eastern and Northern. People had stories about every element in nature. Animals and elements mentioned in various forms include: fish, duck, bear, wolf, deer, tree, forest, canoe, bow and arrow, etc. In fact, nothing would be left out from the cultural universe. A great many elements could serve as totems, though precisely how this played out on the ground will, as noted, be a matter of discovery. The folklore presumably relied heavily on natural themes such as animal stories, but precisely what was said is not known (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964).

Supposedly many of the cosmogonic stories encompass the origins of totem clans; clan origin stories that were both sung and recited. In ancient times, each clan had a collection of names for its members associated with the belief in the rebirth of ancestors. Local family groups had their own burial ground. As in so many other cases we start from scratch when trying to sort out the totemic universe of the Khant nation. But this is how the work must be done.

Gender divisions were emphasized in some Khanti settlements (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016). This may be historically conditioned, such as the men's use of vodka. At funerals liberal amounts of vodka were offered. This may have been a reflection on people's passing and the culture changing. People must have felt the way in which their lives were changing quite intensively, especially during the Soviet era and later.

Summary of Khanti totemism

Recent ethnographic research indicates that the Khanti stand in a difficult situation today. Problems include minority repression, poverty, health issues, alcoholism and related problems. These are challenges that wait to be addressed and solved.

The focus in this book is on the stable conditions that once existed. People lived in villages of up to 300+ people, based on a well-organized collection of totem clans, further set up in the institutions of phratries and moieties. In some ways the organization reached up to Khanti society as a whole. Totems are primarily relevant on the local community level, as a series of contrasting and complementary emblems that distinguish the family groups constituting the community; the totemic clans. Such emblems will also be extended to individuals, and can be further developed for villages, tribal divisions, and the nation. No doubt the Khant ruler or king, set up in answer to Mongol and Russian rule, had a totem that was emblematic for the nation; as noted the totem could be bear – resonating with Russian emblems.

Today the Khanti people are a part of the modern world. Their situation is precarious, as an ethnic minority within the Russian state. It was said that ‘swindlers buy fish from Khanty for the price of a bottle’; same as on the Amur and elsewhere (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 58). Alcoholism is endemic, as in many other indigenous settlements. It has been noted that their language has been reduced to writing, both in the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets. Their oral traditions and stories have been written down, their myths recorded. But as Russian scholars laconically would add: they have never been made public (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964: 546). Maybe a new look at totemism and the ancient social life can renew the interest in Khanti society. At the very least it will preserve their memory in the future.

Summary of Finno-Ugric totemism

In general much too little is known about the traditions and history of the Finno-Ugric peoples in western Siberia and Fenno-Scandinavia. This also applies to the documentation of totemism and totemic systems. Unfortunately this not only applies to the Finno-Ugric regions, but to North Asia in general, and furthermore to totemic organizations in other parts of the world. The scholars, mostly from Russia, Japan or Western countries, have been ethnocentric in their outlook, and have not been able or willing to explore a reality where people and animals share an identity. In rather prudish fashion they have tried to ignore the whole issue.

Yet the rich past of the Finno-Ugric speakers is gradually emerging, and totemism was a part of this past, and in some ways still remains a part of native outlooks on life. People are found who remain bears, wolves and hawks – even mice. This is an enrichment of our understanding of humans in nature, and should continue to be a topic that is carefully investigated and expanded upon. Of particular note is the persisting moiety system, that parallels organizations found further east. A more comprehensive comparison of totemic systems will be returned to at the end of the book; the reader is asked to keep reading.

Samoyedic and Ket totemism

Moving east, the Samoyedic and Ket speakers are among the main native peoples in Siberia. Samoyeds include Nenets, Enets, Nganasan, Selkup and other peoples, while Ket is a group with that name and a few cognates. Unfortunately little is known about the cultures of these small peoples, especially when speaking about early historic times and traditional societies. The short ethnographies that follow barely scratches at the surface of what is to be found about native life and totemic organizations in the Ob-Yenisey drainages. Hopefully more information will be discovered over time so that the following presentation can be expanded. What follows is a first approach to analyzing totemism in central Siberia.

Nenets

Aka: Nentsi, Nentsy, Nennish, Neney-Nenets ('real man'), Yurak, Jurak, Khasava ('man'), Samoyed and the like.

The ancient territory surrounding the lower Ob and Gulf of Ob measured 800,000+ km², with room for 80,000+ people.

Some population estimates are: 20,000-25,000+ before the year 1500; 1897: about 20,000, officially 9427; 1927: 16,375 or preferably 18,000-20,000; 1959: 23,000, including Enets, and with 19,500 speakers; 1970: 29,000, also with Enets, 24,000 speakers; 1980: 30,-33,000, with 20,000-24,000 speakers; 1989: 34,665; 1995: 33,000-36,000, and 20,000-24,000+ speakers; 2020: 49,787, with 30,-40,000 speakers.

Partly due to their fairly isolated location in an Arctic and sub-Arctic environment the Nenets have been able to strengthen their position over the last hundred years, the number of speakers seemingly growing. In spite of this the prehistoric population must have been much larger.

Nenets bands and groups include:

Tundra: Western: Kanin + Malaya

Tundra: Eastern: Bolshaya + Yamal + Taz

Forest Nenets aka Neshchang (3,000 p.) (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 548).

Of the two dialect groups, Tundra-Nenets was the largest with 14,-18,000 speakers in 1926, while Forest-Nenets (Neshchang) was smaller with 1150-1500 members in 1926 (op. cit.: 548-9).

Presumably fairly large and compact settlements or villages existed into early historic times, counting 6-30+ houses. After what may have been a period of epidemics and calamities around 1330-1890 the population would be reduced to <20% and settlements became more scattered. People also took up a specialized nomadism on a full-time basis, while central locations were colonized by Russians. Overall it is difficult to get an image of premodern Nenets communities.

Recent settlements are described as generally small, based on reindeer herding, with 1-4 up to 10-20+ dwellings. Former summer villages, today mostly settled by Russians, would have to be examined to disclose historical settlement patterns.

Ecology

The Nenets homeland included Euro-Asian Arctic tundra and forest tundra. The area today comprises the Greater Tundra west of the Ural Mountains to the Pechora and Mezen rivers, the Yamal Peninsula, the Lower Ob and the lowlands between Ob and Yenisej. One also finds Nenets on the Kola Peninsula, on the White Sea, on the Kanin Peninsula, Novaya-Zemlya, the Taymyr tundra, etc. (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 547).

There was a wealth of wildlife, fish, plants and other resources in the region. People subsisted from hunting, fishing, gathering and reindeer herding. Summer herding took place in camp groups of 2-4 households that could merge into larger units. Bands had summer villages

located by fishing rivers that could have 7-10 or up to 20 tents (Prokof'yeva 1964a). In prehistory larger villages would exist.

History

Ethnographers speculated that the Samoyed peoples had a southern origin in the region around the Sayan Mountains. This could be extended to include the area between the Ural, Altay and Tien-Shan mountains, in short, the entire Ob drainage, and could refer to any period after 10,000 BC. A more basic view is that the Nenets originated in the North, in the lower Ob drainage. Russian scholars imagined a pan-Siberian indigenous people in the north, which was displaced by the Samoyeds. They justified this, among other things, by the occurrence of words for seal (nyak), grouse (khabevko), parkas-terms (lukhu) etc. in Nenets, but these words might as well be scattered among hunters in later years (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 550).

The local history is more important. The Nenets originally lived in the middle-lower Ob drainage and neighboring areas. They were gradually pushed north by immigrating people, in particular the Russians. From the Ob, the Nenets groups spread north, east, and west. They came into contact and potential conflict with other groups such as Komi and Enets. There was an exchange of knowledge, e.g., about reindeer herding.

Russian colonization took place from 1600 AD onwards but was never quite effective in the extreme north. The Russians tried to dominate the Nenets by appointing local Nenets leaders. Several uprisings took place against Russian rule and trade exploitation. Forced Christianization began in 1810, and an Orthodox Samoyed mission was started in Arkhangelsk in 1824. The forced conversions included group baptisms and the destruction of native spirit figures. The Russian authorities forcibly relocated Nenets people to Novaya-Zemlya in the 1870s to counter Norwegian claims to the islands.

The reindeer nomads were mobile and could avoid control, but depended on Russian traders for certain goods. Trade debts led some families to become poor, losing their reindeer, while rich Nenets became intermediaries in trade and were able to consolidate their prosperity. On the tundra, however, groups of Nenets preserved a great degree of freedom throughout the 1900s and into the 21st century.

At the same time their existence was challenged. The Russian 'native administration' was deleterious to the natives. A harsh Russian Christianization after 1810 meant that 'images of spirits were burnt by the hundreds', a case of iconoclasm and cultural destruction, that also affected totemic knowledge. During the Communist period 1920-1990 matters did not improve, as Russian authorities convulsively tried to control people's movement on the tundra. The option was to remain away from Russian towns and settlements, and seek a degree of isolation. For the Nenets this meant that they could achieve some degree of cultural preservation.

Economy

The Nenets would have a mixed economic adaptation of reindeer herding, hunting, fishing and gathering. Reindeer herding was prominent in the far north and found in large parts of the area. Hunting and fishing took place near the Ob and elsewhere in the region. On the tundra the reindeer were herded year-round. The migration routes ran from the forest in the south in winter and across the tundra towards the Arctic Ocean in summer. In some places people

stayed on the tundra year-round. A herd of 70-100 animals could keep a family alive. A separate forest nomadism in the south included herds with fewer animals moving shorter distances, 40-100 km, from summer to winter pastures. Some families left the herd to tundra nomads in the summer and engaged in fishing, trapping, etc. (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 551-2).

From ancient times, fishing in the lower Ob and other rivers was important. Fish caught included salmon, sturgeon and whitefish. Fishing seines were 80-100 m long, handled by 3-4+ men (op. cit.: 552). Sea mammals were also caught (op. cit.: 553). Game animals originally were wild reindeer (ilbets), hare, fox, otter, squirrel, beaver, bear, wolverine, etc. People also caught birds such as goose, duck, grouse, etc. (op. cit.: 548). It was said that 3-4+ men could catch 1500-2000 geese during the molting season. This was used by the Russians as a reason for banning bird capture (op. cit.: 553). The word for wild reindeer also meant 'food, sustenance' (op. cit.: 552). In historic times trapping would be important as a means to pay Russian debts and taxes.

Gathering was an important part of the subsistence activities, though little known. Women were responsible for picking berries and plant foods. In addition came the gathering of materials for weaving, making utensils and other purposes, engaged in by both genders.

Most activities involved group cooperation. Several local kin groups joined forces for the autumn hunt. A hunting group comprised 'different clans' and 'camps', perhaps phratry based (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 560). Animals killed belonged to a hunter's 'clan', but people from other 'clans' received the same proportion of meat (op. cit.: 561). Other joint activities included reindeer herding, bird catching, fishing, etc. It was said that 'snares', perhaps hunting fences, were communally owned (op. cit.: 562) Game was shared equally among those involved, including women, children and the old (ibid.).

This blissful situation changed when Russian traders arrived. Trade led to debt and economic inequality, where the Russians, among other things, used alcohol as a means of creating dependence and exploitation. The Russians would appoint a local man as 'leader' and record him as the owner of the community's reindeer, 2,000-10,000+ animals. Communal grazing (parma) contributed to this development, since it was possible to control the property of the herders working as a group. Similarly for trapping, rich families supported by the Russians would control the equipment and trade, and thus controlled the common hunting territories.

Kinship

Households could live in tipi tents (mya) and wood houses (Proko'yeva 1964a: 554-6). Anciently there may have been subterranean dwellings (op. cit.: 550). Light was provided by grease lamps (op. cit.: 556). The area at the back of the tent was a 'clean' or sacred area, where sacred things, boxes, valuables and special foods were kept (op. cit.: 555). Next to the house was a storehouse on scaffolding. There also were drying and storage racks for fish, meat, harnesses, etc. (ibid.). An overturned boat could be used as temporary shelter on travels (op. cit.: 556). On the move, 1-3+ families could travel together, while the summer and winter camps were larger (op. cit.: 555). The food consisted of meat, fish, berries and edible plants (op. cit.: 556).

Extended families counted 10-15 people (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 563). The oldest man was considered the head. Women, however, had a lot to say in the household. Women controlled almost all household chores. It was the task of the women to erect the tent. Women were also

responsible for fetching water and firewood, cooking, leather and clothing work, childcare, and numerous other tasks. In addition women would take part in herding, calving, and fishing. When family matters were discussed, the wife's view had great weight and was always taken into account.

Inheritance supposedly passed to brothers and sons. Wives and daughters, however, received dowry as an inheritance. Traditional law also granted women all property they had acquired through their own labor or by other means (Prokof'yeva et al. 1964a). This would render inheritance fairly equal.

Sons partly lived with their parents after they were married. Old people with married sons who lived elsewhere could take their grandchildren to their homes for a shorter or longer period of time, up to several years. When the old father died, the widow was taken care of by the youngest son. She had great authority in the household (op. cit.).

At marriage there was a payment of bride price (kalym) and bridal service, a man assisting his wife's parents (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 563). In ancient times, bride-price was paid to the 'clan', later to the FaLa. It usually included a few reindeer, furs, etc. In return, the woman was given dowry of household goods, sleighs, clothes and reindeer. The reindeer were the property of the female, that she kept if divorced or widowed.

Rich nomads had several wives and servants in the old days, especially when the Russians designated camp leaders with rights in property, trade and tax collection. Levirate was practiced, a man marrying the widow of an (older) brother.

Reportedly, marriage to one's (classificatory) FaSiDa was allowed (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 564). Probably this is a simplification. The kinship terminology was classificatory. 'Grandfather' (iri-mi) included FaOBr. 'Father' included Fa and FaBr, and 'mother' referred to Mo and MoSi. OBr (njaka-mi) could include FaYBr, i.e., men slightly older than oneself. A man uses the term 'children' both about his and his Br's children.

Differentiation

Likely Nenets totems are: fish, burbot, pike, whitefish, sturgeon, trout, salmon, seal (nyak), bearded-seal, bird, partridge (khabevko), raven, goose, hawk, eagle, bear, wolverine, marten, ermine, wolf (sarmik, ngyleka), dog, fox, silver-fox, lynx, animal (ilbets, 'sustenance'), deer, reindeer (ilbets), squirrel, hare, earth, sun, etc.

Totems associated with known 'clans' included: fish, seal (nyak), bird, partridge (khabevko), bear, wolf, animal (ilbets, 'sustenance'), reindeer (ilbets), hare, earth, sun, etc. Supposedly there were 100+ distinct 'clans'.

Among nomadic people totems may be hard to maintain, since they rely on a stable local distribution of clans, while nomadic groups can be more shifting in their composition. Before Russian colonization set in, it can be assumed that each group had a home village where they lived during parts of the year. Once Russians took over the region such residence would be less feasible and stable.

Nenets society had lineage groups, extended families or 'clans' (yerkar) (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 560). It should be added here that the word 'clan' is placed in inverted commas because it had

no clear use in the Russian sources, where it could mean anything from a family to an entire tribe. This will be a recurring issue when peoples throughout North Asia are presented. The membership of a 'clan' supposedly was patrilineal and exogamous. Exogamy extended to groups of 'clans' affiliated with 'phratries' or 'moieties' (ibid.). Anciently there were local communities organized by clans, phratries and moieties. A recorded dual organization consisted of moieties termed 'kharyuchi' and 'vanuyta'.

Later, when native settlements were dissolved by the Russians, the local components were fictionalized by the colonizers into abstracted, larger groups that existed independently of communities. This would be amplified by Marxist myths of 'group marriage' and 'primitive communism'. It is then necessary to relate conditions back to when people lived in independent, stable communities on the ground.

One image is of a local settlement consisting of roughly 24-28 families or descent groups, occupying 25-50+ houses, and organized into 12-14 totem clans, 3-4 phratries and 2 moieties. A description of this type of social organization is possible, but it will remain tentative.

The issue of Nenets 'clans' and their distribution is rendered confusing by the question whether these are local groups or an inventory of all family designations in the Nenets nation. Related to a local context is mention of a dozen or more 'clans', or several dozen sub-groups across communities, divided into moieties. On the wider levels there is mention of about 100 local groups that were counted around 1900. Communist era ethnographers would constantly mix lineages, families and locality. Old 'clan' names would end up as Russian last names, losing much of their totemic reference.

In the old days the 'clans' were totemic. No published list of totems exist, but some likely or recorded ones include: fish, pike, sturgeon, mullet, catfish, trout, salmon, bird, grouse, loon, goose, eagle, bear, otter, wolf (sarmik), dog, deer, reindeer, elk-moose, beaver, squirrel, hare, tree, fire, earth, mountain, water, river, sky, sun, etc. As noted, the total number of totems could exceed 100 animals and phenomena.

Phratries

Phratries are described pretty straightforward as groups of related or similar clans. Known Nenets totems, in a received, mythic version, included seals (nyak), grouse (khabevko), and reindeer (ilbets) (Prokof'yeva 1964a). This may be a reference to a phratry system, distinguished as fish or aquatic animals, birds, and land animals. A fourth phratry or division could be the chiefs, who could have totems of their own, such as fire and rock.

Moieties and local communities

According to myths there were two groups that originated on the Ob called 'kharyuchi' and 'vanuyta' (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 560). The moieties were divided into 'sub-groups' of phratries and clans. Each moiety was comprised of 'several dozen groups', totaling 100+ 'clans' (ibid.). This would be on an imagined, tribal level. Actual moieties constituted the two sides of a local community, each with 3-7+ 'clans'.

The total social organization of a local community can to some extent be reconstructed. Local descent groups claimed hunting, fishing and grazing localities. Each family had its fishing spot at the summer camp. The descent groups also had their own burial sites and sacrificial

sites. This allows the following reconstruction: ‘kharyuchi’, seal, partridge, wolverine, wolf, reindeer, squirrel; fish, hawk, bear, fox, elk-moose, hare, ‘vanuyta’. Which totem clan was on which side of the village or settlement is conjectural.

The peaceful community life ended with Russian colonization after 1800. Russian debts and the loss of animals meant that some poor families did not have skins for their own tents. People were forced to work for free as servants for rich nomads or henchmen. Trade debt towards Russians led to property differences. Around the year 1890, 17% of the households owned 75% of the animals. A distinction was created between rich, ordinary and poor people. Nenets who lived by fishing lost their livelihood when the Russians took control, and became poor and starving debt slaves under the Russians (Prokof'yeva 1964a). In more general terms, the social structure of Nenets society was broken.

Politics

The game of power among the Nenets is poorly known. People were driven north and scattered before their political system could be recognized. Based on the presence of two moieties, it is likely that communities had two chiefs, head and second chief. In historical times the Russians appointed local leaders for tax collection, who gained privileges and became intermediaries in trade (Prokof'yeva 1964a).

The traditional Nenets had a legal system. Within the family or local group, offenses such as murder, theft, refusal to help, or incest were unheard of and forbidden. Between local groups there could be cases of murder and revenge (*ibid.*). Apparently such crimes were strongly discouraged. In Russian accounts, local groups might get involved in violent conflicts with each other, in which men from another group were killed. To what extent, if any, this occurred, and how such violence was viewed, is not clear. In prehistoric times local life mostly was peaceful.

Religion

For some reason Russian ethnographers paid considerable attention to Nenets religion, perhaps because it was practiced outside of the reach of government authorities. Forced Christianization in the 1700-1800s could not prevent native beliefs among the nomad. The native cosmology encompassed a spirit ‘lord’ in nature. This was the creator Num, god of heaven, sun, and fire, who created the earth and living things, and the welfare of men depended upon him (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 564-6). The received image probably is mirrored on Christian monotheist ideas.

Spirits or gods included heaven, mountains, hills, rivers, lakes, water, earth, fire, etc. The earth was a separate deity, Ya-nebya, ‘mother earth’, who could help people and especially protected women and helped them during childbirth. The souls of the dead floated on divine cribs in the kingdom of death’s Ilin lake. People would create a rich spiritual universe based on their relations with nature (*ibid.*).

Animal spirits that were worshipped included fish, pike, sturgeon, mullet, catfish, trout, etc. This would be extended to countless other creatures such as birds and four-legged animals. Loon skins were burned to provide good weather. The reindeer was considered to be a ‘pure’ animal and surrounded with respect. A family could have sacred reindeer that were dedicated to the creator, the sun, fire, etc., often white animals with a sun symbol cut into their fur and

red ribbons in their horns. The wolf was treated with respect and fear, personified as 'Ngyleka'. The real word for wolf, 'sarmik', was taboo and was rarely mentioned. The bear was particularly worshipped, with many rules about how to treat its meat, etc. Carved figures representing house spirits could be 'fed' when their help was needed (Prokof'yeva 1964a: 565-6).

There apparently were community ceremonies. Apparently there was an annual cycle of ceremonies, which would indicate a community meeting ground. The creator Num received offerings in autumn and spring. Nenets would incorporate Christian beliefs in their annual ceremonies. At Christmas Saint Nicholas was worshiped, as he is in New York. Worship included prayers and sacrifice, such as an offer to the water spirit for safe journey. Historically, shamanism was of great importance, as a source of community worship and healing. Witchcraft could be another element of social control and upheavals (ibid.).

Culture and ethos

As noted most resources were shared in Nenets society. Hospitality was an exceptionless rule. This was a practice found in many native societies, and one that could be taken advantage of by later colonizers, who repaid the hospitality with repression. The Nenets had a rich material culture, such as forms of clothing and personal decoration, that can only be hinted at here. There were parkas coats with fur collars, bead work, and more.

Samoyed languages were synthetically agglutinating; unfortunately these have been little studied by Russian scholars. The folklore included riddles (khobtsoko), myths (vaal), fairy tales (vadako), heroic poems (sjudbabts), tales (jarabts), etc. Myths concerned the creation of the world, of people and the origin of various clans and groups. There were animal tales that unfortunately are little known (Prokof'yeva 1964a).

Life courses were circumscribed by extensive rituals. At birth, sacrifices took place, followed by a purification of the birth house. A child reportedly was named after one of the ancestors, which may be a recent practice. Children were laid on cradle-boards wrapped in leather. The upbringing was fairly free. Children ate the same food as adults from the age of two.

There were many religious rules and taboos to follow. A woman of childbearing age was considered 'impure' and could not move freely (ibid.). Women were once placed in 'unclean' tents or menstruation huts at birth and menstruation. This was a trans-northern tradition, that may be seen as both obstructive and protective.

The course from birth to death would be a stable element in the Nenets life-world. Funerals were quite extensive. The dead were buried in graves with tomb-houses (nemb, khalmer-tin) made of logs. With the corpse lay a food bowl, food, and implements such as a sleigh. There was a taboo period when the soul of the dead remained on earth before passing to the spirit world. Annual grave visits took place. The many rituals served to protect the cycle of life (Prokof'yeva 1964a).

Summary

External colonists would try to transform or even obliterate Nenets culture. Communist rule after 1920 led to a heavy-handed collectivization, with so-called 'cultural bases' set up after 1928; a process that was considered completed by 1950. The workers were settled in Russian

collective cities under state control. This control became even more extensive after 1950, such as surveillance, compulsory education and assimilation. One strategy was to use women as communist cadres overlooking local activities, as informers for the authorities (Prokof'yeva 1964a).

On the tundra, however, there were groups that escaped government control and continued a traditional Nenets nomadization with camps of men, women, and children to this day. They retained the Nenetsian leather suit and other cultural elements.

Threads can be drawn backwards to when the natives lived in independent communities based on a local system of totemic clans. Then the Nenets were masters of their domain, the vast territory between the northern Urals and Ob. And links can be drawn forward to the present day, when people still try to retain what elements they can of this rich and rewarding culture.

Enets

Aka: Entsi, Entsy, Ennish, Enete ('person'), Oney-enete ('real people'), Yenisey-Samoyed; Yenisey people, Tundra-Enets, Khantajka, Somatu, Forest-Enets, Karasin, Pe-bay, etc. It is worth noting that purely geographical designations were used, such as Yenisey people, which would not distinguish between Enets, Ket and others, leading to a potential confusion in the records. Russians, in ethnocentric fashion, would see all natives as 'indigenes'.

The Enets territory of 100,000+ km² would allow for 15,000+ people.

Population: 6,000+ before the year 1500; 3,-6,000 in 1600; 1650: ca. 3000; 1890: ca. 2000; 1927: ca. 1,500 (of which 378 Southern); 1980: 1,000+, ca. 300 speakers; 1989: ca. 1200, officially 209, less than 200 speakers; 2020: 334+, 69 speakers. Unlike the Nenets, but like most North Asian peoples, the Enets saw their population dwindle over the period 1330-1980. This decline has continued, with the language being virtually extinguished.

The Enets occupied the region around the lower Yenisei.

Some Enets bands were:

Tundra: Somatu + Matu aka Madu or Manto + Bay + Muggadi aka Mongkasi – these were located near Yenisey, Yenisey Sound, Lower Taz, Pur, Pyasina, Little Kheta, etc.

Forest: Pe-Bay aka Forest Bay + Yuchi + Aseda + Salerta + Karasin (re: Muggadi, Bay) – they lived near Yenisey, Middle Taz, Dudinka, Luzino, Potapovo, Turukhan, etc. (Dolgikh 1964: 582).

Later settlements included: 'Transpolar' collective (1950), 'S. M. Kirov Kolkhoz' (1950), etc.

The Enets used to live in regular villages or settlements. A local community could have several hundred residents, perhaps ranging from 30 to 300+ people. In recent times they built camps of conical pole-tents, as well as huts (Dolgikh 1964: 583-4). A modern camp could consist of 10-15 houses, 30-50 inhabitants, divided into 3-4 extended families or family groups. There are indications that old-time villages consisted of 1-2+ rows of houses along a shore, with 6-12+ houses in the front or main row (cf. Dolgikh 1964: 585). In Russian views, perhaps biased, camps had a patrilinear-based, bilateral and exogamous social organization.

Ecology

The Enets land was one of tundra and lakes, and a resource rich river, estuary and coast area. The land provided fish and game, and opportunities for reindeer herding. The climate was harsh, but the expansive territory offered ample means of survival (Dolgikh 1964).

History

What little is known of Enets history is that they lived originally, before 1500 AD, along the lower part of the Yenisei from above the Lower Tunguska to Yenisei Bay, as well as along adjacent rivers such as the Taz, Turukhan, Pyasina and Tanoma. The people were gradually driven north and were reduced in population as a result of epidemics and the Russian colonization of Siberia after 1600. The Enets in the 1600s counted 3000+ people with groups such as Matu-Somatu, Bay-Pebay, Muggadi, Yuchi, Aseda and Salerta. These were driven further north in the 1700s by native groups such as Selkup and Ket, who themselves were displaced by Russian colonizers further south (Dolgikh 1964: 582).

The Enets were gradually established as the Tundra-Enets east and south of Yenisei Bay, and the Forest-Enets along the Yenisei at and below the Lower Tunguska. Until the Revolution they were exploited by Russian traders (op. cit.: 585). Yet people would retain some independence and a sense of native identity. They remained in contact with the Nenets to the W and the Nganasani to the E. At Dudinka the Enets language would persist in a mixed community with Nenets speakers. Today both languages are threatened by extinction due to Russian assimilation and control.

Economy

The Enets way of life was based on hunting, fishing and gathering, as well as reindeer husbandry. Hunters would capture wild reindeer for food and clothing, polar foxes for sale and tax payments. In the Yenisei and neighboring rivers there was extensive fishing, especially in the south. Reindeer husbandry was of the 'Samoyed' type, i.e., mostly for transport and hunting purposes. In modern times the reindeer herding became more extensive and production oriented. When trading in tsarist times, natives were exploited grossly by traders. Later the production outcome was controlled by the state (Dolgikh 1964).

Kinship

Little is known about Enets kinship. It could have been bilateral with a patrilineal tendency, as among the Nenets. The 'social structure' was said to be similar to that of the Nganasans (Dolgikh 1964: 585).

Differentiation

Possible Enets totem animals were: fish, pike, sturgeon, salmon, seal, bird, grouse, crow, duck, eagle, bear, wolverine, sable, wolf, dog, fox, polar-fox, deer, reindeer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, land, sun, etc.

Of interest are the totemic traditions that can be found among the Enets. They are said to be similar to those found among the related Nganasan people. The historical Matu-Somatu band was said to have had 9 exogamous 'clans' (Dolgikh 1964: 585). The other groups in modern times had so few people left that each group constituted an exogamous unit. This may actually point back to earlier times, when each community or settlement in practice was exogamous, even though constituted of several unrelated 'clans'. The basic system could be one of 6 totem clans, e.g., salmon, seal, grouse, eagle, wolf, hare, or some such constellation. In larger communities this could be extended to 12, 14 or more clans, all based on an expanded totemic configuration. A suggestion is: salmon, seal, grouse, eagle, bear, sable, wolf, fox, reindeer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, sky, and earth. The system would allow for a grouping of 3-4 phratries and 2 moieties in each community. As in other native societies totemic emblems could be extended from the individual level all the way up to tribal divisions and the Enets nation.

People were fundamentally egalitarian, though there would be 1-2+ chiefs in each community – first among equals. Under Russian rule this would change. Traders would set up local henchmen that would gain special favors in return for doing their bidding. In the north rich reindeer owners with up to 2,-3,000 animals were known, poor people with few or no animals working for them (Dolgikh 1964). A tax and trade exploitation continued up until Soviet

times, when collectivization and a loss of autonomy would become even more critical. In spite of such oppression, parts of the totemic system seem to have persisted until recent times.

Politics

Each community, and each camp, probably had its own leader or leaders in ancient times. In recent times these were replaced by collective leaders and the rule of Russian officials. Hence little remains of the traditional political system of the Enets, and it is difficult to reconstruct how such a system operated. That leaders had totemic emblems seems clear, possibly up to the national or tribal level.

Religion

Enets beliefs were nature based, so-called animism. Most things had a spirit and awareness. Gods or master spirits included the sky, sun, earth, fire, animals such as bears and reindeer, as well as disease, hunger, and more. In historic times people suffered much from externally brought epidemics, so diseases such as smallpox also became a master spirit. There were water-spirits and animal spirit-helpers. Souls went to a spirit world before going to the Creator to be reborn. A place- or house-spirit could be represented by carved wood or rocks. In addition, one had protective spirits in the house, talismans, magical objects, spells, etc. Sacrificial animals included dogs and reindeer. A sacrifice of clothing or objects could be left on trees, a practice found spread across the north (Dolgikh 1964).

The annual cycle of ceremonies is poorly known. Apparently celebrations were held in winter around the return of the sun. Presumably the main ceremonial season was in summer, with rituals and dances. Little information is provided about the ritual events, that would be harshly curtailed under Russian domination.

The offset for people's need for spiritual comfort once native communal beliefs were banned, was the shaman. This led the shaman to historically have a prominent place as people faced outside threats to their survival and health.

Culture

This brief presentation cannot cover the richness of Enets culture. Native costumes had geometric decorations. There was a rich folklore of songs, cosmology, myths and epic tales. A hunter hero called Morrede was central, who had a reindeer helper. Unfortunately little of the Nenets literature is available for the general reader (Dolgikh 1964: 585).

Summary

The presentation of Enets culture and social organization has been sketchy, due to a dearth of information. The impact of external colonization has been devastating. There was a forced collectivization after the Revolution, such as of reindeer husbandry and fishing. People were increasingly placed in housing on collectives, such as 'Kirov' and 'New Life' in the Ust-Yeniseysky rajon, and 'Trans-Polar' in the Dudinsky rayon (Dolgikh 1964: 585-6). In some cases the state-organized use of resources led to the over-exploitation of wildlife and fisheries. Collectivization and Russification also led to the loss of the Enets language and other cultural resources.

In relation to this, totemism, once a pervasive form of social organization, has remained in vestigial form until the present. It is difficult to completely eradicate people's identity and belonging, even when under severe external rule. Totemism is also a facet when coming to terms with how people have continued their relation to the environment in spite of external interventions. That people live in close contact with nature is an enduring aspect of Enets life.

Nganasan

Aka: Nganasany, Tavgi-Samoyed, Nya – their own name, etc.

The territory around the Taymyr plateau would comprise 20,000+ km², allowing for 2,000+ people.

Population: 1897: 876+; 1926: 867+; 1959: 750+, with 700 speakers; 1970: 1000, with 750 speakers; 1980: c. 900-1200, c. 600 speakers; 1989: 1278; 2020: 860+, with 416 speakers.

The Nganasan was the northernmost people of Siberia, and among the northernmost people in the World. They inhabited the Taymyr tundra, a vast area between the Yenisei and Lena rivers, north of the Polar Circle and mostly north of 70°N (Popov 1964b: 571). This location made them unique, but also vulnerable to external interventions.

Native subgroups included: Pyasina; Tudurusy; Tavgi; Kurak; Vadeyev; Oko; Avam; etc. (Popov 1964b: 571-2). Some place names are: Great Balakhna, Pyasina, Dudypta, Taymyr, Kheta, Khatanga, Kотора, Logata, Avam, etc.

People lived in camps or settlements (malir, maya), that anciently would extend to larger communities or villages (Popov 1964b: 577).

Ecology

As noted the Nganasan land consists mainly of tundra, with rivers and lakes interspersed. It was well suited for reindeer herding, a dominant practice in modern times. In addition game, fish and plants provided sources of sustenance (Popov 1964b: 571).

History

The people over time extended from the Yenisei to the Taymyr River and beyond. In early times they may have lived south to the Kotuy River or further west. Their first contact with the Russians was in 1618 when the Cossacks reached the Pyasina River and demanded a fur 'tax'. By 1630 all Nganasan groups had become nominal Russian subjects (Popov 1964b: 572). Around 1750 the Nganasan took up a group of Evenk that had been pushed north. Also other immigrants were adopted, such as a Dolgan group called Oko in the 1800s. The Oko clan participated in Dolgan clan councils until 1931.

In the period 1700-1900 the Nganasan were treated ruthlessly by the Russians. Many epidemics led to population loss (Popov 1964b). In spite of this the ancient culture was preserved almost intact until the Revolution. Since then the Nganasan people have come under increasing pressure from the Russian state. The number of native speakers has dropped steadily over the last 50 years.

Economy

The quite complex nomadic economy and way of life can only be briefly outlined here. It included both wild reindeer hunting and reindeer husbandry, as well as other hunting, trapping and fishing (Popov 1964b: 572-3). The gathering of plant and mineral materials would add to this diversity.

People moved between the tundra and river valleys according to the annual migrations of wild reindeer. In winter the reindeer stayed in the valley forest, with summer pastures on the plateau and mountain tundra. In all these areas the people would utilize the varied but scattered resources they found, wildlife, fish, berries and plants. Wild reindeer were hunted with spears (pokolki) when crossing rivers and lakes (op. cit.: 573). Another practice was to use 50 m long nets that reindeer were driven into, a practice involving the whole community (ibid.). Animals and fish caught were divided equally among families in the community (op. cit.: 577).

Some people moved inland in winter, where 2-3 families lived in huts of stone, logs and earth, for hunting and ice fishing. Reindeer hunts in summer were conducted in groups of 1-6 men on foot. Animals hunted included geese, ducks, and many more. Fur-trapping only gained importance from the 1600s onwards when the Russians demanded 'taxes' from the natives. Domesticated reindeer herding on an extensive basis became a primary mode of life under Russian rule after 1850 (Popov 1964b).

Even in prehistoric times the livelihood depended on exchange with outside groups. Material goods and some foodstuffs depended on barter with other peoples, such as boats and nets from the Yakut, threads, fibers and wood from several sources, and so on. This trade was greatly expanded under the Russians, and included imported food, tea, tobacco, and spirits. Even though the Russian trade created differences between people, common resource exploitation was emphasized. Catches of fish and game would be shared equally between all participants and camp members (Popov 1964b). Hunting and fishing grounds were jointly possessed. For a while the control was so strong that individuals with firearms were not allowed access to the hunting ground because they frightened the animals. There also was a shared and ceremonial consumption of food, as hunters provided meat for everyone in the camp. If reindeer herders and hunters had a conflict over the sharing of meat, the elders of the camp would be brokers. It was a tough but rewarding life.

Kinship

The households during the year occupied tents or tipis, huts and other housing. Myths mention excavated houses with conical roofs covered with earth. Women were responsible for processing reindeer hides, and otherwise took part in most activities. They also were responsible for household activities, managed the house and had a lot to say in its affairs.

The known marriage practices included bride-price and occasions of polygamy. Relatives assisted in the payment of the bride price in return for having an interest in reindeer from the dowry. Exogamy included both the paternal and maternal lineages. Both levirate and sororate was practiced – widows and widowers marrying the Br or Si of a deceased spouse. The kin terminology was classificatory (Popov 1964b).

Differentiation

Potential Nganasan totems include: fish, whitefish, muksun-fish, trout, bird, partridge-ptarmigan, crow (kurak), raven, duck, goose, owl, snow-owl, eagle (pyasina), bear, polar-bear, wolverine, ermine, wolf, dog, fox, polar-fox, deer, reindeer, mouse, squirrel, hare, tree, fire, water, snow, earth, sun, etc.

As will be noted elsewhere, nomadic people somehow fall outside the established forms of totemic organization. Local communities will not always have a set number of totemic clans controlling a local area and its resources. As people move during the year the composition of families or clan groups may shift slightly, and so reckoning becomes more connected to the kinship links of families, a more 'genealogical' tendency than the universal appearance of totemic emblems, the creatures found all around in nature. Also the nomads tend to be focused on one creature, the reindeer.

Hence it is assumed that the Nganasan, once they became reindeer herders, fell outside the general mode of totemic organization. Yet in prehistoric times, when people had fixed fishing and hunting grounds, and a permanently established location for villages and settlements, both in summer and winter, a social system conforming to a totemic organization may have existed.

Ethnocentrism is a further complication when studying totemic information. Soviet ethnographers routinely mixed up local groups with clans, since Engels postulated this. There was a tendency to place an ideological interpretation on empirical data, making interpretations difficult. This means that all claims to totems, clans, moieties and so on must be read with caution. Among the information provided is that the Avam group had 5 'clans' or local groups, and the Vadeyev had 6 (Popov 1964b: 576). Whether a 'clan' refers to a descent group or a local community is not clear; the 'clan' system was described as loose.

Clans were said to be exogamous, in some accounts extended to each local group. That is to say: people exercised local exogamy. To make matters extra confusing, each local group contained several clans, while the Russians used 'clan' for both units, making distinctions and clarifications difficult. There were something called 'clan idols' or 'kuoyka', not widely described (op. cit.: 577). They could consist of wood, stone, antler, metal, etc., with 'zoomorphic or anthropomorphic images' (op. cit.: 578). No examples are given, though apparently the emblem could be a fish, bird, animal, fox, reindeer, etc., where some species are surmised.

To cut through the confusion, it can be suggested that a local community or settlement consisted of at least 6 clans, divided into 3 phratries and 2 moieties. Precisely how this worked out on the ground is not known, and will depend on detailed studies of all available sources from as far back as the 1600s. Whether such sources exist is an open question. The several local clans were joined together through cooperation and neighborliness.

Local or band names, confused with 'clans', included Tidiris, Tavgi, etc. This would lead over to the Russian-introduced practice of family names and surnames, such as those of a Dolgan called Oko, a group of Vanyadir-Evenk called Vaddeyev, and other, Russian-styled names (Popov 1964b: 571-2).

Some totems noted among the Nganasan, both mythical and historical, included: fish, grouse, crow (kurak), duck, goose, eagle (pyasina), bear, wolf, reindeer, hare, etc. All of these could be found in a local community.

A basic totemic distinction was between animals, fish and birds, reminiscent of a phratry-type division. These would be represented figuratively by a cross or square, a line with curves, and a triangle, respectively. The shapes might vary slightly, and were imprinted as 'ornamental designs on leather' (Popov 1964b: 574). A highly tentative suggestion of a local totemic

organization among the Nganasan could be: whitefish, muksun-fish, ptarmigan or grouse, duck or goose, crow or raven, eagle, bear, wolverine, wolf, fox or polar-fox, reindeer, hare, sky, and earth.

A settlement 'usually consisted of families belonging to different clans' (Popov 1964b: 577). The scholar saw this as a weakness and a decline, since camps 'were not united by clan' (ibid.). Yet this was the whole point of the totemic organization, that the series of local totem clans complemented each other and formed a unity, the local community.

The scholar guessed that the presence of 'different clans' implied a hierarchy, where 'a rich reindeer-breeder' dominated the 'poor households' in the camp, one 'clan' dominating other 'clans' (ibid.). Yet the system was egalitarian, all totems supplemented each other, and to the extent that there was any hierarchy this was imposed from the outside, through Russian trade, taxes and domination.

Instead of studying local organization, Russian scholars would look at social differences and class formation, fitting a programmatic Marxist analysis. Paradoxically and unsurprisingly such distinctions had been introduced by Russian colonizers, and had nothing to do with native society. Yet they had to be eradicated, and the way to do this was through more Russian colonization and control! By 1926, 11% of the households owned 60% of the animals (Popov 1964b: 577). Conflicts were created between hunters and reindeer herders, due to the authorities' demands for produce 'tax'. These conflicts were left to the Nganasan to solve through their elders and egalitarian views. Such pressure would increase over the years, and threatened the native existence.

Politics

The political system of the Nganasan is poorly known. Presumably they had local chiefs and elders representing the local totem clans, who came together in local council meetings; from here the chiefs could enter into wider alliances, perhaps reaching to the tribal or national level. In Russian times there were appointed 'elders' who took care of tax submission and outside contacts (Popov 1964b).

Religion

Religious beliefs were said to mirror those of the neighboring Enets. The 'basis of the religious outlook' was nature beliefs (Popov 1964b: 578). Some 'spirit masters' or gods (nguo) were: sun, moon, sky, earth, water, fire, smallpox, hunger, wolf, reindeer, etc. In addition there were many spirits (barusi) among people and in nature, like water spirits or nymphs, and a shaman's animal helpers (ibid.).

There was a distinct annual cycle of ceremonies among the Nganasan. There was an autumn celebration, in preparation for hunting, in which dogs and reindeer were sacrificed 'to the spirits of certain sacred hills' (ibid.).

Another annual celebration was held in February after the return of the sun. This was sometimes called the 'clean tent' (fala-futu), in which a shaman prayed for good fortune. At the same time there was a custom of passing through 'stone gates' to cast off spells and misfortune (Popov 1964b: 579). During the ceremony 'the young people danced and played' outside (ibid.).

Rivers 'were offered sacrifices of reindeer in the spring' (ibid.). Presumably this marked the beginning of open-water fishing. Probably there were major ceremonies in summer, celebrating hunting, fishing and the bounties of nature; but all such events would be curtailed by the Russian authorities.

Once organized religion and ceremonies were discontinued, the more private shaman grew in importance. Historically the shaman had a prominent place as people faced outside threats to their survival and health (Popov 1964b).

Culture

The rich Nganasan culture has been fairly extensively studied, since it survived until present times. The material culture included decorative coats or parkas made of reindeer hide (Popov 1964b: 576). Clothing could include totemic emblems. Crescents, rings and forks made from metal or ribbons could symbolize creatures such as: fish, bird, animal, reindeer, etc. Other motives were forks, stars, etc. – that could be totemic as well (op. cit.: 580). Color symbolism included yellow, red, black, white and blue, which might also have a totemic or moiety significance. Figurative art included mammoth tusk carvings (ibid.).

The folklore was rich. It included 'epic tales, stories, historical legends, songs and riddles' (Popov 1964b: 579). The scholar ignored the important category of animal tales. Unfortunately much of the literature is not available to readers. Women play a prominent role in myths, perhaps pointing to their earlier prominence in villages and the possible existence of matrilineal clans. The Nganasan had a tradition of word-duels, similar to the Eskimo-Inuit (Popov 1964b).

Life courses were surrounded by rituals. Women were considered 'unclean' during menstruation and pregnancy (Popov 1964b: 577). Name-giving was surrounded with a certain secrecy, especially towards Russians. This is significant, since people usually would not reveal their totem, in particular not to outsiders. Totemic names have to be protected, since they convey a person's identity, as will be noted in relation to several northern peoples; one way to visualize this would be to compare a totem-name to a bank code, something most people would not divulge freely. Reportedly there was a belief in rebirth. Children were often named after older family members, possibly through Russian influences. Children had nicknames such as Ngorobiye, 'joy' (ibid.). These would prevent the real name and its totemic significance from being revealed.

People were buried in a grave under a grave-house. It was said that women brought the dowry with them to the grave, which may be a misunderstanding referring to grave-goods such as a pot, food and so on (Popov 1964b).

Summary

Massive Russian influences after the Revolution reached Tajmyr by 1929. In 1931, Tajmyr was made a communist province, and native nomads were 'schooled' in communist leadership (Popov 1964b). Nganasan lived in isolation as reindeer nomads in an inhospitable area, but the area was of strategic importance and they were surrounded by Russian coastal stations and military posts during the Cold War. This led to forced collectivization, displacement, government-controlled housing settlements, and a general loss of freedom

between 1950 and 1990. People were randomly placed in 2 to 4 large collectives, mixed with Yakut and other people. Reindeer herding, an independent and specialized activity, came under Russian supervision. Even meaningful practices such as exogamy, marrying outside the local group, was 'opposed' by Russian officials, who favored in-marriage. This was one more way to control people. The children were sent to boarding schools, forcibly stripped of their culture. The language today, with <400 speakers, is considered severely endangered. In spite of its isolated location, the last Nganasani speaker may already have been born.

The significance of totemism in all this is retrospective. The Tavgi once lived in fairly large communities along the rivers with hunting areas inland. A summer village could hold dozens of totemic clans with 30+ families organized in descent groups or clans, phratries and moieties. Over time this system changed as people diversified into nomadic reindeer herding with more shifting compositions of camps. Yet the totemic idea survived, and people still can look back to a time when the tribe consisted of stable communities organized into complementary and contrastive totem clans.

Selkup

Aka: Sel'kup, Sel'kupy, Solkup, Ostyak-Samoyed, Ostyak, etc. The ethnonym 'Ostyak' causes confusion, since it is applied to people speaking different languages, Selkup, Ket and Khanti. Perhaps this was a geographical term applied to all people in the West Siberian Plain by the Russians. This makes it difficult to decide what groups were referred to, since all were known by the same term.

The Selkup occupy a crucial position in the regional social history of the Samoyedic peoples. They lived further south than other groups, in a rich forest area where stable local communities based on a totemic organization can be envisioned. Unfortunately their location also led them into direct contact with Russian colonizers, and the Selkup way of life stood in threat of being destroyed as soon as it was discovered – like finding a priceless manuscript and using it to light your evening fire.

The Selkup homeland was huge, and probably included a number of related tribes and considerable cultural complexity. Originally the area must have included the middle and upper reaches of the Ob drainage. This area covers 2,500,000 km² and must have held 500,000+ people. These populous tribes were gradually pushed north and east under Turkic and Russian pressure towards Taz and Turukhan. Others remained on the middle Ob in the Vasyugan, Tym and Ket drainages.

Basically, the entire Selkup nation ended up in the northeastern quarter of its ancient land. This area still remained large, 600,000+ km², easily housing 100,000+ people.

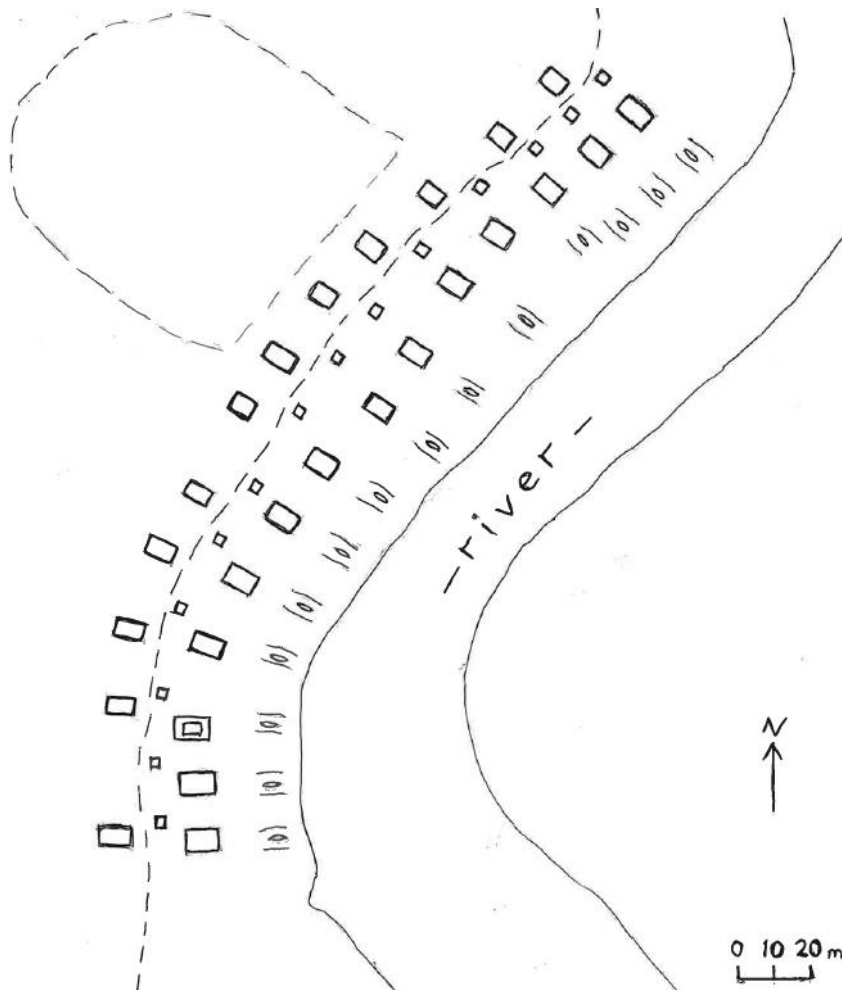
Population figures include: 1250 AD: 100,000-200,000+; 1600: 15,000-30,000; 1897: 7,000+; 1926: ca. 6,000, with ca. 1500 in the north and 4500 in the south; 1959: c. 3,800, 1900-2000 speakers; 1970: ca. 4,300, 2000-2200 speakers; 1980: 3,600-4,000+, ca. 2000 speakers; 1989: 3621+; 1994: 1570 speakers; 2002: 4300; 2010: 3649+; 2020: <1600 speakers.

Modern Selkup regional groups or bands include:

Northern: Taz-Turukhan Selkup aka Söl'kup, Shöl'kup ('forest-man'), Surgut or forest-tundra group. Various designations are: Taz aka Taz-Pur, Tym-Karakon or Taz-Ostyak. Turukhan aka Turukhan-Yeloguy, Baikha-Ostyak or Baisha-Ostyak.

Southern: Narym Selkup aka taiga-forest group: Tym aka Tym-Vasyugan or Chumyl'-kup ('earth-man'). Ket aka Süs-se-kum, Süssecum, Süssekup or Shöshkum ('forest-man') (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 587-590).

The distribution of settlements was wide. In the 1600s the Selkup were subdivided into 27 tribal districts (volost) with 3 at Surgut, 12 at Narym ('Spotted Horde'), 5 at Ket and 7 at Tomsk (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 589). Each area reportedly had a few hundred inhabitants; a simple calculation would give 550-1100 people per district. Accounting for depopulation, districts might earlier hold 5,000-10,000 people, each with several villages holding 100-300+ inhabitants.



Tentative early Selkup village at Napas

It can be assumed that in early historic times there were villages of 6-30+ houses. On Synya River W of the Ob are found villages of 10+ subterranean houses (Siikala & Ulyashev 2016: 68). In subsequent historic times Selkup ‘camps’ or villages often consisted of 2-10+ houses (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 595-6). The villages were placed on high riverbanks, often near a river's mouth or a side canal. The houses were said to be fairly ‘scattered’, or rather placed in rows along the river terrace (op. cit.: 596). Associated with each village there would be a communal area used for gatherings, ceremonies, dances and councils, and perhaps games as well.

Other village features included sacrificial places and one or more cemeteries (op. cit.: 601). Apparently every social unit could have a sacrificial ‘spot’, such as that of a totem clan, phratry, moiety, and the village as a whole (op. cit.: 603). Supposedly there were ‘log structures’ (lozyl-sessan) at the sites with ‘clan idols’ (parga) and other paraphernalia inside (ibid.). What the objects were is unclear, but mention is made of: furs, brass images, silver, cloth, etc., presumably each item with a ritual significance; the only specific item noted was a bear image (ibid.).

The local group controlled joint hunting and fishing spots which were partly used in common and partly distributed on an extended family basis (Prokof'yeva 1964b). The shared control and use of resources would linger into later history. In modern times there were well-known collectives and relocation places. These included Farkovo (‘Smidovich’) at Turukhan; Krasno-Selkup at Taz; a place called ‘Kirov’, which was relocated in a combined collective

called 'Third 5-year plan' with 75 households after 1950; Napas, an old main village at Tym; Pylkaramo, another old village; 'Molotov', a mixed collective south of Tym; and villages near Kargasok, Kolpashevo, etc. (op. cit.: 603-6). It is important to note that one village in 1950 had 75+ Selkup families. While this resulted from forced resettlement by the Russians, it hints at the village background of native life. Some Selkup villages in 1250 AD may well have counted 75+ houses. Even though under force, people were returning to a village life that they had never fully abandoned.

Villages were forcibly relocated several times between 1925 and 1955. This would become even worse later, as Russian authorities tried to destroy 'ethnic' communities after 1975. The aim was Russification, a forced assimilation. There was a curious claim that 'nomadic' Selkup were 'settled' down by 1955; the proper term would be relocated (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 605). The Selkup had always been settled in permanent local communities.

Ecology

It has been stated that Selkup villages controlled joint hunting and fishing grounds that were allocated on an extended family basis. This would conform to the resource uses in a village composed of totem clans, where the village as a whole controlled a local territory and its resources, and could distribute the access on a clan, phratry or moiety basis, depending on the resource. The Selkup thereby had a good adaptation to their environment. The resource use combined hunting, fishing, gathering and some basic forms of plant cultivation, that would afford sustainable practices within the native territory (Prokof'yeva 1964b).

History

The prehistory of the Selkup homeland, nearly the size of Western Europe, must be rich and complex, but is virtually unknown. Prehistoric dugout houses have been uncovered in clusters of 3-12 dwellings. Probably the number of houses was much greater in some places. Excavated houses contained pottery, copper arrowheads, belt buckles, women's braid ornaments, bone thread coils, etc.

Around 1600-1650 AD the Selkup occupied the middle Ob valley from present Novosibirsk to Khanty-Mansijsk (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 589). Their ancient neighbors included the Khant and Ket.

History was not kind to the Selkup. As noted they were driven northeast to an area on the middle Ob including its side branches between the Vakh and Chulym rivers. After the arrival of the Russians in the 1590s, the Selkup would progressively see their land being taken. Among the survivors, one group was known as 'Northern Selkup' on the Taz and Turukhan rivers (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 587). The group that survived in the Ob drainage was called Southern Selkup. A group known as Narym-Selkup counting 400 men under Chief Vonya resisted Russian emissaries and tax collectors between 1590 and 1597. Vonya allied himself with the Tatar khan Kuchum and threatened to attack Surgut. The Russians fortified Narym in 1596, thus creating a wedge and breaking the so-called 'Spotted Horde'. Then each local group or district could be picked off separately. Of 27 local areas in the 1590s, 3 were near Surgut, 12 near Narym-Tym, 5 at Ket and 7 at Tomsk-Chulym. All came under Russian attack.

The Southern Selkup were gradually suppressed and assimilated by the Russians between 1600-1900. Forced Christianization took place 1700-1900. Until 1880, taxes were paid with fur animals, especially sables. When the population declined in the 1800s, Selkup had to buy fur from Russian traders to pay the tax. A condition of extensive native debt bondage to traders existed from 1850 to 1920 (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 589-590). Since then the repression and subordination practices have continued, leading to a rapid decline of Selkup nationals and speakers. Still, ca. 2000 speakers remained in 1970. Yet the language may be disappearing fast; today (2023) perhaps 1000 speakers are to be found.

Economy

The Selkup economy was a form of natural subsistence. The main occupations were hunting, fishing and gathering (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 590-595). In the N after 1600 some reindeer herding was adopted. A range of wildlife was utilized. Large animals caught included moose, wild reindeer and bear. Fur animals included wolverine, marten, ferret, sable, wolf, fox, polar-fox, lynx, chipmunk, squirrel, hare, etc. Furs of squirrel and sables were used to pay the Russian 'tax' (op. cit.: 591). In historic times the trapping of fur animals was important to pay trade debts or taxes.

A wealth of birds could be harvested, such as partridge, grouse, woodcock, duck, goose, eagle etc. Eagles were captured for their feathers (op. cit.: 590). In ancient times people ate mostly bird-meat, salted and stored (op. cit.: 591). Several families would cooperate in using long nets to catch geese (op. cit.: 591, 600). This may have included a large section of a village, such as a moiety.

Fishing was among the main occupations in the summer, with catches of salmon, sturgeon, whitefish, pike, perch, carp, etc. (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 592-3). As with birds, 'all the working population' would cooperate in catching fish with nets or fish traps, perhaps on a phratry or moiety basis (op. cit.: 593, 600).

As will be noted below, the Selkup kept wild animals as pets. For how long they have known other domestic animals such as horses or pigs, is not known. The best known domesticated animal was the reindeer, though this was not practiced among the Selkup until late in historic times and farthest to the north. By then a few Selkup would have 200-300 reindeer, an occupation they learned from the Nenets (op. cit.: 593).

Gathering included berries such as blueberries, crane-berries, blackberries and black currants, nuts, wild onions, lily roots, green shoots, etc., a work often carried out by teams of women equipped with digging sticks and baskets. Pine seeds from cedar cones were gathered using long sticks, an activity still carried out after 1950 (Prokof'yeva 1964b). Whether the Selkup practiced prehistoric plant cultivation is not known.

Anciently the Selkup produced their own pottery, but this was dropped in historic times when metal pots became available (op. cit.: 595). Other industries included basketry, weaving and the manufacture of various products.

Trade relations among the natives must have been extensive in prehistoric times. It would seem the Selkup carried on trade visits to people as far apart as the Khant and Evenk. One particular trade item was the Selkup bow, which was famous and used as a medium of exchange with the Nenets, Khant and Evenk. This was before 1800 when guns (tyulshe, 'fire-

tongue’) became available. Transport in summer was by boat (anti), in winter by skis (tangysh) and sleds (kandzhi). A boat could carry 10+ men, indicating that these were village-based vehicles.

Once Russian colonization set in, the outside traders would command the transport and charge ‘tax’ from the hapless natives. Around 1850 a set of 10 squirrel skins (sarum) was a unit of exchange value. The Selkup traded furs, skins, fish, birds, nuts and berries for Russian goods such as knives, axes, pots, flour, salt, sugar and many other articles, including, ominously, liquor (vodka). Liquor was a tool of control in Siberia as in many other indigenous areas around the world. People fell in debt to the traders, who demanded exorbitant interest, creating a Russian debt slavery (Prokof’yeva 1964b). Such practices would pave the way for the subsequent Russian colonization of this and other parts of North Asia.

There are strong indications that the native resource use was village based, with a local area and its resources controlled and distributed among the village totem clans. As already noted, different families and individuals locally collaborated in tasks such as fishing, trapping and gathering. The proceeds were shared among all participants and their families, extended to the entire local camp, or to the whole village. An emphasis was placed on mutual aid and hospitality. This would gradually change when the Russian colonization set in, but ideas of commensality lingered on.

Kinship

The household organization was based on 1-2+ houses occupied by a descent group or extended family. In the Selkup area were ancient dugout houses (karamo), rectangular or square in shape. These houses could have an entrance corridor facing the river or facing south (Prokof’yeva 1964b: 588-9). The hearth (shöngal) was near the door. In front of the fireplace at the door people kept firewood, pots and tools. Between the fireplace and the back wall was the living area. There was a window or sacred door at the back. The doorstep is called kät-shünchi, ‘mountain entrance’, indicating that people should take a big step when coming inside – a practice also found in Norway (op. cit.: 589). The hearth area was called ‘karre’, ‘down’, and the back area ‘konne’, ‘opposite’ (ibid.).

What is missing from such descriptions is the layout of communities and villages. Recently villages of 10+ subterranean dwellings have been uncovered. It would seem that family houses were placed in 1-2+ rows along the river. As noted the number of houses in each village might number 6-30+ dwellings. Near each house was a storehouse on stilts, similar to those among the Khant.

Food staples included bird meat (Prokof’yeva 1964b: 591). The main staple was fish, supplemented with meat and plant foods such as berries, nuts, onions, roots and green shoots (op. cit.: 595, 604). The food in ancient times was preferably fish, dried salmon (yukola), dried fishmeal (porsu), and fish fermented by being buried with a layer of crane- or blueberries (op. cit.: 595).

In male biased Russian accounts, the man was formally the head of the family – with the qualification that the status of women was equal to that of men (Prokof’yeva 1964b). In practice this could mean that women were at the head of the household. Women took part in hunting and fishing, were in charge of the house activities, and otherwise had considerable

influence in community affairs. Russian scholars were not prepared to accept this, so from the start they put the man at the head, regardless of the influence of women.

That resources were community directed is indicated by accounts that an extended family controlled and shared hunting and fishing spots with the rest of the families locally. This was amplified by notes on hospitality being an important rule for the families.

It is thought that Selkup society switched from matrilineal to patrilineal descent following the Russian colonization after 1586 AD (Jettmar 1954: 24). This would not be a case of social 'evolution' but of colonial assimilation.

Apparently the Selkup kinship system is poorly known. Scholars would content themselves with noting the presence of classificatory family terms, such as daughter (nälja) (Jettmar 1954; Prokof'yeva 1964b: 600).

Differentiation

Scholars would note that Selkup society was based on a totemic organization. The Selkups 'revered' animals and plants and considered themselves their 'descendants' (Karmanova 2010: 93). The natural world influenced the Selkup worldview (ibid.).

The range of Selkup totems, when applied to the social organization in general, must have been quite extensive. Potential totems include: fish (kwel, qeli), burbot (ńuni), perch, carp, pike (pičča, pechya), sturgeon, sterlet, whitefish, trout, salmon, white-salmon, snake (šü), bird, sparrow, kingfisher, nuthatch or jay (kossyl), woodpecker, cuckoo, partridge, grouse, black-grouse, wood-grouse, hazel-grouse, forest-bird or woodcock (sengkyl), crow, raven (kuläl), loon, duck, goose, swan (chingkyl), crane (karel), owl, hawk or kite (mulint), eagle (limbyl), bear (korkyl, qorqi, kworkw), wolverine (ünginti, ongongts), badger (narkw), marten, ferret or weasel (tsombikwor), sable (siy), ermine (kor), otter (tote, tete), wolf (tompene, surip), dog (kanak), fox (loka, loqa), silver-fox (segetska-loka), polar-fox or white-fox (tsay-loka), lynx, cat (koskiya), animal (surep), deer (ate), wild-reindeer, elk-moose (pakwe), horse (konti), cow (sigar), sheep (koner), pig (sipinta), marmot, mole (kalli), beaver (potso), mouse or rat (tama), squirrel, flying-squirrel (posi), chipmunk (sepeka), hare (ńoma, nob), tree, birch, fire (ti), ashes (šimī), water (it), river, earth, moon (aret), sun (čeli), etc. This is just a partial list of living beings and other phenomena that may serve as social emblems or totems.

Selkup communities were described as collective neighborhoods of related and unrelated households from several clans. Unfortunately the scholarly descriptions are both confused and biased. The clans were said to be patrilineal and grouped into exogamous clan halves or moieties, and phratries or clan groups. That clans were patrilineal may be wrong. Moieties need not have been exogamous as such, but over time there might be a tendency towards village exogamy, as most local people were considered to be related through the totems of parents, grandparents and extended kin, leading single persons to seek spouses elsewhere.

Significantly, scholars observed that totems had a 'female origin'. Totems were referred to as 'mother animal' or 'female animal'; e.g., kworkol-paya, 'mother bear'. They could also be referred to as 'imiya', GrMo, hinting strongly at female or matrilineal descent.

One cultural bias led Russian researchers to think of ‘clans’ as corporate units, so the presence of unrelated clans in the same place disturbed their image. Actually the village or local community was the corporate unit, controlling a local territory, and the unrelated clans were component parts of the village, each and all distinguished by a totem. In spite of the scholars’ hang-ups and bias, they managed to convey an image of a complex and fascinating totemic organization among the Selkup. The description will here progress from the component parts, totem clans, up to the village level and beyond.

Clans

The word given for clan is ‘tamdyr’ (Prokof’yeva 1964b: 599). Perhaps I should not mention this, but when I first translated this from my Norwegian text (Selstad 1998a), I used the term ‘pet’, since ‘tamdyr’ means ‘tame animal’ in Norwegian – presented here as a hopefully funny example of language confusion.

Totem animals were partly considered to be ancestors, and sometimes kept as tamed or domesticated animals. Such possible clan animals included cuckoo, fox, horse, etc. There were taboos and rules related to totems, including totem animals such as jays, eagles, and animals being kept in cages and referred to as ‘brother’ or ‘sister’ by clan members. The animal was a clan member, and therefore one could not kill jays, bears, eagles, and other totem animals without special rituals.

If young animals were captured, such as a ‘nutcracker’ or jay-bird, cuckoo, duck, goose, eagle, bear, fox, polar-fox, etc., these were raised in captivity and kept in cages (Prokof’yeva 1964b: 591). This was partly because they were totem animals, partly for food, and partly for their fur or feathers. Bears could be kept in cages and were considered family members. Bear-cubs were referred to as ‘children’, e.g., iyami, ‘my son’. Tame bears could be used in hunting (ibid.). Supposedly, eagles were kept for arrow feathers and bear cubs were used in hunting to entice other bears. This may not be the full story. What is left out in such accounts is that animals were tamed and kept as pets, and that people had a close relationship to such pets, sometimes as close as family.

There were sacred storehouses in which totem elements and other paraphernalia were kept. Among other things the skins of dead swans were kept in such stores (Jettmar 1954: 22). Women were not allowed at the sacred shed (op. cit.: 23). This may be a historical development, when weapons and armor were kept in the shed (ibid.).

Some known clan totems are: fish, nuthatch or jay (kossyl), grouse or woodcock (sengkyl), cuckoo, swan (chingkyl), crane (karel), raven (kuläl), hawk or kite (mulint), eagle (limbyl), bear (korkyl), wolf, elk-moose or horse, hare, etc. (Jettmar 1954; Prokof’yeva 1964: 591-2, 599, 601-2).

Most totems were seen to have a female origin and were thought of as female (Jettmar 1954: 24). As noted, this hints at matrilineal descent. Few totemic origin stories have been preserved. On Tym River members of the bear clan ‘considered the bear to be their progenitor’ (Prokof’yeva 1964b: 591). Apparently this was not a descent group but a regional band; though the chiefly clan may have been bear. For all the other clans the origin stories are simply not known or recorded.

Phratries

The issue of phratries is less well known among the Selkup. Russian scholars would group all these units, clans, phratries and moieties together in one mixed category, confining their analysis to the level of moieties, that they found confusing.

As noted elsewhere, a phratry is a grouping of similar totem clans, for instance fishes, birds, carnivorous and herbivorous animals, as well as non-animal emblems. Among the Selkup the groupings would be fishes such as salmon and sturgeon, birds such as jay and eagle, and animals such as bear and wolf. It will be immediately seen that phratries cut across the moiety lines, which consisted of a cross-section of groups, holding half of all totem clans, whether fishes, birds or animals. This added complexity would be ignored by the scholars, who wanted consistent groups. Yet the division of a community into a plurality of sections in each moiety, with half-parts of phratries, was crucial to the local organization. It contributes what anthropologists refer to as 'cross-cutting' or crossing connections, where people in one group, such as a moiety or phratry, are not separate from another group, but have closely related members across the divide. The persistence of such crossing relations is one of the facets that makes totemic organizations fascinating and durable.

Moieties

Moieties were referred to as a 'clan-half' (peläkkyl-tamdyr) or 'half' (kula), e.g., half the local clans. The two moieties were called eagles (limbyl) and jays (kossyl) (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 599). Here the Russian scholars once more got confused, since jay and eagle could be the totems of both a moiety and a clan. That totems are found at different levels of social organization, all the way up to the nation, somehow was confusing, as if a 'name' can only be used for one 'thing', while in actual usage it can be used for a whole range of phenomena. The moiety terms resemble 'hawks' and 'pigeons' used in modern politics; such a comparison is not apposite, except to indicate the prevalence of factions and a tendency for moieties to be opposed in games and certain rituals. Selkup politics was not moiety based, but rather this was one of the many crossing ties found between totem clans.

Among the Selkup the bird clans are prominent, and would remain so into historic times. As noted elsewhere, this may be a fairly common occurrence in the north, where birds are prominent in the landscape. Birds are good at flight, which may have been an admirable quality in the vast and contended Selkup land.

There is a moiety origin story stating that ancient 'heroes' started wrestling with the sky mother. In the struggle she tore off their tail feathers and they fell into the river, turning into people. Earlier all humans had tails like birds. They swam ashore and became the Selkup moiety leaders (Jettmar 1954: 23). Presumably it was the moiety leaders who wore bird tails, while other totem clan members wore the tails of wolves, foxes or other parts of animals; perhaps this was re-enacted in an annual village ceremony or dance starting (or ending) with a swimming contest.

Each moiety consisted of several clans. The jay (kossyl) moiety contained the jay (kossyl), perch (kossyl), forest-hen (sengkyl), swan (chingkyl), crane (karel), raven (kuläl), hawk or kite (mulint), bear (corkyl), and possibly deer, squirrel and tree totem clans as well. The eagle (limbyl) moiety may have held the eagle, cuckoo, wolf, elk-moose, hare and sky totem clans.

Much of this is conjecture, since information was not provided easily (Jettmar 1954; Prokof'yeva 1964b: 591, 599). It is even possible that the moiety clan groups constitute an imaginary geographical division on the part of Russian ethnographers, with jays in the south and eagles in the north. In spite of such preconceptions, the complementary distribution of totem clans is significant. The main point is that there was a grouping of local clans into two sides in each village.

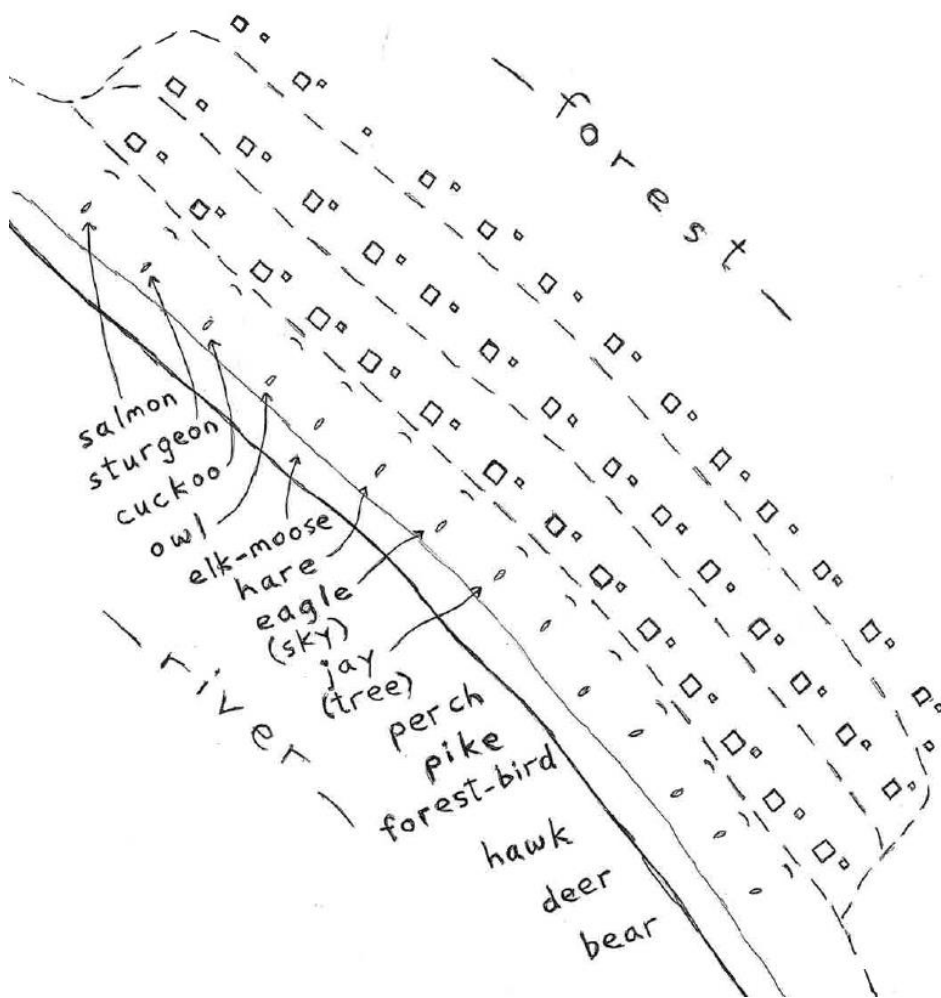
The two moieties would play a part in most local events. Each could have its chief, reckoned as a first and second chief, and perhaps assistant chiefs as well. Moieties, as well as phratries, would be activated in local meetings and councils, with crossing affiliations and loyalties. Other moiety functions would be in games, sports, funerals and rituals, including marriage. Overall the moiety organization seems to have retained its significance into modern times.

The local organization

The village or local community was the main unit of organization in traditional Selkup society (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 599). Scholars could not correlate 'non-related households' to a 'previous clan organization', thinking these were inconsistent phenomena (*ibid.*). The scholars' confusion became total when also local groups and areas could be named after animals, e.g., those who lived at Tym River called themselves 'perch people' (*ibid.*). Russian ethnographers systematically mixed 'clan' with local group due to Engels' evolutionism, and so they were unable to distinguish between a family totem and a regional totem, since they all should be part of the same 'primitive communism' unit. According to this idea, and again heavily biased, scholars assumed that each 'clan' probably had its own territory in the 1600s (*ibid.*). The actual case would be that local communities possessed a local territory whose resources would be distributed among local clans, phratries and moieties according to need, such as hunting grounds. Each lineage group or extended family had a portion of this territory for common or exclusive exploitation, depending on the nature of the resource and the harvesting technique. For instance, the river Tym was common to all who lived there, and spring fishing at the bottom of the river was carried out jointly by all the clans, after an initial meeting in the central village of Napas (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 599). Various local groups were then assigned parts of the river and arranged the fishing without reference to clan membership. Thus also seal hunting with spears took place through the cooperation of men and women from different clans. Each social unit, from the individual up to the village council, was involved in the careful and sustainable management of the natural resources by the community.

The simplistic Marxist ideas made it impossible for Russian scholars to investigate the complexity and intricacies of the local community and its organization. Perhaps this criticism is unfair. The scholars were trying to make sense of an organization that had largely been destroyed by their compatriots, and they had to make concessions to the Russian regime in order to promote their academic work. Yet it is frustrating to read repeatedly how the scholars pay lip-service to a useless idea.

Based on the presence of moieties and clans, it is possible to suggest a tentative layout of totem clans in a village. An 'upper' or 'jay' moiety had perch, pike, forest-bird, hawk, bear and deer, while a 'lower' or 'eagle' moiety had salmon, sturgeon, cuckoo, owl, elk-moose and hare. This is merely a suggestion of how totem-clans could be distributed, with 3 phratries of fishes, birds and animals. There could be different distributions and variations in different villages. Yet the presence of a local totemic organization seems fairly well established.



Conceptual Selkup village ca. 1250 AD

All in all the totemic social organization of the Selkup provided a pervasive connection between the individuals and groups found locally, all united in an intricate web of relations. This organization probably could be carried up to wider levels of social life, such as districts, tribes, and the Selkup nation as a whole. As noted, districts of bands could have their totems, and there probably was an emblem for the Selkup as a whole as well, such as eagle or jay. This would have implications, e.g., for alliances and the political organization of the tribe.

What seems clear is that Selkup society was highly inclusive and integrative. Orphans and prisoners were adopted by local families and worked for the family. The Russian scholars would turn this into an ideological case of slavery, while locally this would be a way of integrating people who otherwise would fall outside the social fabric. In a more sympathetic report, prisoners taken in conflicts and orphans were admitted as local family members (Prokof'yeva 1964b). Presumably the outsiders would be adopted into local totem clans. That such social ties later would be exploited by Russian traders and officials, belongs to a more recent part of native history.

Totemic emblems would extend to the Selkup nation as a whole. The Southern Selkup had a 'bear' totem (qorqit-tamtir), while the Northern or Taz Selkup had an 'eagle' totem (limpil-tamtir) (Karmanova 2010: 94). Which totem represented the nation as a whole would depend

on who was asked, and may have changed during the historical turmoil of the people; the jay-bird may be an early candidate. Perhaps a scrutiny of historical records could clarify this.

Politics

The Selkup presumably had local leaders in the form of first, second and assistant chiefs. Sometimes chiefs might be referred to by totem, e.g., barg-ata, 'deer chief' (Karmanova 2010: 93).

Our information on Selkup politics is meagre indeed. As noted Russian colonizers could take advantage of the close ties existing between local people and visitors. Local areas (volost) were led by local chiefs, clan leaders and their successors. In historical times leaders would resist Russian colonization, with dire consequences. Local leaders then became intermediaries in trade with the Russians. Supposedly they were able to enrich themselves at the expense of other members, by distributing goods on credit in return for employment, payment in furs, etc. Mainly the leaders became pawns and henchmen in Russian efforts to take over the land and resources. People lost not only their autonomy, but also their land and often their life (Prokof'yeva 1964b).

Religion

Religion was a far more thankful topic to the Russian scholars, since they could see beyond the sad reality of Russian domination. People believed in gods or 'master' spirits in nature (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 601). These included the sky god Nom or Num, the underground god Kyzy, the wind, and other elements of the environment and universe. While Nom was male, the most active gods were female, such as the forest woman (Jettmar 1954: 24). Nom was 'benevolent' and Kyzy was an 'evil spirit', easily misinterpreted by monotheistic scholars (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 601). This led to a somewhat twisted view of the rich cosmology of the Selkup. The gods can be briefly indicated as the sun, moon, sky (Nom), earth, wind, water (üt kyl-loz), forest (machil-loz), and animal spirits.

There were forest sanctuaries (lozyl-sessan), clan figures (parga), a bear shrine at Pylkaramo, Tym, and many more sacred locations. Native worship included village ceremonies, dances, rituals and prayers. Many events remain unrecorded. Mention is made of ritual sacrifices, to the forest and water god, and to clan and moiety totems. Probably such secluded rituals gained prominence with enforced Christianity. Also shaman practices grew in importance. Shamanic spirit helpers (loz) included: snake, cuckoo, forest spirit, mountain, sun, and more. Scholars would note shaman drawings, without clear descriptions (Prokof'yeva 1964b).

The Selkup had a kind of bear cult, of which little is known and which probably was repressed. The bear 'clan' at Taz had a brass bear figure in the clan's storage-house (op. cit.: 591).

Negative views on native religion would be followed by the forced Christianization of the natives, a part of the Russian colonial scheme and take-over. Communal and religious structures, such as sacred huts with ritual paraphernalia, were eliminated by the Russians by the 1930s (op. cit.: 603). Forced Christianization was carried out throughout the 1700s. Later Communism would be a threat. The Selkup would then take care of their old beliefs and rituals in secret.

Among religious elements otherwise noted are: witchcraft, shamanism, and other belief practices found throughout the north (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 601). The shamanic cult grew important after the devastating impacts of European epidemics and diseases, and the rapid population loss at the hands of colonizers. Shamans filled a spiritual void after the Russians stopped local celebrations. As noted the shamans would have spirit helpers (op. cit.: 592). They maintained a relation to the ancient religion.

Culture

The incredibly rich Selkup culture can only be hinted at here. Clothing included the parkas (pary) with a hood (üky) and mittens (nopy). People used turban-shaped headscarves and leather boots (pemy). Ancient clothing was also made from fish skins. Women wore hand-woven belts with knife and thimble attached, while men wore leather belts with metal figures and knives attached (Prokof'yeva 1964b).

Animal carvings of bears, elk-moose, etc., could have a totemic significance (op. cit.: 590). Decorative figures were largely stylized, with shapes such as triangle, zigzag line, and circle (op. cit.: 603). These could have a totemic significance, bird, snake or fish, and animal.

The folklore is rich, but not widely available. Mention was made of: legends (tentyl), tales (chaptä), riddles (nürkytsa) and 'humorous sayings' (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 603). The pivotal element of animal stories significantly is not noted; such stories are dismissed as 'fairytales', while the scholar prefers stories of heroes and 'wars' (ibid.). A recent contribution mitigates this by offering a rich array of animal and clan stories, where animals, natural beings and humans morph into each other (Tuchkova et al. 2007). Animal and other protagonists include: fish, burbot, pike, snake, bird, feather, small-bird, nutcracker or jay, woodgrouse, crow, loon, duck, garganey or dabbling-duck, swan, buzzard or kite, hawk, eagle, bear, marten, sable, ermine, wolf, dog, animal, deer, reindeer, elk-moose, horse, cow, bull, mouse, squirrel, hare, tree, birch, plant, moss, man, woman, boy, girl, house, pot, drum, ring, water, lake, bog, earth, island, sun, etc. (op. cit.: 50-51). Curiously missing is the fox, though s/he is noted elsewhere in the document. Selkup narratives reconstitute their environment and people's living in it.

In the above cited work a comprehensive complement of totemically relevant beings are revealed in one page and throughout the text. If the full range of natural beliefs had been shown for every local community across the North, the idea of totemism would take on a different reality. Unfortunately earlier scholars have generally ignored the topic.

Life courses among the Selkup are another obscure topic. Toddlers used moss or lichen as a diaper. According to legend, boys from the age of puberty until they were 17-18 years old had to live separately from their family in their own boys' or bachelors' houses. The boys were then not to have contact with girls. Yet such rules were easily circumvented (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 599). The reference to initiation huts is important, because it shows the importance of the transition from childhood to an adult status. It also hints at totemic experiences, perhaps akin to the vision quest found in North America. Though whether such a ritual was performed among the Selkup is unknown.

Marriage rituals were extensive, but are not well known. A typical biased and ambiguous statement was that women were 'subordinate' to men – but their 'status was not an inferior one' (Prokof'yeva 1964b: 600). In general women 'had the same rights as men', they could hunt and fish and take part in most activities (ibid.). Adult members of society put great store

in sociability. As with most native peoples, hospitality ‘was highly developed’ (Prokof’yeva 1964b: 600).

Perhaps the most important transition was at death. When someone died away from home, the relatives made sure to bring the body home to the local cemetery. This is significant, since it points to the strong community or village outlook of the Selkup, closely connected to its totemic organization. How different totem clans assisted each other at funerals is not clearly known. People were buried in the soil, sometimes in buried boats or hollowed-out cedar-wood, and logs were placed over the grave. With the deceased were placed possessions that first were broken so that they could only be used in the spirit world.

Summary

Russian scholars held a negative view of Selkup totemism, considering it to be demeaning and ‘subhuman’, a claim to ‘animal ancestry’ (Lettmar 1954: 23). By contrast, a belief in Marx, Lenin and Stalin was ‘human’. For some reason Selkup nature beliefs and social forms were particularly targeted, perhaps because they held a territory coveted by Russian colonizers.

In their outlook on Selkup culture Russian scholars would focus on the changes that had been imposed in modern times, without becoming very critical of their own compatriots. There was forced collectivization after ca. 1925. A Selkup collective was set up in 1932 at the village Napas near Tym, involving four native villages; it was dissolved in 1950. Many Selkup from the Ket, Parabel, Vasyugan and Chaya valleys were forcibly relocated to Tym from the 1930s onwards and placed together with people from other ethnic groups, Russians, Tatars, Komi, Khant, Nenets, Evenk, etc. (Prokof’yeva 1964b). This was the policy of divide-and-rule used to force assimilation.

After 1951 a forced relocation and consolidation took place in larger collectives, such as ‘Third 5-year plan’ at Taz, where 75 Selkup households were transported by force. Fishing in the Ob was taken over by Russians by 1930. The natives were trained in modern reindeer breeding, a task Russians would not take (Prokof’yeva 1964b). Yet the reindeer business was carefully controlled by the state. On the whole, the Selkup were given fewer and fewer opportunities to maintain their way of life, while forced assimilation went on relentlessly.

In one appalling case, jay-birds were systematically killed by the Russians after 1934, following an official decree, because jays were esteemed as native totems, and all such symbols were to be destroyed. By contrast, somewhat incongruously, Selkup were given 2 weeks’ leave to pick pinecones around 1950, since pine seeds were a native food.

The Selkup were taught farming under Russian control, assuming they would assimilate quickly. Children were sent to boarding schools. Native cadres were used to force people to conform. Women were specially selected as communist whips and functionaries to control the collective members at ‘Kirov’ and elsewhere. One woman, L. Tikhomirova, was trained as an ‘economic geographer’ in 1953 (Prokof’yeva 1964b: 606). Russification gained momentum after 1960, with new displacements and central control. The Selkup culture was disappearing.

When turning the vision backwards, a different world appears. The Selkup had a well-established existence in stable villages that dotted the Ob drainage, with a highly developed totemic organization that allowed people to utilize their local resources in a sustainable

manner. Both symbolically and in practice they lived in close relation to their surroundings. This was a social world that should not or could not be broken.

Even after 500 years of oppression the Selkup hang on to their language and culture. This is a testimony to human perseverance. Perhaps there will be a world in the future where the Selkup culture can be practiced. At least the link to the past exists, and can be examined through sources that even today remain largely unexplored.

Southern Samoyedic peoples

Historical records mention southern Samoyedic people near the Sajon Mountains, more or less recent offshoots of the Selkup and related tribes in the Ob drainage. They include people called Kamassin, Mator, Karagasy, and Kaysot. All these groups are known under different ethnic designations. Variants include: Mator aka Motor or Koybal; Kamassin aka Kamasin, Kamass, Kaŋmažə or Sayan; Karagasy-Tofalar; Kaysot aka Kajsot; etc.

The precise history and linguistic affiliation of these groups is not well known. Their background may be partly Ket, partly Samoyedic. Most groups will be found on the Ket map, below. They would furthermore have ties to neighboring Mongol groups. Most would become Turkic speakers in historic times. Today they are under Kazakh, Russian, Mongol or Chinese rule, and so face the assimilation pressure of several states.

The sparse historical information indicates that Samoyedic languages were formerly spoken in the Sayan Mountains and the surrounding highlands. This was claimed by some scholars to be the original homeland of the Samoyeds. But people might as well have moved here from the areas of Ob and Yenisei to the N and NW. Another potential link for Sayan tribes is to the Ket languages, which they may have spoken in the past.

It is possible that the immigration of Turkic tribes from the west, the originators of the Tuva and Yakut languages, pushed the Sayan people from an Ob-Yenisey homeland into the mountains. All these groups acquired Turkic languages in historical times. In 1925, only Kamassin preserved a Samoyedic language. There would be <50 Kamassin-Samoyedic speakers in 1980. The last Kamass speaker passed away in 1989. By 2020 some 20+ people retained a Kamassin identity, without speaking the native Samoyedic language.

The mountains may have served as a refuge for people pressed by the Russians and Tatars lower down in the valleys, allowing them to preserve more of the aboriginal culture. Yet their situation would be completely changed, and little of a former totemic organization seems to have survived.

History

The southern Samoyeds would be squeezed between the expanding Turkic peoples and Russian colonizers in historic times, in particular after 1580, when a Russian Cossack trade expansion began – the Russian colonization of Siberia. Even before this, people must have been affected by negative events ca. 1000-1580 AD, such as the Mongol expansion, Turkic raids and the plague and other epidemics after 1340 AD. Some Samoyeds joined the Selkup to the north, retiring down the Ob River, while others sought refuge as scattered groups in the mountains. The remainder would be assimilated to Turkic speakers, a fate that over time would affect all southern Samoyedic-Yeniseyan groups. In turn people would be subjected to Russian colonization, so that over time the native adaptation was overlain by Turkic, Mongol and Russian influences, not to mention Chinese. What little remained of a totemic system is poorly known, and closer scrutiny will be left for future research.

Social organization

Little is known of the social organization among the southern Yenisei people. A note can be included here on ‘clan’ totems found among the related Altaian tribes, including: snake, eagle,

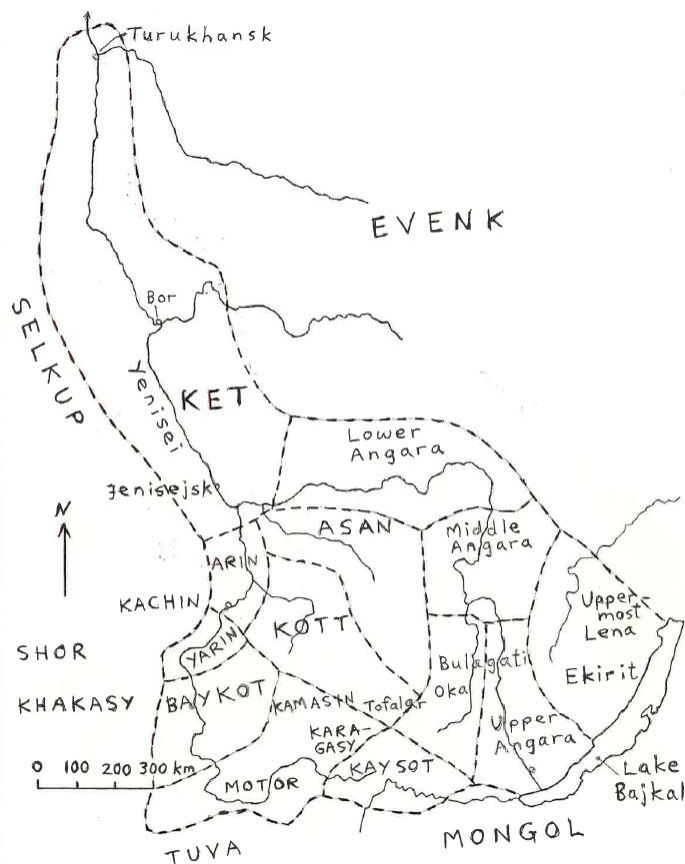
wolf, dog, deer, horse, etc. If the known totems are not quite random, a phratry system of egg-laying animals, carnivores and herbivores is hinted at. It was said that Altaians would not refer to their 'animal' directly, instead using hints and metaphors such as 'grey uncle' for wolf. Totems were sacred or taboo (bai), and should not be revealed to strangers. Keeping a totem secret is found in many native societies, and may be one reason why scholars rarely refer to or even become aware of local totemic units. It can be assumed that other southern groups, such as Kamassin and Mator, had similar totemic designations for local descent groups. All of this must remain for future research to investigate.

Ket and other Yeniseyan tribes

Aka: Keti, Yenisey Ostyak, Jenisej-Ostjak, Ostiak, Yeniseians, Imbak, Kety, Keto, Kett, Kettic, Din, etc. Ket means 'man'; plural 'deng' (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 607).

Other tribal groups with synonyms include: Kott (Cottian, Kotu, Kot), Arin (Arints, Arinz, Ara), Asan (Assan), Yarin, Baykot, and more. Parts of the tribes became Turkish speakers, such as the Arin and Asan.

Identifying and sorting out the different Ket or Yeniseyan tribes is a challenging task. Simply placing the tribes within the territorial homeland is difficult, since the natives were broken up and decimated after 1600.



An attempt at placing the Kettic or Yeniseyan tribes on a map, ca. 1250-1600 AD

Tribal names not on the map include: Koibal, perhaps the same as Motor. It may be that the Ket peoples once occupied all of the Yenisei drainage, as well as that of Khatanga River, though perhaps not including the S side of Lake Bajkal.

The people called Ket and Kott, and related ethnic groups, are among the least known people in North Asia. Largely this is due to their harsh fate in the wake of Russian colonization, a colonization that swept aside the people on the middle Yenisei and its tributaries. The different Yeniseyan tribes will here be subsumed under the description of the Ket, which is the only better known group where descriptions exist.

Inside the Ket nation there were at least four dialects or regional groups, Inbak, Bogden, Zemshak-Sym with other local groups, and Jugun. Parts of these lived further up the Yenisei towards Angara River in ancient times (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 607-8, 615-6).

The Ket peoples were located centrally in North Asia, W and S of the Central Siberian Plateau. As such they would form a cultural bridge between the Samoyedes to the west, the Yukaghir and Tungus to the east, and the Mongols to the south. Knowledge of Ket culture would provide a valuable facet in the general knowledge of northern cultures. At the same time their central location would place them in the path of Russian colonization, leading to the nation's destruction (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 607-8).

The Ket and other Yeniseyans occupied the middle and upper Yenisei drainage up to the vicinity of Lake Bajkal.

Their fruitful and extensive homelands, measuring 900,000+ km², would accommodate 200,000 people as a minimum. This is for all the Ket, Kott and related groups. Today these groups are all but extinct, at least linguistically.

The Ket population is given as: 1650: 5000-6000 people; 1858: ca. 6000 people (1000 'tribute payers') (Castrén 1858: v); 1859: 4000+, 1652 counted; 1720: 3,400; 1850: 1800, with 1000-1200+ speakers; 1890: officially 994, actually ca. 1400+, with 988-1000+ speakers; 1897: 988+, 952+ speakers; 1917: 1100-1400+ people; 1428 (1926); 1113 (1989); 1220 (2020); 1128 (2021); 1100 (2022). Recent figures for Ket speakers are: 1000-1225 (1926); 770-1000+ (1959); <885-1200 (1970); 537 (1989); 1,300, 300+ speakers (1980); 50-100+ speakers (2008); 10-153 speakers (2020). It is highly ominous that the native population has been declining since 2020. The Ket language is rapidly becoming extinct.

For other Yeniseyan groups some population figures are: around 1650 there were perhaps 1500+ Asan, 2000+ Kott, 700+ Arin, 400+ Yarin and 1000+ Baykot; around 1720 there lived ca. 200+ Asan, 900+ Kott and 500+ Yarin. The Asan language died out around 1820, Kott around 1880, Arin around 1830, and Yarin and Baykot after 1850.

The territory would hold up to 1000+ villages and settlements, of which few are known and hardly any are described. Ket words for settlements include 'village' (ëän, ëänjuŋ, agél, âgel, ajel) and 'camp' (atax). Presumably villages were large permanent communities while camps were seasonal residences.

In 1938 there were 6 Ket collective farms with 72 households near Turukhansk; averaging 12 households per collective (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 617).

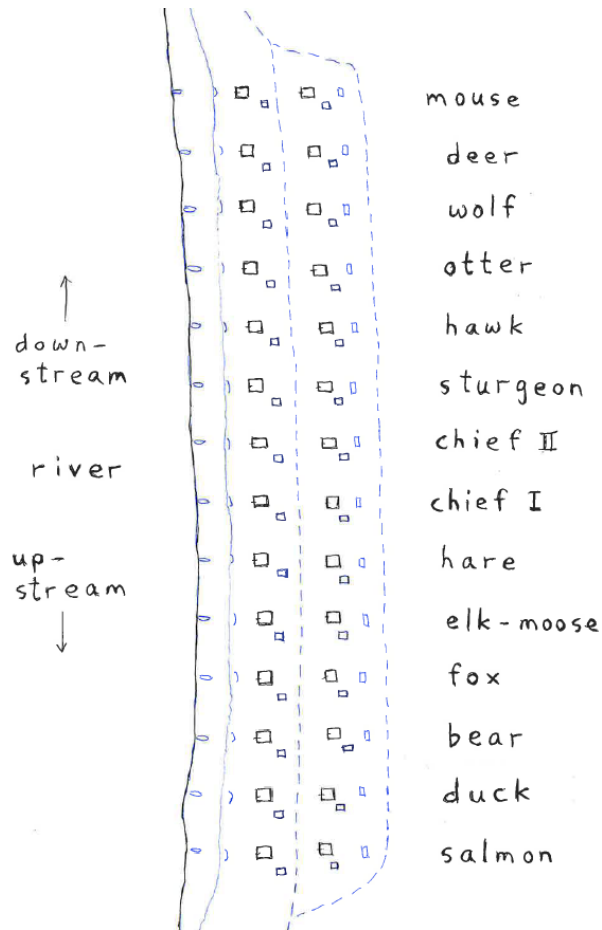
Relevant places include:

Northern Ket: Kureyka; Turukhansk; Verkhneinbatskoye; etc. (op. cit.: 609).

Central Ket: Podkamennaya-Tunguska; Chernyy Ostrov (in 1934: 'Stalin collective farm!'); Yeloguy; etc. (ibid.).

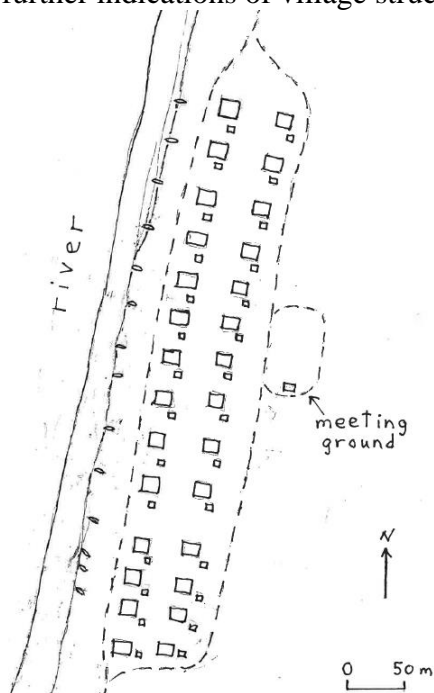
Modern villages and settlements include: Maduika or Madoo'ika (1991).

Sources indicate that communities could be large and included members from different 'clans' organized in moieties or village halves, who cooperated in local social life and the defense of territory (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 615-6).



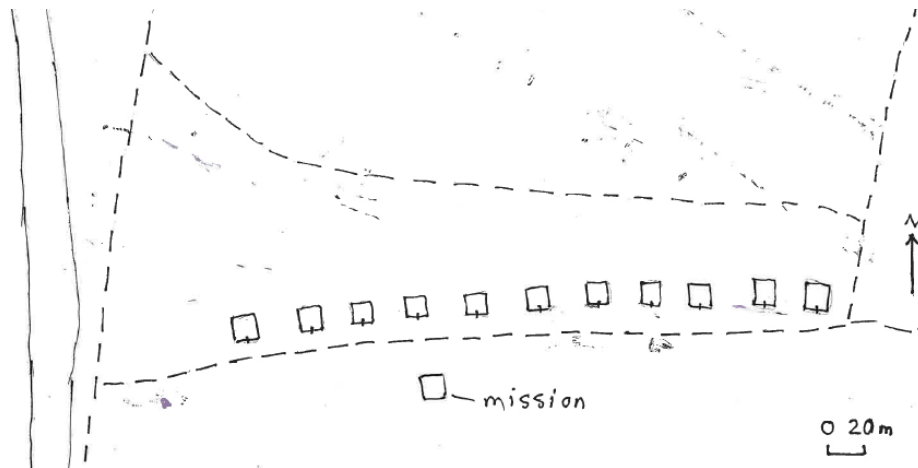
Hypothetical Ket village

This model is a hypothetical 'archetype', since historical villages are not well documented. The distance between local houses can be greater than indicated, up to 200+ m. This would conform to the vast expanse of the Yenisei. Later known village locations provide some further indications of village structures, also hypothetical, exemplified below.

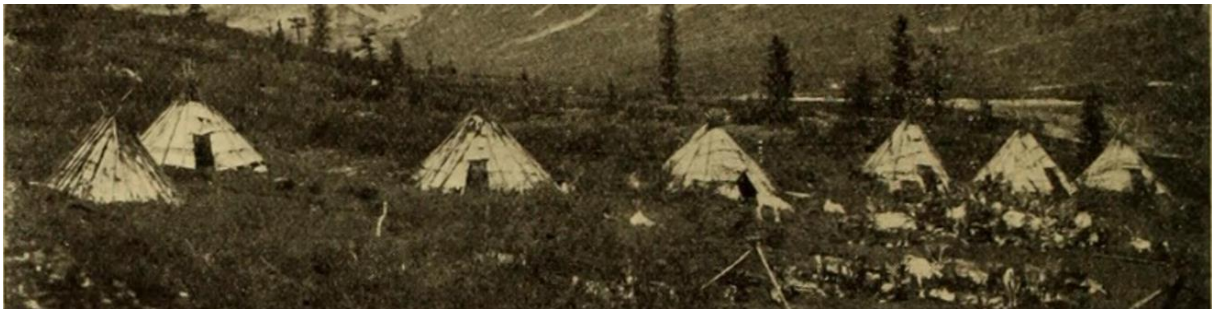


Tentative Ket village at Potapovo

Whether this is an actual Ket settlement or not is unknown; possibly not. But there may be a hint here at the mode of settlement along the river.



Possible Ket village ca. 1830 at Cherkov Nikolaya below Jenisejsk; the river is to the W



Soyot-Karagasy village ca. 1900 (Jochelson 1928: 190)

It would appear that Ket villages had a basic form of one or more rows of houses along the river. This would resonate with village layouts in other northern regions.

Even though little is known about Ket community structures, it is possible to envision some relations between people and the environment. Activities would shift between the river and the forest. Inland there would be hunting areas, perhaps reaching as much as 30 km in. There would be places for gathering plants and berries. The river was a major source of food from fishing. Also the river served as a route of travel and trade. Each village would be in control of a stretch of river 10-12 km up and down, and an area 30-40 km inland. A village of 200-300+ people could then possess a territory of 600-900+ km².

No doubt there would be smaller villages and camps in the inland and among smaller river branches. Since phratries and moieties seem to have been present, a minimal settlement could have 6 clans and 6-12 houses. It is possible to envision great variation in the size of Ket communities, ranging from camps with 3-4 houses to major places along the Yenisei possibly with 200+ houses and up to 1000 inhabitants. The smaller camps should be considered to be seasonal parts of larger villages. Sadly none of the hundreds of Ket settlements are known from historical descriptions, and now most of the people are gone.

Ecology

People lived in an environment suitable for hunting, fishing and gathering. The northern Ket kept tame reindeer, but used dogs for transport. There was a river and forest adaptation (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 607-8).

It might not be wrong to say that Ket people had a dual adaptation. One was a 'cosmopolitan' life along the rivers, with people coming and going in boats and plenty of opportunities for contact and trade. Another was the more secluded life as hunters and trappers in the forests and mountains. Those living away from the main rivers had a different lifestyle than their riverine neighbors. In some ways this may have been a vulnerability. When Russian colonizers came, sticking to the rivers, this may not have led to a solidaric resistance among all the groups. The Russians used the tactic of 'divide and rule', punishing and expelling those groups that resisted. The devastating consequence would be the destruction of the once flourishing Ket nation.

History

Scholars imagined that Ketic languages were distantly related to Tungus. A link to Mongolian seems equally likely. At the same time it was noted that the peoples have lived in the Yenisei Valley since time immemorial.

Significantly the Ket peoples have a quite extensive traditional history, though poorly recorded. According to native myths, they had to cross some mountains in the south, probably the Sajon Mountains, on their way to Siberia, and fought with mountain or 'stone' people, including a people called Kiliki, perhaps Karagasy, who forced them north along the Yenisei. Scholars guessed that river names showed that Ket people once lived in the Tom valley. In the north, they mingled with the ancient population along the middle Yenisey. Much of this is speculation. As noted the Ketic people have lived in their homeland 'since time immemorial'. The southern conflicts and 'ancient' residents would then refer to contacts with other people far back in time, Samoyedic, Mongolian and Turkic speakers, rather than representing a migration, such as diffusionist scholars were fond of imagining. The Yenisey drainage has always been the Ket homeland (cf. Popov & Dolgikh 1964).

By 1500 AD the Ket may have had trade contacts with the Mongol-Chinese empire, which manifested itself in robe clothing and blacksmithing.

If the Ket peoples once occupied the Yenisei to its mouth, the history becomes complicated. When epidemics and depopulation set in ca. 1350-1600, people may have moved south higher up the river to consolidate the population. Once Russian colonization set in people may have reversed the movement, moving down the river to avoid the colonizers.

With the advent of Russian traders and colonizers after 1600, the Ket experienced an external pressure that they had never seen before. The Russian Cossacks would kill natives, take hostages and demand 'tribute' from the stunned inhabitants. This would be the start of an increasingly violent and oppressive Russian colonization (Batashev 2013). The Ket began gradually to move northward as a result of pressure from Tatars, Russian Cossacks, and Tungus tribesmen, all interested in the Russian trade. The Cossacks established a winter camp at Inbak in 1607, and demanded 'tax' tributes from Ket people in the area. More Cossack camps followed at Dubches and other places. A powerful Russian colonization set in. As the

Ket were driven northward along the Yenisey, they set up new territorial groupings, at Upper Tunguska, Yeloguj, etc.

Between 1610 and 1750 the Ket tried to resist the Russian expansion into their areas. The punishment was ruthless. The resistance was defeated and as a punishment the Russians deported them to different places to break down the opposition. This resulted in a breakdown of the social system, in a biased view seen as patrilineal, and Ket society disintegrated.

One manner of control was to make Ket people get into debt with Russian traders and colonizers, accompanied by exorbitant interest rates and demands that were impossible to meet. Under the Cossaks the natives were entirely dependent on fur trapping for trade. Many became serf fishermen and trappers who worked for Russian big farmers and traders. This led to poverty and hardship. Ket people died in great numbers from starvation and diseases brought by the Russians. In the 1800s the Ket were dependent on food relief from the Russian state, a relief that did not always come.

Between 1750 and 1900 almost all the Kettic languages disappeared through Russian assimilation and incorporation with Turkic and other speakers. One group moved to the Kureyka River after 1750 and mingled with the Selkup there. Others moved to Turukhan and were likewise Selkupized.

For other Yeniseyan groups in the south and near the Sajans, it has been reported that these groups were assimilated by other ethnic groups in the 1800s. The Kott were partly incorporated with the Ket, but spoke Russian after 1850. The Asan became partly Evenk speaking and partly Russian speaking. The Arin, Yarin and Baykot became Khakasy and Russian speaking peoples. The upper parts of the Yenisei were subjected to a hard Russian colonization from the 1600s onwards, as a main route through Siberia. Turkic and Russian-speaking peoples entered the region and assimilated the former Kettic or Yeniseyan peoples. They would remain as small enclaves or assimilated groups in the wider Russian community. Only the northernmost groups of Ket retained the language. Upper Ket groups from Zemshak upwards were assimilated to Selkup and known as Baikhin around the year 1800. Most Ket speakers in 1926 were bilingual in Ket and Russian, some also spoke Selkup.

The minority situation would not improve significantly in recent times, as the number of Ket speakers fell to <150 by 2020.

Economy

In the old days people lived from hunting and fishing with a collective character (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 616-7). 'The basic occupation of most Kets was hunting' (op. cit.: 609). Such a statement would have to be qualified by the existence of quite varied economic activities, ranging from hunting, fishing and gathering to simple agriculture, craft manufacture and trade. In the north reindeer herding was practiced.

Animals hunted included: bear, ferret, sable, ermine, fox, polar-fox, deer, wild-reindeer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, etc. (ibid.). Birds were also hunted, including: partridge, 'wildfowl', forest-hen, woodcock, duck, etc. Dogs were used in hunting (ibid.). There was a trans-northern tradition of knocking one's skis together to invite other people on a hunt (op. cit.: 616). There were communal hunts after wild-reindeer and bears (op. cit.: 609, 616).

Fishing was important. The fish caught were: pike, burbot, sterlet, salmon, etc. (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 611). Fish was dried on racks or buried and fermented, but also eaten raw, boiled or roasted (op. cit.: 611). The fishing was quite advanced, with nets, lines, weirs, fish traps and fish-ponds (op. cit.: 609-611). There also was torchlight fishing by 2-3 men in a boat. Also, 2-3 households could possess a net that the entire community used. People would borrow each other's houseboats, small boats, and tools. The houseboats were a modern phenomenon, allowing people to move and live on the river in restless times (op. cit.: 611-4). They may have been a continuation of large communal boats found in earlier times.

Gathering, the collecting of edible plants, berries and other edibles, would be poorly recorded by scholars. Resources gathered included berries, nuts, roots, green shoots etc. Presumably mostly women engaged in this basic and important activity. In the spring they picked lily shoots. Berries included cloudberry, eaten boiled in cod liver oil (op. cit.: 611).

Economic activities had a clear seasonal orientation. Fishing and intermittent hunting, such as of birds and squirrels, were conducted in spring-summer (op. cit.: 609). Other summer activities included gathering and trading. Most hunting and trapping took place in fall-winter, along with some fishing (ibid.).

Fish and game caught jointly were shared among all who took part. There also was mutual assistance between neighbors. Orphans, old people and invalids were taken care of by people in the camp. In other words, the use and sharing of resources was based on the local community or village and its component descent groups or totem clans (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 617).

For the southern Yeniseyans, Kott, Arin, and others, it was noted that they had a composite economic adaptation in historic times. This included horse and cattle pastoralism, agriculture and blacksmithing as livelihoods in the 1600s. Trade items included 'famous' manufactured bows (op. cit.: 609). Flour 'had long been the staple diet of the Kets' (op. cit.: 611). After the Russian occupation many types of goods, foodstuffs and merchandize depended on trade with the colonists. This included articles such as flour, salt and sugar – not to mention vodka.

Kinship

The household in ancient times occupied wood houses that could be dugouts. There might be a dugout area of 3 x 3.5 m, while the house could be 8 x 10 m. The walls could be plastered with clay, indicating a high degree of residential stability. Near the house would be a storehouse on stilts, meat cache, fish and net racks, and a boat by the river. The food supply of fish, flour, etc. was stored in fish-skin sacks, bark boxes, etc. Meat was preferably eaten boiled, while fish was dried, dug, grilled or boiled (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 611-5).

In historic times, people would have a separate summer residence on houseboats. The houseboats were up to 15 m long with bark cabins. Up to twenty such boats could be moored together on the Yenisei, representing a whole community (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 611-3). In many ways, living along rivers, the Ket were boat people.



Ket houseboats – a village on water (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 613)

Reportedly the basic social unit was the family; but this is a programmatic scholarly view (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 617). Actually there would be extended families of grandparents, parents and children, forming local totem clans, that with a series of other complementary clans would make up the local community or village, which was the basic unit in terms of control of local land and resources. In other words, the family was a sub-unit in larger entities such as villages.

While the marriage customs are not well known, there supposedly was a distribution of property when young people married. Russian scholars would refer to this as bride price. Marriages were often arranged (op. cit.: 616-7).

Ket kinship was classificatory (op. cit. 617). Scholars were highly confused by the wide use of kin terms. In one example the members of ego's 'phratry', 'bisep', included brother, sister, cousin, FaBr and FaSi, oBr's children, etc., while those in another 'phratry', 'kuy', would be Mo's yBr, Mo's ySi, Mo's oBr's child, etc. A third group, 'kip' or 'kipa', included (classificatory) GrFa, GrMo, Fa's oBr, Fa's oSi, Mo's oBr, Mo's oSi, etc. (ibid.). Obviously this would depend on the informant's totem clan and kin affiliation, and the mutual use of kin terms. What the example shows, however, is the wide application of kin designations. A person would designate almost all local people as kin, whether demonstrably related or not. This would strongly indicate a high degree of local exogamy, so that people found spouses outside the village. This would confuse Russian scholars, whose outlook was endogamous.

People from the mother's 'phratry' could not be addressed by name, nor could one marry them (ibid.). This is an indication of so-called joking relations and in-law avoidance. It may obliquely support the scholar's claim of patrilineal descent, though it might equally well indicate matrilineal descent, men not being allowed to marry their mother's kin. Much would depend on the position of the informant or 'ego', whether this was a male or female, which remains unclear, though possibly male?

It is notable that a patrilineal kin system is suggested for the Ket, when so little is known about their social organization. The patrilineal emphasis may be based on a cultural bias held by Russians and other outsiders.

It was reported that inheritance passed to the youngest son when the father fell away, and that other siblings inherited their share by marriage; this could be Russian-influenced practices (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 617). Inheritance also went to others who lived with the family. Probably inheritance was not an issue in the traditional culture, where resource use was based on collaboration.

Differentiation and social organization

Due to the historic destruction of this amazing people, our knowledge of their social organization is limited. Sources mention ‘clans’, phratries and moieties, all thought to be patrilineal; they might be matrilineal or bilateral (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 615-6). Each component of the social organization will be noted below, starting with the clans.

Clans

One Russian source has 5 ‘clans’ with 7 local ‘lineages’ (Shimkin 1939: 154-5). This may be read as 5 regional bands each including communities with 7+ totemic groups. Though the so-called ‘lineages’ may also refer to villages within each band. The 5 or more bands are: Xant’a (Snow-Staff-Ring), Bogdeĭ-get (Fiery-Man), Xonin (Pine Needle), Olygĭt (Aquatic-Man), and Ket (Man). The 7+ local totemic groups or ‘lineages’ were also named, supposedly from ‘semi-legendary heroes’, but the names are not reported (Shimkin 1939: 155). ‘Like the other natives in Siberia they fall into particular kin groups’ or ‘clans’, led by elders (Castrén 1858: v).

Some ‘clan’ or ‘phratry’ names among the Koibal were Big Baigado, Little Baigado, and Kaideng. These could actually be local groups that had been so reduced in population that they now resembled kin groups.

The word for a clan leader is ‘baghat’ or ‘kham’, which means ‘elder’ and ‘mother’. The word ‘fang’ or ‘hang’ is used for totems, which means both ‘female’ and ‘bitch’, a word that unfortunately is derogatory in English. Male scholars were reluctant to write of matrilineal and female power, but the Ket material indicates that women were prominent in village totem clans.

Potential Ket totems are: fish (ĭs, isy, is, it, itex, tex, tĕg, tĕx, yazya), sturgeon (baĭel, kĕägĭs), carp (sar, sal, śat), pike, perch (te, teä), minnow, trout, salmon/ char, seal, crayfish, snake (tieġ, tiegh, oŋkhoi, onkhoi, hoi), snake/ viper, worm (ol, hoi), toad, frog (ĕäl, öł, kanćökse), insect, fly (fagoi, págoi), louse (ĕag, ĕäg, iki), moth, spider, snail, bird, wing (keŋ, as, kei, kĕja), robin, sparrow (dum), swallow, thrush, cuckoo (khoakhpen, kukŭka), grouse (assup, assep), hazel-grouse (su, śu), black-grouse (xup, hŭpi), capercaillie-grouse (yg-diĭ), capercaillie-hen (faŋ-diĭ), chicken/ hen (teokhpas, teokpas, hĕŋe-teokpas), rooster/ cock (iel-teokpas), crow (xŭlat, khulat, xŭlat, kŭlĕt, karĕga), raven (kyl, hĭla), duck (bĕän, bĕn, bĕn, pin), long-tailed duck (dĕreja), mallard-duck (bĕntan, agaŋa, akĕŋa), garganey-duck (Anas querquedula) (takt, takti, fĕgaĭa), merganser-duck (fĕr, fur, pŭl), goldeneye-duck (tŭx, alĕx), black-duck (tĕŋban, taŋban, kyks, alg, ĕĭge, heal, hĕagaĭ), goose (tĕm, tem, tĕm, tym), heron

(t'ulup), swan (tiġ, tiġ, ŝiġi), crane (tâg, ta'u, tau, kurîrax), snipe, owl (fyei, hyei, hikeise), eagle (di'e, tage, take), hawk (haçat), falcon (haçat), red-kie xânbuzzard, animal, bear (xôi, kôi, yk-xôi, şajan, ig-şajan), black-bear, big-bear (açânse), female-bear (fañ-xôi, feñ-şajan), wolverine, badger (hâs), marten, weasel, ermine/ sable (eäđ, eädi, eäti, fuga'ise, fukajase, kamurse), raccoon-dog, otter (târ, tar, teyer, îêgâr, îê'âr), wolf (xyt, kÿti, bôru), female-wolf (feñe-bôru), dog (tip, tîp, tîp, alsip, alzip, ig-alsip), female-dog (fañ, hañ, feñ-alsip), fox (kâgan, kèagan, şumarçôgana), leopard, lynx (agan, âgan), cat, deer (hui), reindeer (seär, seäl, säł, kôja, kôjâse), female-reindeer (feñ-kôja), roe-deer, elk-moose (açânse, açânši), horse (kus, huş, huçânse), stallion (askar, ig-huş), cow (kuos, tiġä, ti'ä), bull (boga), boar/ wild pig (šoška), pig (šoška), goat (êg, êx), mammoth (têl, tel, têt), beaver (lâtet, lâtedi, ursä', urse), squirrel (sak, sak, şagá), flying-squirrel (kop, kuop, alpuga, alpuka, alpaka), chipmunk, mouse (û'ot, u'ot, uoti, đûta), small-mouse (boño-đireñs, boño-dilsi), hare (beäs, beäs, mankara), rabbit (beäs, beäs, mankara), tree (uk, ak, aq, uoks, atçi, atce, ak), pine (xakñ, kakñ, enai, enâi, xonin), cedar (fai, hai, fei; *pahi), fir (dyn, dÿn, tîni, tîñi), fir-forest/ taiga (tîli, tîle, tile, ajax), larch (seäs, säs, sêt), birch (û'os, uos, ûca, ûci), willow, alder (sujeñoks, sujueñoks, sam-tîli), rowan (sâñef), house/ tent (khus, qus, xuos, xus, kúos, hûs, huş, atax), knife (doan, ton), snowshoe/ ski (âsił, asł, ip), man/ human (ket, kêwt, kêt, kiet, hit, het), fire (bok, hat, bogdei), hill (xup, kúp), mountain (tyès, tyès, đix, đí), stone (tyès, tyès, şis), sand (fèañeñ, fãñeñ), earth (bañ, pañ), water (ul, oly, ulis, ulik), rain (ures, ur, ûr), lake (deä, ûr-têg, ûr-tex), river (ses, sês, şset), big-river/ flood (xeä-xuk), thunder (êkñ, èkñ, ajak, đateñ; *jekena), sky (ês, êş, ets), wind (bei, pèi), star (xoax, khoagh, kôağ, alaga, alax, alak), moon (khip, xip, xîp, kîp, kîp, şui), sun (î, êga, êgä, ege), etc.

This comprehensive list is intended to show the range of animals and creatures that totemic tokens could be drawn from. How many of these were in use at any one time to designate persons and groups is unknown, but anywhere from 20 to 60 totems may have been regularly in use.

The old scholars did not distinguish between totems and other 'clan' designations, since they saw them all as family names similar to the Russian practice, not realizing that totems are relational terms that only make sense in reference to a complement of other totems. Various lists of 'clan' names would then have: fish, duck, swan, cuckoo, eagle, bear, fire, stone, water, etc.; but also: Bogden, Bulvan, Baygado, Big Baigado, Little Baigado, Tystad (stone), Khoniget, Khentyan, Kaideng, Zakamenny, Zemshak, Inbak, etc. The last named 'clans' presumably were badly decimated local groups (Popov & Dolgikh 1964). There might be more than 2 fish clans among the village totems. River seals may have been reckoned among the aquatic animals, and could be one of the local clans.

Duck must have been a popular totem. At least 10 different words have been recorded for ducks and varieties of ducks, that would allow some flexibility in totemic designations. The existence of 'white' and 'black', 'big' and 'small' duck terms may indicate the existence of dual clans, e.g., two local families of the same clan distinguished by basic contrasts. One totem or 'goddess' was called 'white bird' (tomyamy); there may have been a 'black bird' as well. Such dual totem clans are often found in American Indian villages, and may have been common in North Asia also. Closely related to duck would be goose and other aquatic bird totems, heron, swan and crane. All these could be popular totems.

Another fairly prominent bird is grouse and grouse-like birds; they may alternate with duck as one of the local totems. On the whole birds seem to have been frequent totems among the Ket, perhaps more common than indicated in the village reconstruction.

Among the four-legged animals there are quite a few small animals, mouse, squirrel, hare and more. Modern people may think of these creatures as insignificant, but they were peaceful and omnipresent parts of the fauna and as such could be prominent in the totemic organization. A village would be interested in having peaceful members.

For many animals the female is specially indicated, which is a possible hint at matrilineal descent. Other terms used for totems, like 'goddess', 'elder', 'mother' and 'female creature', all may point to the presence of matrilines.

The older prevalence of totems is partly indicated by references to humans in stories. People would refer to themselves by their totem, e.g., fire-man (bogdei-get), water-man (olygit), etc. Obviously women would refer to themselves as 'water-woman', 'duck-woman' and so on. Totems as such were mainly seen as female. Whether there also was a patrilineal tendency depends on what evidence can be found in the sources. In historical times there may well have been a shift towards patrilineal, more fitting to Russian ideas and expectations.

Whether there were carved representations of totems among the Ket, akin to totem poles, is not clear. A reference is made to idol figures of dead relatives that were maintained and kept by clan families. Presumably these were human figures, that might or might not have animal symbols as well. If the clan died out, the idols were transferred to another clan in the same moiety (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 616). The last statement is important, that if a clan's members died its representation could be transferred to another clan in its moiety, or rather its phratry, so that the totemic position could be preserved. First of all this indicated the flexibility of the totemic system, where a totem could be transferred to one or more members of another clan, thus preserving it. Even more significantly, this practice shows that it was mandatory to maintain the number of complementary clans in a village. The whole complement of local clans had to be preserved to keep the social organization running, made difficult by the great loss of population after the Russian colonization.

People who suffered historic population depletion due to European epidemics and colonization, would try to maintain the full complement of clans. The Shawnee Indians would maintain a system of 12 totem clans even if the local families were much fewer, naming children into the lost clans and trying to fill the 'gap' in the village circle (Selstad 1986). Similar solutions can have been tried in the diminished house rows of Ket villages. Attempts were made at local consolidation, such as adopting new members for local extinct clans.

A claim that 'clans' could be spread over a large area, but that each local 'clan' or family group maintained territorial and economic rights, is curiously right and wrong at the same time (op. cit.: 616). In the totemic system a totem clan would be found in each area, just like birds and animals are spread out. Yet family ownership must be wrong – the family would depend on the shared possession of a local territory between all the totem clans in the village.

Less problematic are statements that members from several clans collaborated in local social life; also that the clans had reciprocal relations of mutual aid, common bride price and blood vengeance, etc. Though the vengeance bit could be a Cossack invention (Popov & Dolgikh 1964). Most totemic villages are geared towards peaceful relations, such as appealing to shared totemic relations at home and abroad.

Phratries

Apparently the Ket had a separate word for phratries or local groups of clans, calling them 'bisimdeng', 'fraternity' or 'siblings'. Scholars would somewhat helplessly make these a part of moieties, another social category, as noted below.

Phratries would include similar creatures, such as fishes, birds and animals. Within a phratry similar animals would be found on opposite sides of the village, e.g., in opposite village halves or moieties. Wolf would be on one side, fox on the other, though considered as 'siblings' and part of the same phratry.

Moieties

One basic claim is that two moieties were found among the Ket. With some confusion scholars described them as an 'ancient dual organization' made up 'of two exogamous phratries (khuotpyl)', or rather, moieties (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 615). The reference to exogamy could be a modern development, when the population was so diminished that it could not sustain a complement of local clans, only a wider group of moieties. Or rather, the complex social organization had been reduced by colonization and depopulation, leading Russian scholars to focus on remnants of moieties, that they did not distinguish clearly from phratries. The practice of exogamy, as will be noted elsewhere, may extend to the village level of organization; people tend to find spouses outside their own community.

There are vague references to two moieties or moiety-like units. It may have been the case that people found spouses in the other moiety. This would presuppose that the same moieties were found in each village; they might be called 'upper' and 'lower', but as will be seen the common terms were 'eagle' and 'cuckoo'. Then Fa's and Mo's kin would be in opposite moieties, relationally called 'bisep' and 'kuy'. Yet the existence of a third group, 'kip'-'kipa', may indicate that a phratry-like system also is at work. This may indicate an even more complex situation in which a person found a spouse from the other moiety, in another phratry than Fa's or Mo's, and in another village. These restrictions would be conducive to a wide connubium of intermarrying villages, since only a few persons would be eligible to marry in each place – less than 1/6 of those available. The extensive use of kin terms, and their exogamous implications, tended to confuse Russian scholars, so many details remain unknown.

Once each moiety is looked at, a more composite local organization emerges. Ket people had a dual organization of two moieties (khuotpyl), also labeled or mislabeled 'phratries'. As noted the two halves supposedly were patrilineal and exogamous. This may be modern developments or misrepresentations; exogamy is likely, but patriliney is uncertain. The older arrangement could be matrilineal.

One moiety was called 'eagle' (kantang, kentandeng), another 'cuckoo' (bogdeyget, bogdedeng, bogden) (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 615).

Records from the 1600s mentioned one 'moiety' in the Inbak group, and another in groups called Zemshak and Bogden (op. cit.: 616). This would lead Russian scholars to happily conclude that 'moieties' were separate local units, living in distinct places, while they almost certainly formed the two halves of every village or local community. As with totems in general, the symbolism could be extended to wider units.

The scholars would concede that the moieties had totemistic origins. Each moiety consisted of several 'clans' called 'bisimdeng', 'fraternity'; again this would reflect a scholarly failure to clearly distinguish moieties, phratries and totem clans.

That the moieties were identified by bird totems, indicate a close parallel to the Selkup case. At a guess, the 'eagle' moiety could have clans such as sturgeon, hawk, wolf and hare, while the 'cuckoo' moiety had perch, grouse, bear and deer. Only more detailed information could provide a better image of the local totemic distribution.

The moieties had various rules, ceremonies, and cults attached to them alongside exogamy. It was taboo to kill one's moiety beast. It was taboo to make fire in the house of someone from the opposite moiety. At weddings, the participants sat in two semicircles opposite each other according to moieties. In the past, archery competitions and other games were held between the moieties. When a bear was killed, a ceremony was held to find out which moiety's dead relatives had sent it (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 616). Other relevant information is that a moiety could be mobilized for trade or warfare, and might also be involved 'in the payment of bride-price', though this last effort might relate to a phratry or individual totem clan (ibid.).

These are significant observations, since they indicate the wider 'functions' or workings of the moiety system. That moieties operate on occasions when two sides are required, as at weddings and games, is known from other societies. Research would show that ritual and social tasks are assigned to all the totemic units, clans, phratries, moieties, and the village as a whole. This becomes one more facet in our knowledge about North Asian totemism.

Villages

The Ket practiced exogamy up to the village level. It was said that 'the Xant'a and Bogdeï-get their wives from one another'; this would be beyond the level of villages. A loss of population would force people to find spouses farther afield, including intermarriage with Russians.

A highly tentative local totemic organization could be: sky or eagle, sturgeon, hawk, bear, wolf, deer, mouse; perch, grouse, otter, fox, elk-moose, hare, and cuckoo or earth. There would be local variants in the totem clan distribution, so this is merely one suggestion of how the totemic system in one village might be.

Unfortunately Russian scholars were marginally interested in totemism, and focused more on fixed ideas of 'class' or social differences and Marxist dogma. Ket society was not based on class differences. The main distinction might be between most people and chiefs, but leaders would mainly be the first among equals. Ethnic and class differences would only be established with Russian colonization. Economic disparities were strongest among those who owned reindeer; no doubt a post-colonial situation. A common marking of economic disparity was the resale of hunting equipment and food to relatives during the hunting season; probably also due to Russian influences (Popov & Dolgikh 1964). In a native village people would depend on sharing their resources fairly equally.

Politics

Little is known about leadership conditions among the Ket. They have long been a closely watched minority in the Yenisei Russian area. Such a heavy impact would influence all areas of political relations. Totemic leadership would be weakened once Russian colonists arrived. While the Ket were proud of their clan leaders, speaking of them as ‘nobles’, the Russians would not be impressed by groups named from animals such as ‘bitches’. A cultural collision took place, much to the detriment of the proud and welcoming Ket. The Russians were unlikely to recognize native leadership under any shape or form, unless they could control the leaders and make them do their bidding. Hence little is known about native forms of political organization, though some hints remain (Popov & Dolgikh 1964).

Ket people may have been part of vast political alliances in pre-Russian times. These may have extended beyond the Ket homelands. It is significant that tribal names in the north often appear in pairs: Enets-Nenets, Evenk-Even, Ket-Kott, Kott-Baykot, Arin-Yarin, etc. Also there are dual distinctions found in tribal names, such as upper-lower, big-small, etc. This may indicate that networks of exogamy, marriage, trade and political alliances extended to the regional and sub-regional level. People representing whole tribes may have met for consultations and negotiations in some neutral location. This may have been crucial for maintaining a regional peace in prehistoric times.

Whether the Ket and related people had a tribal totem is not known. Yet totems may have been applied from the individual via the clan and community up to the tribal and regional level. It would be interesting for instance if the Ket tribal totem was ‘duck’ or ‘cuckoo’. This would make their affiliation unique and easily comparable to other tribes – or to the Russian ‘bear’. That the cuckoo had a high standing as an emblem among the Ket, present one more challenge to how modern people might conceive, or rather misunderstand, totemism.

Religion

Ket people by the 1850s were nominally Christian, but in practice they were ‘heathen’, and paid great respect to the bear and to nature in general (Castrén 1858: v). Yet the belief system would be only partly intact after 1850.

What is known is that people had a form of nature belief or ‘animism’. In one somewhat biased view, the world was populated by good and evil spirits. Gods included the male Yes, heaven, sky or sun, his wife Khosedabam, the moon and protector of the earth, and various earthly deities. Curiously Khosedabam is described as ‘evil’, possibly a Russian bias, but perhaps also linked to historical developments of epidemics and depopulation, where her protection would be drawn into question. In this later historic view, she was sent down to earth and caused misfortune and disease to animals and men (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 617). Actually it was the colonizers who brought ‘misfortune and disease’, but this people could not say openly.

The annual ceremonial life of the Ket is poorly known, explainable by the Christian imposition. The bear cult and bear ceremony were important among the Ket, though obscure (op. cit.: 609, 617). Probably there was a full yearly cycle of fall, mid-winter, spring and summer ceremonials and gatherings – all but unknown. The bear ceremony might fall into the winter-spring part of the cycle.

The Ket were known for shamanistic practices. This may have been a survival mechanism in the face of external threats, to invoke the spirit world. Shamans were engaged in healing – also understandable when the people were continually reduced. The shaman ('tsenin' or 'sening') would have spirit helpers, including loon, bear, deer, and other beings. Beliefs in wizards or witches (bongos) can be linked to the difficult situation (op. cit.: 617). External pressure may also have led people to rely on fetishes. Such fetishes took the form of dolls, found in most Ket homes around 2010, as a form of protective household deities. One fetish, perhaps the same kind, was called 'a'lalt'. More information is needed on all aspects of Ket religious beliefs.

Culture

The wealth of Ket cultural practices must have been fantastic, but is poorly known today. The culture shows both northern features such as skin clothing, and southern influences such as robes. In the material culture transportation, particularly boats, were important. There were large boats, houseboats, smaller craft and hollowed-out boats. People also had skis. Men could wear their hair like hair-whips hung with ornaments, while women wore two braids and beaded ribbons around their hair (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 610-5).

The rich mythology is poorly known. There were epic tales about a culture hero, Balna, 'Cherry Cane', who fought with enemies armed only with a cane. His bravado and haunts were linked to sites along the Yenisei. That the hero barely was armed, hints at an underlying emphasis on non-violence and peaceful relations in Ket society. That there also were a few stories of fights with Nenets and Evenk no doubt was a Russian hang-up, who expected people to be violent (op. cit.: 618-9). Sadly missing from the records are animal stories and other nature-based tales, that must have been numerous and could have a totemic significance.

Information on life courses is sparse. People would go through regular life courses of birth, matrimony and death. Most information is on the last aspect, showing that funerals were important occasions in native life. People were buried in the earth. Personal belongings were placed next to the corpse, such as a knife, pipe, canoe, or sleigh. Objects were broken before being placed in the grave. Sometimes dogs were killed and laid in the grave. In early times, a bonfire was lit by the grave during the burial, which was extinguished when the grave was covered (op. cit.: 617). Most of these pivotal traditions were broken when missions demanded Christian burials. Even in death the Ket were not left alone by the colonists.

Summary

Russian scholars would focus on the tremendous change and destruction brought to the Ket by their compatriot colonists. Forced collectivization took place in the 1920s and '30s. The entire Ket population from Yartsevo to Turukhansk was collectivized. Under Soviet rule activities were 'modernized', such as guns for hunting, which entailed that people had less and less control over their livelihoods. In the village of Cherny Ostrov, the collective farm 'Stalin'(!) organized most of the Ket who before hunted on the Upper Tunguska. The name said something about their sad situation. The Russians taught people to grow potatoes, cabbage, carrots and vegetables. There was compulsory schooling in Russian (Popov & Dolgikh 1964: 617-9).

The old culture was disappearing. By 1960 Russian colonization or 'collectivization' had removed all Ket practices, hunting, fishing, gathering, etc., placing them under Russian

control (op. cit.: 618). Only the old people remembered the clans and the moiety system after 1950 (ibid.). Over time, the clans were turned into family groups with Russian names. Native songs were replaced by Russian patriotic songs imposed by the Red Army (op. cit.: 619). It was the nail in the coffin for the Ket nation. Yet people would still persist somehow, and still occupy villages near the Yenisei.

Looking back, the once flourishing culture of the Yeniseyans stands out. Scholars were surprised to find this well established and extensive culture in the area. They would note Kott families in Russian neighborhoods who tried to hold on to their own language and traditions. The persistence and permanence of Kettic culture leads back to a time when people lived in old and well-established villages along the Yenisei River. The local communities were organized along totemic lines. Totem clans, phratries and moieties gave each village a stable social structure that would allow it to persist and flourish while conducting trade and peaceful visits along the Yenisej flood. The reach of this system is indicated by the similarities of Ket totemism to that found among the Selkup in the Ob drainage, speaking a different language.

The enduring totemic organization would allow the Ket to persist also in historic times. Only the pressure became too great. The Russians were not willing to share their newly colonized land on the Yenisey with people of another language and culture, even though they were the old natives. The Kettic people became a virtually hidden minority, living interspersed among the dominant Russians and some other minority groups. Yet the fact that they could convey their culture to the present world bears testimony of the strength of the Ket society that once existed, based on a totemic organization. The same strength may point to a future revival.

Mongol totemism

Mongol society and history is far too extensive and complex to be presented in full here. They also span the areas between several regions and states, and have an adaptation and cultural development that falls outside the subject of totemism in a narrow sense. The wide practice of nomadism and husbandry has given them forms of organization that are more akin to extensive kin networks, genealogical groups and political band alliances.

In the midst of this complexity the Mongol peoples have a past pointing back to a period of totemic organizations. For simplicity, the discussion of totemism will be limited to one group, the Buryat, with comparative references to other Mongol nations where relevant. Also other Mongol groups with a presence in the north will be taken into consideration, such as the Dahur or Daur. There is plenty of complexity to take into consideration when relating Mongol totemism to other forms of social organization in North Asia.

Buryat

Aka: Buriat, Buryat-Mongol, etc. Some 'clan' or regional groups were noted as: Omok, Solo, Jas (bone), etc.

Population estimates include: 80,000+ in 1650; 290,-300,000+ in 1897; 1926: 220,000 in Russia, 100,000 in Mongolia, total ca. 320,000; 500,000 in 1980, of which 360,000 speakers; 2010: 420,000 speakers; etc.

The perspective here can be extended to the wider realm and territory of Mongolian society, covering an area of 2,000,000+ km² from the Altay Mountains in the west to the middle and upper Amur in east. With the exception of groups such as the Buryat and Dahur, this great region is considered to be outside the general purview of the present work, though notes on Mongol society will be added whenever pertinent. The general Mongolian population has been reckoned as: 1,000,000+ in 1600; 1890: 2,000,000; 1950: 2,-3,000,000; 1980: 4,000,000+, of which 3,800,000 spoke Khalkha.

Among the Buryat, regional divisions include the northern or western Baikal-Buryat and south-eastern Transbaikalian-Buryat. Tribal groups and dialects included Bulagat, Bargut, Burgut, Buryat, Barguzin and Bersit in the NW, Ekhirit or Ekerit in the N, Khondogor in the W, Khorin, Khor, Khoridoy, Khangin, Khoto or similar in the E, Tabunut in the S, and groups variously called Tulasy, Tumets, Tunka-Soyot, Kabanu-Bargo-Zinti, Tsongol, Sartol-Sartul, Atagan, Alar, Unga, and more (Vyatkina 1964: 203).

In Mongol terms, a 'clan' group (ulus) is larger than a local group (khoton), and part of a 'clan' tribe (talbin) or a chiefdom (kholbon). Whether a local descent group would also be called a 'clan' is unclear; apparently the word 'bone' (yasu) could be used.

Summer camps were often located near water, by a spring or river, while the winter camp was located in a pasture area where hay was stored. All this would point to a wider and more shifting organization than in a totemic village. There is a possibility that early Buryat villages were laid out in a circle, perhaps on a totemic basis, though the ordinary layout may have been in 1-3+ rows of houses or yurts.

Ecology

The Buryat lived west, east and south of Lake Baikal, in a region with high mountain steppes and wooded mountains, in addition to some valleys. The region provided ample resources for hunting, fishing, husbandry, gathering and basic agriculture. The area is scenic.

History

The Buryat were a Mongolian people originating in the region around Lake Baikal. This may be an ancient homeland for the Buryat and for the Mongols in general. Before 1000 AD a common Mongol language existed with various tribal dialects. Genghis Khan (1163-1227) subjugated the Buryat tribes. After Genghis Khan's empire collapsed, the tribes separated and different languages emerged. The Buryat absorbed groups from the Kott, Samoyed, Tungus and Turkic speaking peoples. The contact with Russian Cossacks from about 1650 was at first peaceful. China ceded the Buryat territory to Russia in 1727-28. After this the Buryat were subjected to ruthless exploitation and taxation by the Russian colonial masters (voyevod). Over time the Buryat region was partially feudalized with Mongolian titled rulers and henchmen. After 1822 a ruthless Russian colonization with peasants and convicts began. This led to bouts of epidemics and disease, poverty and unrest. A program of Russification was intensified after the Trans-Siberian Railway was built in 1904. Chaos and lawlessness was rampant during the Revolutionary period of 1918-23 (Vyatkina 1964).

Mongol history in general will only be briefly noted. The Mongolian people grew to prominence after 1000 AD, leading to the Chinese conquest of Genghis Khan 1206-1227, and Mongol power over much of Eurasia. Today most Mongol live in the republic of Mongolia, where the main language is Khalkha.

Economy

The Buryat practiced nomadism with horses, cattle and sheep. As noted this generated a more shifting and lineage based social organization than among more residential tribes. Hence totemism would be less central to the society's makeup. At the same time there was diversity within the economic adaptation. This included hunting, fishing and gathering. In Lake Baikal people caught seals and sturgeons. There also was some agriculture in the valleys (Vyatkina 1964: 219).

Kinship

Buryat households occupied Mongol tents called yurt, and huts with yurt shape. There also were other kinds of dwellings (Vyatkina 1964: 216-8). The position of women was programmatically portrayed by Russian ethnographers as 'subordinate', while the head of the house was the husband (op. cit.: 225). Women still had property of their own passed down from mother to daughter. At marriage a man was required to pay a bride price.

The genealogy-based terminology is weakly classificatory, with separate terms for 'older' (akha) and 'younger' (du) siblings. Terms include 'father's brother' (abaga), and 'mother's brother' (nagasa) (ibid.).

Differentiation

Potential Buryat-Mongol totems are: fish, whitefish, burbot, sturgeon, trout, salmon-trout, seal, snake, lizard, dragon, frog, spider, bird, pheasant, crow, duck, goose, swan (börtö), owl, bustard, hawk, vulture, falcon, eagle, bear, wolverine, polecat, marten, weasel, sable, wolf, dog, fox, lynx, leopard, tiger, deer, reindeer, roe-deer, musk-deer, elk-moose, horse, cattle, bull (bukha), boar, sheep, goat, elephant, mouse, rat, hamster, tarbagan-rodent, beaver, porcupine, mouse, squirrel, hare, bone (jasu), tree, wood, sky, cloud, rain, sun, etc. (Vyatkina 1964: 204).

The 'clans' or 'bones' (yasu) could exceed the local groups (khoton). An 'unknown Buryat' entering a house 'was first asked which bone he belonged to' (Vyatkina 1964: 224). Each clan had its own identification, which was only partly totemic. Such totems included: fish, snake, dragon, frog, bird, swan (börtö), eagle, vulture, wolf, dog, bear, sable, deer, bull (bukha), boar, goat, elephant, beaver, squirrel, hare, bone (jasu), wood, sky, cloud, etc.

Historically the wolf and deer totems are said to have been prominent among the Mongolian tribes. Genghis Khan supposedly was descended from both of these totemic groups. Killing a wolf was taboo. Other known totems included: eagle, bear, etc. Supposedly people pictured a bear's head on house posts and danced around it, perhaps in relation to a totem clan feast.

Particularly noteworthy among the Mongols was the appearance of totemic figures not usually found elsewhere in the North, such as dragon, tiger and elephant. Though the tiger would be found in the Amur region, and presumably had a wider distribution in prehistoric times, along with leopards or panthers, it would have a peculiar status as a totem, almost mythical. Whether large felines would operate as totems among people further north, such as the Selkup, is not well known.

Wider clan groups (ulus) comprised a tribal-like union of clans led by a khan. The Sartul 'clan' group included: snake, vulture and frog totems. Bersit had: wolf, dog, deer, and more. Khoto had: eagle. Khangin had: swan and eagle. Ekerit included: fish, burbot, pig, and more. The Tunka tribe venerated the sable. These may have been regional totems or emblems.

Other Buryat totems may include sacred animals such as: white-headed eagle (berkut), swan, and more. Up to 9 totems have been noted in some accounts. This number may easily be extended to 14 or more. In spite of this it is difficult to arrive at an impression of the ancient Buryat totemic system – how it would play out locally. Sources on the local occurrences are too sparse and disparate to allow a more general image to appear.

A highly tentative reconstruction of a local totemic organization could be: sky or eagle, burbot, swan, bear, wolf, deer, marmot; snake, vulture, sable, fox, pig, hare, and earth. This list is presented with the general reservation that there would be local variations, and it is basically hypothetical.

If there was a totemic system underlying the documented 'clan' groups, it became fragmented and diversified. In the nomadic world people started reckoning kinship more specifically limited to their own kin, rather than to their position in relation to a complement of local totemic clans.

Hence the Buryat would construct genealogies. According to the sources an exogamous patrilineal kin group could reckon their ancestry up to 7-10 generations back (Vyatkina 1964: 224). People had to know their specific 'clan' or 'bone'. Some clans did have totemic names, such as snake, frog and bull, but this was no longer a requirement, as a clan could have any name that would distinguish it from other clans.

The organization was further modified by the Mongol state and later by the colonization of the Russians. Now it was no longer clanship that determined local membership, but residence. People would retain clan rights for hunting and fishing, grazing distribution, and other activities. State intervention would create a 3-class system of poor people, ordinary people and a rich elite. The poor would work for the rich nomads or be subject to the state as laborers or inmates in prison camps (Vyatkina 1964). This was a new reality in North Asia, one that would last to the present time.

Politics

The Buryat, like other Mongols, had a proud political history. There would be layers of leaders starting with clan-elders (*zasul*), and moving on to tribal and national chiefs and rulers. Unfortunately the tribal leaders, called *Tajsha*, *Zajsan*, *Shulenga* or similar, were appropriated by the state as its henchmen, and became a privileged elite during the Russian colonization and later. Some of the elite would oversee local areas, while others, called *Shulenga*, administered regional tribal groups. In the old days a leader could rise to great power and lead many followers in raids and conquests, as China, Russia and Europe knew. In more recent times they became overseers who administered people and made them pay tribute or tax. The Russian colonizers used the same tactic as with other tribes, connecting leaders with them by granting them privileges such as tax exemptions and property access. Ordinary Buryat, by the same process, would end up formally without land property (Vyatkina 1964).

Religion

The Buryat, though nomads, would share many of the beliefs found in the forest tribes, such as nature gods and shamanism. Nature was a spiritual realm and was inhabited by gods. These 'lords' or nature-spirits (*edzhin*) included heaven, sun, moon, mountains, stone, forest, fire, and more. The sky or heaven (*tengri*) was populated by gods (*tengerin*) (Vyatkina 1964: 224, 227). In Buryat fashion these were settled in camps, with 55 lords in the west, considered good, and 44 in the east, held to be evil (*ibid.*). There may have been many modifications to such beliefs. The Eastern Buryat may have held a different opinion from the Western Buryat.

A sign that the religion moved away from basic nature beliefs and totemism, could be that human god-like figures gained prominence. Shamans, chieftains, good archers, blacksmiths, and heroic figures could be worshiped, while less known people after death turned into restless ghosts (*ibid.*). This would be a much more human-focused belief than in nature beliefs, and more similar to modern beliefs in god-like men.

Settlements were surrounded by sacred spaces. The nomads had sacred spots where they made sacrifices, as a way to safeguard their journey (*op. cit.*: 226).

Celebrations included games and contests. An ancient celebration was the Archery Festival (*sur-kharban*) in the spring, when several thousand people could gather to participate (Vyatkina 1964: 228-9). Such large gatherings would distinguish the nomads from the forest

people, who generally would have local celebrations. The Buryat celebrations included dancing, prayer, sacrifice and communal feasting, which would also be found among forest tribes, but curtailed by Russian missions.

Shamans gained importance historically, as people needed relief from external pressure and introduced diseases. Shamans had spirit helpers (ongon) such as squirrels, hares, sables, etc. Shamanism was replaced by Lama-Buddhism in the 1700s, but remained in the west until the Communists took power. In many ways the lamas took the place of shamans in the 1800s, under Russian control, and grew in numbers from 2600 in 1822 to 5545 in 1842. The Orthodox church competed with the lamas after 1700 (Vyatkina 1964: 227-8).

Culture

The Buryat cultural universe, with its long and varied background, was rich in material and symbolic expressions. It included characteristic clothing, such as robes fastened on the right side (Vyatkina 1964: 223). The visual arts were highly developed, both geometrically and figuratively. There was a rich folklore, that sadly is not widely disseminated. The stories often concern epic heroes fighting against adversaries (op. cit.: 229). For some reason the Buryat language was sternly opposed by Russian authorities, perhaps because they, as nomads, had a better chance of avoiding authoritative control.

Life course rituals were important. At birth an animal's ankle bone was placed in the crib to make the child grow straight. Otherwise it seems that Buddhist rituals were largely followed (Vyatkina 1964).

Summary

In recent historical times Buryat societies, like all the people in the north, came under more external pressure than they had ever experienced before. The Russian control of the elite has been mentioned. The colonial and state-led control would set in on all fronts. Traditionally the Buryat had their own tradition of social drinking, consuming fermented milk. This would take on a whole different aspect when the Russians introduced vodka, leading to widespread alcoholism. After 1927 efforts were made to place the nomads in Russian-led collectives. Land was expropriated, agriculture and animal husbandry collectivized (Vyatkina 1964: 230). After 1930 Lake Bajkal became a spa center for the Russian intelligentsia and oligarchs. This led to a strong Russian influence on education, native communities and cultural activities. In the Stalin era there was a drastic purge of all ritualist, shamanistic, and Buddhist practitioners. While controls would lighten up later, native life remained circumscribed by Russian and state controls.

This being said it can be seen that Buryat still is a strong society. Much more can be established about their past, including totemic traditions. This must be left for future research. What has been hinted at is that anciently there would be a local complement of totem clans, which can be compared to organizations found elsewhere in the north.

Dahur

Aka: Daur, Davur, Dahuhai, Dakhuri, Uwur, etc.

The Daur or Dahur are a Mongolian people who occupied the middle Amur valley in the 1600s. They are also called Eastern Mongols, with villages on the Amur River and inland, opposite Konstantinovka, and in other places. Their position placed them into contact with a variety of people between Mongolia, China and parts of North Asia. This was a central but also challenging situation. Reportedly they lived in large fortified villages in early historic times. Today the Dahur or Daur are identified as a minority in China and Russia.

Population: 2010: 130,000+ in China, and 8,000+ in Russia, in total 138,000+; etc.

Background information

The Dahur lived in a mixed environment of forests, mountains, steppes, rivers and lakes. Supposedly the Dahur descended from a people called Khitan. They would relate to Tungusic peoples to the E and Mongolians to the W. Their economy was based on hunting, fishing, gathering, agriculture, and cattle and horse breeding (Shirokogoroff 1979: 83). The Dahur apparently practiced matrilocality, a man moving in with his wife's kin; though most likely the choice of residence would vary.

Differentiation

Some 'clan' names were: (M = Manchu)

Aisin Gioro

Ao (cf. Áojiā, Èjì, Guāěrjiā, Wūxīlěi)

Áolāshì

Áolēiduō'ěr

Āěrdān

Énuò

Áolātuōxīn

Áojiā (M)

Èjì (M)

Guāěrjiā (M)

Wūxīlěi (M)

These are presented here as a possible comparison with Tungusic 'clan' names. As can be seen, specific totemic references are lacking.

'There is a very noticeable hierarchic structure. People sharing the same surname are in groups called hala, they live together with the same group, formed by two or three towns. Each hala is divided in diverse clans (mokon) that live in the same town. If a marriage between different clans is made, the husband continues to live with the clan of his wife without holding property rights' (Wikipedia n.d.). The word 'hala' can be compared to 'khala', found among the Tungusic tribes and usually translated 'clan'.

Further social and cultural aspects

Dahur leadership is poorly known. As with other Mongolian tribes, there would be prominent leaders representing the interests of native groups, but their history is little known.

Supposedly Genghis Khan shared descent with some of the Dahur clans. 'Many Daur practice shamanism. Each clan has its own shaman in charge of all the important ceremonies in the lives' of the people. A significant number of Daur would take up Tibetan Buddhism. 'During the Qing, the Daur knew a version of the Tale of the Nisan Shaman', in which a female shaman competed against monks and was executed. 'The Qing emperor is shown as a fool who is tricked by the lamas' (Wikipedia n.d.).

'During the winter, the Daur women wear long dresses' and skin boots, 'which they change for long trousers in summer'. The men wore caps made from 'fox or red deer skin' winter, and fabric or straw hats in summer. 'A customary sport of the Daur is Beikou, a game similar to field hockey or street hockey, which has been played' for 'about 1,000 years' (Wikipedia n.d.).

The Dahur are a fascinating people with a thousand-year-old history that is little known, perhaps because of their position between several other cultures, Mongolian, Tungusic, Manchu, Chinese and Russian. For now, the presentation will move on to the ethnographically better known Tungusic peoples.

Tungusic peoples in general

The small Tungusic tribes and peoples suffered catastrophic population losses in the general period 1300-1900 AD. Much had to do with epidemics, but also other disasters. There was not one epidemic episode, but countless fatal events, ranging from externally introduced contagious diseases to raids, warfare, displacement and invasions by outside groups such as Mongolians, Manchus, Chinese, Koreans, Russians, and others. Each Tungusic group, from local communities up to the tribal level, lost 50-100 % of their population. The result was a breakdown of the local social system, considered to be totemic, the dispersal of the survivors, and the reorganization of people into new groups. These reconstituted local communities over time developed a transformed, more synthetic form of clans, somewhere between totemic descent groups and the named lineages and large-scale clans of the Manchus, Mongolians, and partly, Koreans. Not least, the Russian administrative approach of assigning people family names would break down what remained of totemic units.

One basic question concerns the words 'khala' and 'dokha' and what they entail. If the interpretation is 'clan' and 'phratry', then they indicate a totemic significance. If they refer to local and regional groups that were dispersed, the interpretation becomes more nondescript. Or there may be a combination of the two outlooks.

This mystery led to the start of this study into totemism in the lower Amur valley, and by extension in the North Asia region. A study that soon proved to be complicated.

Words for 'clan' include:

khala, xala, xala (Manchu), etc.

xalu, xalun (Buryat)

mokun (Manchu), mukun (Biar)

omok (Mongol); jas (Mongol)

One scholar, to be difficult, concludes that the Tungus have no word for 'clan', since they have many (Shirokogoroff 1979: 121).

The same scholar makes a troubling statement: 'I think we do not need to discover the meaning of the clan names'. The meaning is unknown, 'for the old clan names were taken up by the Tungus long before' any outside 'influences compelled the Tungus to change their original organization' (Shirokogoroff 1979: 135). Precisely for this reason the meaning is important; like other observers the scholar did not think about asking people about their totems, what animals they were. He probably did not even consider the thought.

That Amur Tungus societies were totemic seems clear. 'Ancestral animals of lineages in the Amur-Sakhalin region include the tiger, bear, elk, wolf, fox, boar, otter, hare, frog, killer-whale, seal, eagle, hawk, salmon and ... dragon' (Zgusta 2015: 309). In spite of such obvious statements, scholars in almost puritanical fashion have denied the existence of totemism in these societies. That people would descend from animals was not acceptable. For some reason this was particularly the case among Russian scholars, in spite of names such as Medvedev and Volkov, the sons of bear and wolf. Whenever the scholar met a group named from an animal, this would be explained away as a local circumstance, such as a place name, and not as totemism. In defense of the scholars it should be added that native people generally were reluctant to reveal their totem or even to mention the topic. Totems were integral to their identity. It would be like asking modern people about the pin code to their bank card. In addition, natives experienced ridicule of their culture by Russians, adding to their reluctance.

Unfortunately most scholars did not take these circumstances into consideration, and simply avoided the topic, instead of making discerning and considerate inquiries. Above all, the in-depth study of local communities was generally lacking. Scholars wanted to make far-reaching claims, not going into the minute details of family histories, personal names and local kinship relations. And yet, writing about small societies based on local communities, is all about recording the minutiae of social life.

Even

Aka: Lamut, Lamutka, Oven, Eveny, Menel, Orochel – same as Oroch, etc. The name Even is similar to Evenk, leading to some confusion and difficulties in word searches. The name Lamut is more distinctive, but has been abandoned in official usage.

The Even live north of the Sea of Okhotsk. The territory of 100,000+ km² should allow for 15,000+ people.

Population estimates include: 1650: 3000-6000; 1890: 8000; 1926: officially 2109, but rather 7000 (they were partly counted together with the Evenk); 1959: 9,100, 7407 speakers; 1970: 12,000, 6,700 speakers; 1980: 13,000, 6,000-7,000 speakers; 1989: 17,199; 2010: 21,800, 5700 speakers (cf. Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 671).

The Even had fairly stable local communities or settlements located near a river or fishing lake during the summer. Both summer camps and nomadic camps consisted of members from several 'clans', and could include from 2-4 up to 20+ huts. Each group that hunted and nomadized together claimed a common use territory. The implication would be that a proper summer village had 12-24+ houses, intended to be permanently settled. That villages changed their location after 10-15 years was normal, since houses might decay, trash could accumulate, and healthy conditions had to be maintained. But this would be local moves, such as between preferred village locations in the same local area, that could be used alternately.

In association with villages there could be 3-4 hunting camps with 6-8+ tent-like houses each (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 676-7). There would also be fishing camps near rivers or near the ocean in coastal villages.

Ecology

The landscape would be one of coasts, forests and mountains. As the people moved E and N in historic times they also entered the tundra region. This was a vast area with an abundance of wildlife, fish, birds and animals. In addition came plant resources, berry, roots and greens, and mineral resources for manufacturing tools.

History

The Even were originally one people with the Evenk (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 672). They were said to be coastal clans or regional groups who developed their own culture. They supposedly separated from the main body of Evenk through a gradual move to the N and E after 1100 AD. Much of the early history remains conjectural.

In historic times the Even moved from the western end of the Sea of Okhotsk towards Magadan. Along the way they absorbed other people, especially the Yukaghir. This has to be viewed in relation to the Russian expansion N of Okhotsk after 1630, and epidemics and other calamities that attended the colonization. Native peoples became decimated and displaced, and re-formed in local and regional groups as they tried to survive.

Later in history the Even moved E of Magadan and displaced the Koryak further east after the year 1780. Eventually Even people reached Kamchatka in the 1840s (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 671-2).

Today, Even is a minority throughout its vast area north of the Sea of Okhotsk. They were culturally influenced by other native peoples they came into contact with, and more recently especially by the Russians.

Economy

The original adaptation was one of hunting, fishing and gathering. As people moved east north of the Okhotsk Sea reindeer herding became more common as a livelihood (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 672). Reindeer nomadism was a factor in their expansion northwards into other peoples' territory. It was also a way to keep out of reach of the Russian expansion along the coast.

As noted, local groups had common use of a territory, with extensive cooperation and a division of labour between groups. Some families fished salmon and dried fish, while others went on hunts. Fishing and hunting grounds also could be divided between groups, such as phratries and moieties or subgroups. Fishing was done with traps, nets and lines. 'Sea-animal hunting' played a role on the coast (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 674).

Hunters would share meat with everybody in the village. The sharing of game was called 'nimat' (op. cit.: 680). In ancient times this also applied to furs, but later the hunters would keep the furs to pay taxes and trade with the Russians. This actually led to disputes over customary laws locally. Elders or clan representatives could impose a fine on the 'sin' of not sharing. Yet they could not prevent the Russians from demanding tax, so the sanctions had limited effect. Wolves in the old days were not killed. As with the Chukchi, they were viewed as sacred and were taboo to kill (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 674).

Trade was important in native society. Reportedly there was 'busy bartering' between coastal and inland bands 'for a long time' (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 675). This trade would be curtailed when Russians appropriated the exchange in the 1800s.

The ancient economy was based on equality. In modern times reindeer nomadism supposedly led to inequality, based on Russian influences such as taxation. 13% of nomadic households reportedly owned 75% of the reindeer around 1920 (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 679). As a contradiction the Russians would counteract the 'inequality' by taking away the reindeer of the Evens, assigning them instead to Russian-led collectives after 1925. To the Even this must have seemed incomprehensible. As with other natives they experienced the mass forced collectivization of native peoples after the Revolution and the taking of their land by Russians.

Kinship

Nomadization would change the social relations in Even society. The local-based totemic clans were weakened, while more shifting, lineage based groups appeared in the herding camps. Housing shifted from fixed houses to tents. Though people on the coast would maintain permanent excavated or dugout houses (utan) that could be occupied year round, and tended to be used in winter (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 676). Houses had sleeping platforms along the walls. Near the house would be a storehouse on scaffolding, meat scaffolding and drying and storing racks for fish, as well as other structures.

In programmatic fashion scholars would note that men had formal authority, reluctantly adding that women had a relatively independent position in the family (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 680).

People married at different ages. Children could be promised in marriage, perhaps indicating that exogamy made finding a partner difficult, so marriage was arranged. Older women could be married with younger men. Polygamy was allowed, but rarely occurred (ibid.).

Marriage involved a bride price. Other ways to arrange marriage was to have mediators or envoys to ask for a bride. In historical times, when wealth was found, a bride price was usually 2-3 times greater than the dowry, considered as a form of hypogamy (ibid.). These recent practices could be influenced by Turkish and Russian contributions.

The kinship terminology was similar to the Evenk-Tungus; a fairly nondescript statement (ibid.). The basic kinship pattern was bilateral and classificatory.

Differentiation

Likely and potential Even totems were: fish (olro, olla), grayling, salmon, humped-back-salmon, taimen-salmon, whale, seal, snake, frog, bird (chûkachan), woodpecker, cuckoo, raven (kor), loon, duck, swan, hawk, eagle, bear, wolverine, badger, wolf (tittenge), dog, fox, lynx, animal, deer, reindeer (oroch), elk-moose, mountain-sheep, mouse, squirrel, hare (munrukan, munnukang), cannibal, tree, forest, taiga, fire, water, ice (deep), earth, rock or stone, water, sea (lamu), sky, moon, sun, etc.

As a part of the Tungus conundrum, it is not at all clear what scholars mean by 'clans' when writing of the Even. In the loose Russian usage a 'clan' could be anything from a family to a regional band or tribe (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 677). In 'official' documents 'there were 10 Uyagan, 7 Dolgan' and 'several Delyan clans' (op. cit.: 679). The Russians would appoint 'elders' to answer for each 'clan' (ibid.).

Before the Revolution, the Even supposedly had 'exogamous patrilineal clans' (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 677). In view of scholarly bias, this statement cannot be taken at face value. There might be matrilineal and bilateral tendencies as well.

Reportedly the Even had some of the same 'clan' names as among neighboring Evenk groups. Such names would have a varied background, from places, people, totems and unknown sources. Some noted Even 'clan' names were: (K = Koryak; M = Mongol; Y = Yukaghir) Dutkil-Dudki ('fearless') (Y)

Tugiasir (cf. Dudki)

Dolgan

Delyan

Dondakon

Doydal

Gizhiga-Chagachibair

Khorin (M)

Tyuges, Tyuge, Dyuk (ice)

Chagachibair (cf. Gizhiga) (K)

Tyugyasir (cf. Tjuges)

Lamu (sea)

Lamunkin
Menel (spot)
Oroch (reindeer)
Uyagan
etc.

Paradoxically the scholars at the same time would offer totemic names, seemingly unrelated: frog, seal, raven, eagle, wolf, fox, bear, wolverine, reindeer (oroch), hare, sea (lamu), ice (deep), forest, fire, etc.

They were trying to fit two classifications, totems and group names, into one by juxtaposing them. After all, if you put an apple next to an orange, nobody can see the difference.

Of the wider group names, Chagachibair and Dudki were descended from Koryak and Yukaghir, probably diminished groups of those people incorporated into Even communities.

A clan could be spread over large areas along with other clans. Unfortunately this could mean different things. If the 'clan' was a former regional group, this would mean that the group had been dispersed. If a totem clan was meant, this would refer to the presence of totems, such as wolf and hare, all over the territory, from which a local complement of totem clans can be selected and instituted.

One camp would include houses from several clans. This statement is equally ambiguous. In the Russian usage 'clans' could be remnants of regional groups or communities that had amalgamated. Yet the reference could mean a distribution of complementary totem clans, in which case a village would always have a plurality of clans, since this was how the totemic organization was installed. Some scholars noted that Even settlements contained 'different clans'. They immediately thought this meant that 'clan' relations had 'died out', since they pre-determined 'clans' to be locally distinct, while a combination actually was the original state, since a totemic system depends on a complement or series of local clans (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 679).

With some disappointment the scholars added that even in '17-th century sources' there was a 'decomposition of the blood-related clan', meaning that early historic settlements consisted of a series of clans, presumably totemic (ibid.). The term 'blood-related' is significant, since the scholars applied their own idea of descent on local societies; this would be one reason why descent from animals was unacceptable to Russian intellectuals. People with the wolf as a totem would be siblings, but not in the scholars' notion of 'blood' relations.

A tentative local totemic organization can be suggested: sky, fish, raven, bear, wolf, reindeer, mouse; seal, eagle, wolverine, fox, elk-moose, hare, and sea.

Totemic emblems would extend from local totem clans to wider districts. In this case we see that the tribe as a whole, Lamut, had its own totem, 'lamu' or sea, perhaps with a whale as its emblem.

Russian scholar, based on Marxist and state ideology, would impute a class structure to the Even. It should be emphasized that native society was basically egalitarian and community based. The scholars, by contrast, associated the combination of clans with differences in property and prestige. They cited distinctions such as 'leader' (bay), 'worker' (kelme) and

‘poor man’ (buuch, dzhogri) (Levin & Vasil’yev 1964: 679). Presumably these are Russian categories with native words added.

More sinister was the condition that the failed understanding of native society led to the repression of the natives and their way of life. Historical reindeer herding might lead to differences in herd sizes. Old traditions of shared work and mutual aid collided with Russian demands for produce, tax and debt payment. In Russian trade debts, rich nomads became intermediaries who gave goods to fellow nomads, in return for direct or deferred payment in skins. The Russians by such means created a formerly non-existent class system that they then criticized.

Politics

As noted, Even ‘elders’ tried to impose fines on hunters who refused to share their furs according to old customs, the hunters instead using them to pay taxes and trade with the Russians (Levin & Vasil’yev 1964: 679-680). This would indicate that there was a kind of clan council in Even villages or settlements, where each totem clans had its ‘elder’ or representative. It can further be assumed that the village council had a leadership in the form of chiefs. There might be a head chief and second chief representing the two sides of the settlement. Also there might be one or two assistant chiefs (kapral) (Levin & Vasil’yev 1964: 679).

Unfortunately Russian scholars would ignore the intricacies of native political systems completely. Instead they would refer to their own influence and impose it on the Even. Such as, the ‘clans’ were used as tools of governance by the tsarist administrators; in order to keep track of the various branches of a ‘clan’, serial numbers were given, e.g. 10 Uyagan, 7 Dolgan, etc. This supposedly led to administrative confusion, as when the Doydal clan was listed under another clan. Vis-à-vis the Russians each such ‘clan’ was represented by an ‘elder’ representative, preferably a wealthy member, who was responsible for collecting fur taxes. According to traditional laws the elders received gunpowder and distributed goods among local members. Various branches of the clan were controlled by assistant representatives (Levin & Vasil’yev 1964). This unclear picture may imply that totemic sub-groups still existed in each ‘clan’.

Russian officials saw coastal camps and nomadic groups as territorial, cooperative and tax entities, making them vulnerable to taxation and exploitation by merchants and local henchmen.

Religion

The ancient religion was said to be nature based, ‘animistic’, and shamanistic. Nature gods included the sun, moon, forest, fire, water and animals (Levin & Vasil’yev 1964: 681).

There must have been a yearly cycle of ceremonies and celebrations, but after native beliefs were repressed by Russian Christianization little is known (ibid.).

The bear cult was important. The hunter thanked the bear for coming to him and allowing itself to be killed. The bear was given away as *nimat*. The one who received the bear then organized a feast where the bear meat was eaten. The meat from the head and forepart was special and could only be boiled and eaten by men. The bones were buried on a scaffolding

and laid out in anatomical order. In some places, the skull was set up on a larch tree (chuki), as a very old custom (ibid.).

The sun was the object of a separate cult in which people sacrificed reindeer. The skin was hung on a log against a tree that on both sides was surrounded by young larch trees, symbols of the sun. The reindeer's flesh was consumed in a common feast where everyone was involved, and the legs were not crushed but laid whole on a tripod (ibid.).

It could be that the bear ceremony and the sun festivals formed part of the annual cycle, winter and summer respectively. The use of larch trees may have underscored the continuity in the cycle, as larch is the only conifer that loses its leaves in winter.

As local worship was repressed, the shaman became the mediator of people's existential fears and health problems. An animal sacrifice, such as of reindeer, was often made in connection with illness in the camp. Reportedly, Even shamanism was mixed with Christianity in the 1800s (ibid.).

Culture

Even material culture was rich, including skis (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 674). Native coats were richly decorated (op. cit.: 677).

The folklore included tales (nemkan), legends (teleng), songs (ike), riddles (nenuken), and proverbs (op. cit.: 681). Cosmological myths referred to the forces in nature, such as the sun and moon. Myths included animal stories, with characters such as: fish, seal, frog, cuckoo, raven, loon, eagle, bear, wolverine, wolf, fox, reindeer, mouse, hare, sun, etc. (op. cit.: 681-2). Other beings or phenomena included: cannibal, stone, moon, sun, etc. The stories resembled both Evenk and Koryak myths (ibid.). Epic stories were given a masculine interpretation by Russian scholars, of heroes fighting. The scholars hesitantly noted stories of heroic women who defeat men (op. cit.: 682). That women had a high standing in Even society was difficult to accept by the scholars.

Little is known of Even life courses. Some recorded male names were: Khabarov, Zybin, Valtukhin, etc. (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 680). Apparently many reported names were based on Russian exemplars; people may have been reluctant to reveal their native and potentially totemic names.

Life was accompanied by rituals. Reportedly, people were buried on scaffolding. A wooden raven figure (kor) was placed in the coffin. Under imposed Christianity, people were buried in the soil. On the cross, however, people carved out the figure of a bird, representing the soul. The possessions of the deceased were scattered at the tomb, such as bedding and pots. All the objects were broken into pieces before being scattered (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 681).

Summary

Russian scholars would describe Even society as one faced with Russification. After the Revolution, livelihoods were collectivized from 1929-30 (Levin & Vasil'yev 1964: 682f). When reindeer owners fled with their animals into the tundra, the Russians responded by attacking the nomads in their camps and killing them. Then collectives were set up as 'primary production units', a process declared complete from 1936 onwards. A standard

collective consisted of at least 30 houses. Based on the paranoid Russian divide-and-rule policy, people from different ethnic groups were mixed on the collectives, Even, Chukchi, Yakut, Yukaghir, etc., headed by Russian administrators. All activities, such as hunting and fishing, were collectivized. People were no longer to control their property or their lives. Although a written language was developed for Even, the teaching was mostly in Russian. Education and indoctrination were important instruments of Russification.

In spite of this Even society is still going strong, as indicated by 5000+ speakers; but the language is considered endangered, meaning that the number of speakers is declining. The population is fairly strong, with 21,000+ people listed in 2010. Hopefully the future holds a revitalization of Even culture, including its totemic heritage.

Evenk

Aka: Evenky, Evenki, Ivenky, Tungus, Tongus, Tungusy, Orochen – cf. Oroch, etc. The word Tungus also applies to other parts of the Tungusic language group.

In the 1800s, the Evenk had the most extensive territory of all the native peoples of Siberia, about 2,500,000+ km² (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1864: 620). From prehistoric times to the 1900s the territory would vary considerably, but it had always been great.

The vast territory hints at a population of 200,000+ in prehistoric or early historic times. Yet many areas may then have been occupied by people from other groups, Samoyedic, Kettic and Yukaghiric.

Population: ca. 1500: ca. 50,000+; 1650: ca. 60,000+; 1897: ca. 73,000-77,000, 28,000-31,500 reindeer nomads and 45,000-45,500 hunter-pastoralists; ca. 1920: ca. 50,000-60,000+; 1926: 38,804, not including pastoral farmers in the south; 1959: 25,000+, total around 50,000+, 14,000+ speakers; 1970: 25,000+, probably about 60,000, of which 14,000-24,000 speakers; 1980: 27,000+, 20,000+ speakers; 1990: 30,000-60,000 members, 12,000-18,000 speakers, of whom officially 25,000 lived in the Evenk region, which also had 20,000 Russians; 2010: 65,000, with 10,000+ speakers; of whom 35,000 in Russia, with 7,000+ speakers, and 30,000 in China, with 3000+ speakers.

Near-Mongol or Mongolized bands included: Mankova, Borzia, Barguzin, Zhilinda, Urulga, etc. (Shirokogoroff 1979: 109). Yakutized bands included: Dolgan (Dulgaan, Tya-Kisite), who numbered 1224 in 1897, and 6932 in 1989.

The Evenk have a special position in North Asia, as a widely spread group of people also known as Tungus. There are Evenk groups that have assimilated their language to other ethnic groups, Yakut and Russian. The term Tungus has been extended more widely to refer to the speakers of all Tungusic languages. So this is an expansive and vital native people. At the same time the number of Evenk speakers is rapidly diminishing, and is now <10,000 people. It is as if their very expansion and vitality have placed them at risk of being assimilated and joining the fate of other indigenous peoples. Only the future can show if the Evenk will perpetuate their rich culture and way of life.

The Evenk were divided into a number of named groups, and most of these can be considered local and regional groups, bands, tribal divisions, sub-tribes and tribes. Unfortunately early scholars had difficulty distinguishing between different levels of organization and sizes of group, referring to them all as ‘clans’ or ‘tribes’ without making a clear distinction between the terms. Diffusionism and Marxism combined to make the finer distinctions irrelevant.

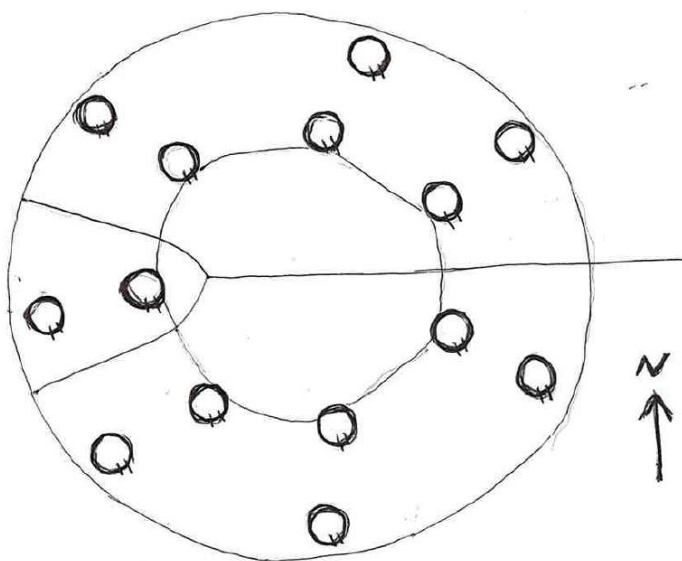
There is a need for a detailed account of each group distributed in the landscape, a distribution that can only be hinted at here.

Far to the north, between the Lena, Khatanga and Taymyr rivers, the Yakutized Dolgan had group names such as: Dolgan, Yenisey-Dolgan, Dolgan-Tungus, Dongot, Zhigan-Tungus, Edzhen, Boganyd-Tungus, Karyntuo, Lower Tundra Yakut, Betu, Chordu, and more (Vasilevich & Smoyak 1964).

In historic times, regional and local Evenk groups, vaguely identified as ‘clans’, could range from several dozen members with large herds of reindeer, to small families. Several local groups joined forces in elk-moose hunting, reindeer herding, or in defense. The Vanadyr tribe consisted of 6 local bands, misidentified as ‘clans’ by scholars.

A common form of local community adaptation would be to live in settlements or villages near a river surrounded by forests in summer, and move inland to higher forests or tundra to hunt in the winter. Each local area could support 60-300+ people.

The settlements occupying this vast territory were both scattered and varied. Historic summer villages had up to 10+ households. Prehistoric villages would be larger, with up to 30+ houses. Villages included ordinary houses, store houses, platforms (delken), and other structures (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 637-640).



Potential Tungus camp layout ca. 1750 (based on old drawings)

It was noted that in summer people sometimes came together in even larger groups, several camps together, for celebrations and nomadization. This could be called a composite village, perhaps a fusion of several reduced villages. In these larger camps the tents or houses were placed in a circle (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 644). The camp could be fortified with a palisade of poles (ibid.). This is suggestive of round villages found in many parts of the world, such as in North America. Such round villages are rarely noted in North Asia, but may have been common. As will be noted, round villages have been unearthed from the Jomon period in Japan (Imamura 1996).

Local communities, often misrepresented as ‘clans’, were associated with an area of use, a ‘river’ domain. A local community consisted of members from several totem clans who had common ownership of the local territory, hunting grounds, pastures and fish deposits. Each local community controlled its territory’s resources, which could be distributed among resident families or totem clans in a number of ways.

In some cases each family could be assigned their own hunting and fishing grounds on a rotational basis. Usually this would involve the combination of several families, on a phratry or moiety basis. The totem clan leaders would each spring agree on a new place for each

family or group to use. One implication is that there was a village council in which each totem clan or descent group was represented. That this was a community-based collective system is apparent, since game and fish was divided among all community residents.

Dolgan settlements had 10-12+ families. In prehistoric times local communities may easily have included 30+ houses.

Ecology

The wonderful vast territory across which the Evenk roamed embraces taiga, vast coniferous forests, tundra and some mountain stretches (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 622). The original homeland was one of forests, rivers, plains and mountains. The wildlife, as elsewhere in North Asia, is rich. People's ecological adaptation included hunting, fishing and gathering of vegetable food resources. Northern areas were closely related to an adaptation as reindeer herding nomads. In modern times the Evenk can be divided according to their adaptation as reindeer herding nomads in the north and horse and cattle pastoralists and farmers south and east of Baikal.

History

Native history should focus on the places where people lived in the past. Unfortunately Russian and other scholars, of a diffusionist bent, tend to envision native history in terms of migrations and displacements (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 622-3). They create a myth of migration.

One such myth is that the origins of the Tungus were probably in the south (ibid.). Supposedly they spread from the Baikal region 15,000 years ago. An early homeland was presumably in the upper and middle Amur drainage with adjacent areas. From here people moved towards the N to the end of the Okhotsk Sea, and from there to the Lena area in the period 1100-1600 AD. The spread up to the year 1600 was extensive, and took place partly at the expense of smaller people such as the Yukaghir, Ket and Enets.

Evenk have been in contact with other powerful groups such as the Mongols and Yakut since prehistoric times.

In a scholarly view of historical migrations, the intrusion of the Russian Cossacks into Siberia in the 1600s may have accelerated the Evenk migrations. These included an intercourse with larger ethnic groups in the area, Yakut, Russians and Chinese, both peaceful and conflict-ridden, which led to parts of the Evenk being assimilated by the larger groups (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 623-4).

Rather than viewing this as a continuous history of migrations, it can be claimed that everything changed with the Russian colonization across the region after 1630. The Russian Cossacks brought trade goods that could be useful, but they also brought diseases and war, and they were the forerunners of an increasingly dominant Russian settlement of the area.

The history of epidemics among the Evenk is poorly known. There seems to be a parallel to North American Indians, in which colonial and early modern diseases took a heavy toll on the population, diseases ranging from plague to measles and smallpox. One attempt to maintain

the population was to incorporate or adopt people from other ethnic groups, Yukaghir, Yakut, Ket and others (Vasilveich & Smolyak 1964: 623-5).

The Russian state introduced a 'native rule law' in 1822 in which Evenk nomads were given a 'clan administration' of elder family heads. Clan leaders were to collect taxes and act as judges. The Russians carried out a harsh trade rule until the Revolution, which led to widespread poverty and health problems among the nomads. Diseases included smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, rheumatism, colds, trachoma, etc. Epidemics could eradicate entire camps, and people fled into the woods when epidemics arose.

A smallpox epidemic decimated a part of the Samagir clan and other bands in the 1890s (Shirokogoroff 1979: 128). One band lost 22% of its people between 1869 and 1892 (*ibid.*: 127). This led to displacement. Also the effect of 'Russian colonization' led to the displacement of many bands; in fact nearly all of the Tungus would be affected by this invasion (Shirokogoroff 1979: 128). Clans such as Godyigir and Nyanyagir were destroyed by the colonizers' intervention (*ibid.*). Russification set in before 1890, and became increasingly harsh during the 20th century.

Economy

In their vast modern territory the Evenk pursued a number of livelihoods, ranging from hunting and fishing to reindeer nomadism, horse and cattle breeding and farming (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 620-1, 625). Anciently, hunting, fishing and gathering of plants provided people with ample food and livelihood.

Animals hunted included reindeer, geese, ptarmigan, and more. 'First place was taken by hunting hoofed animals' (*op. cit.*: 626). Such hunting could be done 'in groups or singly' (*ibid.*). Presumably the hunting territory of a village or local community was divided into smaller areas used by phratries or totem clans. An ancient hunting technique was to use spear-throwers. Deer calls were also used. Hunters carried backpacks (*talmi*) made with a flat board of wood (*op. cit.*: 628). The bow and arrow was used into the 1900s, and was gradually displaced by guns (*op. cit.*: 626). Highly significant was the use of 'long' hunting fences, that would be built on a community basis. These could be quite sophisticated, with pits and traps placed in gaps in the fences to catch elk-moose and other animals (*op. cit.*: 627).

Fishing was a significant supplement to native subsistence. In the summer, people fished in the seas and rivers. There also was ice fishing in the winter (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 631-3). The gathering of plant produce and other materials was extensive but is little known. Plant resources included berries, nuts, onions, roots and green shoots (*op. cit.*: 636-7).

The main camp in the summer was often located in the lowlands near a river, while the hunters dispersed into small groups on the plateau in winter to hunt deer, fur animals, etc.

Animal and fish caught in the old days was divided among everyone in a settlement. This would indicate an economic system based on reciprocity and redistribution. Hunting booty was shared among local residents, even in the 1900s. A hunter was required to share his prey with everyone in the camp, a custom called 'nimat'.

Bears were looked upon with particular respect and worship. When a bear was killed, a man from another clan had to skin it. Furs, however, were the property of the hunter. In historic

times the fur-trade would lead the hunter to keep the skins for himself as a means of tax payment and trade. Animal husbandry such as reindeer herding also would become modernized and state controlled. In historic times agriculture would gradually be adopted from the Russians, potatoes, cabbage and more. People also would become dependent on purchased goods, flour, sugar, tea – and vodka.

Historical Evenk reindeer husbandry was characterized by small herds, about 25 animals per family, which were kept in the forest and also milked. In spring and summer, the herds were merged into the mountains for calving and grazing, and then split up and herded into the forest in autumn and winter. In some areas there were large reindeer owners, but each household was usually a separate economic entity. The household owned household goods, the implement, hunting equipment, reindeer herds, etc. Individual members could have their own property, some animals, calves, etc. (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964).

As modernity approached, Evenk people engaged in all kinds of activities, horse and cattle ranching, agriculture, gold mining, blacksmithing and trade (ibid.). Exchange included reciprocity, barter, trading trips and redistribution of goods and food. With the Russian colonization market trade would be added to the forms of exchange (op. cit.: 624, 626).

Mutual aid and reciprocity were part of the old camp life, which in a Russian colonial context could appear as exploitation. Outsiders took advantage of local generosity. Trade with Russians and others caused the old organization of society to break down and change. People could no longer trust that mutual aid would be reciprocated. The Russians controlled people's settlement, taxes and economic activities such as hunting and reindeer husbandry. Russians would trade on credit, using local leaders and rich reindeer owners as intermediaries. Evenk livelihood to a large extent depended on staying out of the way of the Russians.

Kinship

Evenk house types would vary across time and territory (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 637). The summer house was made of bark or timber, while nomadic life required a tent (dyu) covered with leather, bark or cloth. The summer house (tchum) was spacious (op. cit.: 637-8). In some areas the permanent residence could be conical (golomo-uten) (op. cit.: 638).

In the house the housewife ruled the square closest to the door, family members lived on both sides of the hearth, while the area at the back of the house (malo) was sacred and reserved for guests (op. cit.: 637; Zgusta 1991: 169). It would seem that women had a strong position in the household.

Among the Dolgan, extended families had a chosen common housewife as head. This would strongly hint at a matrilineal or bilateral organization. Women had charge of the house. They 'fed' the fire, i.e., kept the fire of the house going. Russian scholars would programatically add that men were 'nonetheless' nominal heads of families.

Some sort of wooden house presumably was common in prehistoric times. Near the house stood a storehouse built on scaffolding. In modern times these were replaced with barns.

An average family or household held 4.3 people (Shirokogoroff 1979: 118). Households were part of extended families and descent groups.

Marriages were entered into through bride price (teri) and bride service, where the husband worked helping the in-laws for several years (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 647). Among the Western Evenk there was a tradition of exchanging women in marriage between families. Proposals were through messengers. A bride price was paid before the wedding. From courtship to wedding, it could go up to a year, while the dowry was prepared. The dowry was preferably as great as the bride price (ibid.). Ultimogeniture was practiced. Older children received part of the parental home's equipment and animals when they married, while the youngest son usually stayed with his parents and took over when they passed away. It was primarily sons who inherited when their father passed, keeping his possessions in the clan. At the same time women held authority 'in the family' (op. cit.: 646).

The kinship terminology was classificatory (op. cit.: 647). Mother (entyl) was more widely used than father (amtyl) to denote the parent generation (ibid.). Among the Dolgan, kin reckoned through women was considered closer than through men (Popov 1964a: 663). This further would indicate a matrilineal or matrilineal emphasis. Older brothers and younger brothers of father and mother were called 'akinmi', and could marry each other's widows (levirate). The wife of a younger brother was called 'kukinmi'.

Among the southern Evenk 'exogamy is a fundamental condition of marriage, ergo the propagation and continuation' of the clan (Shirokogoroff 1979: 123). This led the scholar to posit an earlier state of 'matrilineal' kinship in the tribe (ibid.). He then went on to state that 'the clan' was 'based upon the patrilineal system of kinship', as if matrilineality did not matter; an ethnocentric bias (ibid.).

Differentiation

The wealth of potential totems include: fish (ollo, olro, oxuson, sogd, nim), perch (keketch, nyeketchen, jeketchen), pike (gusen, sakanyin), burbot, salmon (limwa, sugdzhanna, kâta, ilkun, adzhin, dawa), trout (majma, hesimki), sturgeon, turtle, snake (kulin, kulinda, mejk, mîkî), lizard, worm (kulikan), monster, frog (erekî, kereki), insect (chimechi, chimgi), ant (irikta, silukte), spider (atakî), fly (gilke), butterfly (lerede), bird (deyi, degi, gaza, mân, üle), wing (asakî), egg (umukta), fowl, chicken (tumiti, tshiko), cock (pjetux), sparrow (hiwi, phiwi), jay, pigeon, woodpecker (kiretke, sendekûn), cuckoo (keku, kukti), grouse (kara, karakî), pheasant (umñêtî), ptarmigan (kara), crow (turaki, karak, ôlî), raven (ôlî), gull-seagull (umñêtî, khewu), loon (axani), duck (mudiki, gaza, nyiki), goldeneye-duck (mudiki), goose (nyungnyaki, niongnia), swan (bagdaski, gâg, gar), crane (karaf, kokoar), owl (ûmil, umil, deregdiwun, oksarang), falcon (gêki, ternga), hawk (hilakta, philakta), eagle (kîran, kiran, kusi), bear (xomotî, puren), claw (osikta, tshowori), wolverine (jantakî), badger (ojo), raccoon-dog (jandako), marten (karse), sable (nêkê, balini, seyep), otter (dzhukun, žukun), wolf (guske, gosika, jenggur, tölge), dog (nginakin, ninihin, inda), fox (sulakî, sulohi), tiger (tasaka), leopard (jarga), lynx (luku, nonno, dejexe), cat (koshka), animal (bejnge), hoof, tail (iryi), deer (segdzhen, segžen, sekserge, emugde), roe-deer (melkan), musk-deer (hoŋgo, phoŋga, nârôs), reindeer (oron, ojon, oyon, kanda), elk-moose (tô, tôki, môti), horse (murin, murchen), cow (matshâle), bull, ox (oyus), wild-goat, sheep (konyin), pig (puren, xomotî, sunyurin, tukalagda), beaver (targa), mouse (tepureken, tukalagda, singgere), marmot, mole (muktu), beaver, squirrel (ulukî), chipmunk (ulgukî), hare (tuksakî, munnukân), tree (irekte, giria, mo, momol, dayatshân), larch, pine (dzhagda, dyagda), fir (asjêkta), birch (tshalban), willow (sjketa, tungde), wood (momol), forest (môsa, momol), root (ngingte), grass (tshûka), flower (ngôdi), man (ile), fire (togo, toyo), spark (osin), water (mû), sea (lamu), lake (âmüt), river (birag), rain (tigde), snow (imanna), ice-frost (djuke, ingin), cloud (tuksu), stone (xise,

djul, jolo, žolo), sand (sirugi), earth-land (dupku, dunne, xere), dust-dirt (nâmne, nyangnya), coast (xuli), island (bur), mountain-hill (kadar, nyerbeke), sky-air (nyanyna, kej), wind (edin), smoke (sangnyan), thunder (agdi), star (ôsikta), moon (bjêga), night (dolbo), moon, sun (dilatsha, sigun), etc.

Of the 100+ potential totems, roughly 14 are fishes, reptiles, amphibians and insects, 26 are birds, 15 are carnivores, 16 are herbivores, and 34 are other entities or phenomena. This provides a generous span of totem selection.

Some better known totems include: fish, burbot-fish, bird, cuckoo, raven, loon, gull, duck, swan, crane, bear, otter, wolf, dog, hare, etc.

Scholars would include a programmatic statement, that in ancient times the Evenk had exogamous, patrilineal clans (khalan); not necessarily true (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 643-5). From here they would try to specify what a ‘clan’ entailed. Each ‘clan’ had its name, partly after an ancestor, such as Chapagir from Chapa, Kurkagir from Kurka, and others (op. cit.: 643). This might then not be a clan, but an extended family, descent group or some sort of linear or bilateral kin group. It might also be a village, band or district, named from a leader. One scholar thought families had ‘become separate’ since communities included different families, ‘large’ and ‘smaller’ (op. cit.: 645). Yet local communities always consisted of a series and complement of totem clans or ‘families’.

References to ‘clans’ (kala, omoy) need clarification. Old clan names can carry the suffix -gir or -git (Shirokogoroff 1979: 122). This is the plural of -gin that could mean ‘woman’. A modern form is ‘atirkan’, ‘old honorable woman’ (ibid.). It is presumed that -gir originally meant ‘women’; a strong indication of matriliney. Examples include Chilcha-gir, Kindi-gir and Sama-gir, Chechogir, Ochokogir, Turujagir, Godyigir, etc.

When presenting their views on ‘clans’, scholars would not distinguish between differences in structure or naming. They would mention that ‘clans’ could be named from ancestors, or by other names, Archemku, Bojaki and Poligus – and then immediately add that clans could be named after animals and plants, such as raven, loon, bear, horse (murchen), and so on. This should bring reflection that these were different kinds of units that would have to be examined in a historical context, but the scholars would not go there, in particular not concerning totemism.

The confused scholar would note that some clan names were modern names adopted from recent forefathers, such as Sinyirkochir named from Sinyirkon, who lived in the 1860s (Shirokogoroff 1979: 125). In effect these are modern family names, conforming to a Russian practice. If every grandfather has his own clan, then the number of clan names become limitless, and the native system of totemic clans will disappear. This is precisely what seems to have happened in historic times, between 1650 and today. To catch a glimpse of the original totemic clan system, it is necessary to go back to a conjectural period around 1250-1500 AD, as this book tries to do.

There is a tell-tale combination of ‘clans’ within ‘clans’: Chilchagir included Godyigir, which in turn included 4 other clans, and Turujagir with 3 other clans, which in total would include 10 clans within 1 clan. What once may have been an entire band was now, in Russian records, counted as one clan. For good measure another official clan was also called Chilchagir and also included Mukorir and Omdirir. And a ‘third’ clan, Kindyigir, included Lokshikagir

(Shirokogoroff 1979: 125). There is an analogy here to North America, where badly decimated Osage villages with roughly 14 clans were counted as one 'clan' on the reservation. There is a difference, however, in that new Tungus 'clans' appear as family names taken from the names of elders, fitting into official Russian registration policies. In order to arrive at a native condition, it would be necessary to trace each clan back in time to when the population was much greater and each community had a complement of local totem clans. Ideally this should refer to the period before 1500 AD.

To add to the confusion about 'clans' and similar types of units, scholars would not distinguished between different levels or scales of organization. A single family and a whole tribe, with levels in between, could all be referred to as a 'clan', in Russian 'rod', 'kind', often with untranslated names, while totems were left unspecified as to 'clans'. The word 'rod', though translated 'clan', would generally refer to an area that was under Russian taxation, a tax district; hence it had little to do with native totem clans (Jochelson 1905: 431). This means that a careful sorting and sifting of material has to be made in order to arrive at an understanding of the early Evenk social organization. Among the Dolgan were 4 'clan groups' called Dolgan, Dongot, Karyntuo and Edzhen. These 'clan groups' were said to be patrilinear, but with a bilateral tendency. This would indicate that these groups were not totem clans or descent groups in any basic sense of the concepts, but the historical descendants or remnants of much large groups, such as former bands, that would appear in reduced form and be considered related, though including unrelated families and hence also reckoned as bilateral. It would be necessary to reconstruct the earlier composition of each group, Dolgan, Dongot and so on, and try to identify separate families within each group to arrive at an earlier organization, most likely totemic.

A list of Evenk 'clans' compared to potential totem beings:

(B = Buryat; En = Even; M = Mongol; R = Russian)

(Betu) -> Bulto	pjetux (cock)
Boganyd, Boganid -> Bajagir	bagdaski (swan)
(Beldai -> Bultogir)	bur (island)
Bulduti (from Kindigir)	bur (island)
Bultogir, Bulduti (Bulto: bear's heart)	puren (bear)
Poligus	philakta (hawk)
Balikâgir	birag (river), philakta (hawk)
Borkochir -> Bultogir; Godyigir	birag (river)
Poligus -> Bultogir	philakta (hawk)
Beletski	balini (sable), philakta (hawk)
Buldyagir -> Bultogir	puren (bear, pig)
Bayagir, Bajagir (well-off; fox/rabbit)	bejnge (animal)
Bojaki (bajan = well off; fox/rabbit)	bjega (moon), phiwi (sparrow)
Pankagir	phonga (musk-deer), bejnge (animal)
Tepkôgir, Tèptogir	tepureken (mouse), dupku (land)
Dutkil-Dudki (fearless) (En)	tôki (elk-moose), tuksu (cloud), tasaka (tiger)
Tekâgir -> Diger	degi (bird), tuksaki (hare), tôki (elk-moose)
Diger, Digir	tigde (rain), degi (bird), tukalagda (mouse)
Dayadiyar (from Godyigir)	tigde (rain), degi, deyi (bird), togo (fire)
Dulâgat -> Dulugir	turaki (crow), targa (beaver), tölge (wolf), (owl)
Dulugir, Dolgan (En) (cradle; tree)	turaki (crow), targa (beaver), momol (tree)

Turu jagir (turu: sound of woodpecker)	kiretke (woodpecker), karaf, turuya (crane)
Dulivar -> Dulugir	deredigwun (owl), dilotsha (sun)
Dongot, Donka -> Dulgaan	tungde (willow), ternga (falcon)
Dunänkän -> Dunayir	ternga (falcon)
Dunayir, Dunair	dunne (earth)
Doydal, Dojdal -> Turujagir	deyi (bird), dejexe (lynx)
Davydkin	dawa (salmon)
Kaptukar, Kheveke (a hero)	kêta (salmon)
Gagdagir, Gagdair	gâg (swan), kokoar (crane), geki (falcon)
Kokogir (e.g., cuckoo)	keku (cuckoo), kokoar (crane)
Godyigir, Kuchugir -> Igachagir	kukti (cuckoo)
Kachiskij, Gutchiskij	gaza (duck), keketsh (perch), xise (stone)
Kishigir, Gizhiga-Chagachibair (En)	kusi (eagle), gusen (pike), guske (wolf), (cat)
Kaltagir, Kuldugir, Koldagir	kulikan (worm), kiretke (woodpecker)
Kurka, Kurkagir (name: Kurka) (M)	kereki (frog), gilke (fly), kulikan (worm)
Kargir	karak (crow), gar (swan), karaki (grouse)
Galdyôhir	karse (marten), karaf (crane)
Kilen, Kile	kiran (eagle)
Khalan (river) -> Karyntuo	kulin (snake)
Karyntuo, Karyntuok-Boganid (river)	kulinda (snake), kiran (eagle), munnukan (hare)
Kara-namet (B)	xere (earth)
Khamene, Xamene (from Chilchagir)	xomoti (bear, pig)
Konut (B)	xomoti (bear, pig)
Kindi-gir, Kindigir, Kindygir	konyin (sheep)
Kongeda (bark vessel; birch)	jenggur (wolf), konyin (sheep), tshalban (birch)
Govair, Gurair (from Managir)	khewu (gull), kej (sky-air)
Chapogir, Chapgir (name: Chapa)	tôki (elk-moose)
Chipchinut (B)	phiwi (sparrow), chimgi (insect)
Chukikagir, Chakagir	tshiko (chicken), dyukun (otter), djuke (ice)
Chagachibair -> Kishigir	seyep (sable), chakta (pine)
Chakchir -> Chukikagir	segdzhen (deer), dzhagda (pine)
Chokchogir, Tjugjasir (En)	sulaki (fox)
Chechogir, Chachagir (chacha: elk skin)	tôki (elk-moose)
Chalbanka	tshalban (birch)
Chordu -> Kaltagir	chol (stone)
Cholkogir, Chelkagir	sulaki (fox), xuli (coast)
Chilcha-gir, Chilchagir (messy, swollen)	puren, xomoti (bear)
Dyalanchen (dyalo: stone)	djul (stone)
Chemdal	chimechi (insect)
Chomokogir, Chimchagir	chimgi, chimechi (insect), jantaki (wolverine)
Dyankir	sendekûn (woodpecker), jandako (raccoon-dog)
Zhigan	sigun (sun), sakanyin (pike), sugzhana (salmon)
Sologon, Soloyon (upper)	sulaki (fox), sirugi (sand)
Sira-namet (B)	sirugi (sand), sulohi (fox)
Samagir, Sama-gir, Samagit (sing, mark)	sogd (fish)
Shemagir	seme (fat)
Singirkochir (from Turuayagir)	singgere (mouse), seyep (badger), (woodpecker)

Lakigir	degi (bird), hilakta (hawk)
Lokshikagir, Lakshikagir (talk; bird)	luku (lynx), uluki (squirrel)
Laligir -> Dulugir	tôki (elk-moose), lerede (butterfly)
Limâgir	limwa (salmon), lamu (sea)
Linagir	jenggur (wolf)
Moktagir -> Mukorir	muktu (mole), mudiki (duck), mugdi (earth)
Maakagir, Môkogir	mejk (snake)
Mukorir -> Chilchagir (egg-like; bird)	degi (bird)
Murdocher, Murdochir (murdo: stoop)	môti (elk-moose)
Malukcher, Malukchen (snake/owl)	koshka (cat); bear (puren); elk-moose (tô)
Malakul (from Maakgir)	umil (owl), melkan (roe-deer)
Murchen (mur: horse)	murin (horse)
Mamugir, Maimogir (momol: tree)	majma (trout), momol (forest)
Managir, Manegry (name: Mana)	mân (bird), imanna (snow), munnukan (hare)
Mongoli (M)	munnukan (hare), mû (water)
Nikagir -> Nyanyagir	nyiki (duck), néke (sable)
Nasikagir	ñaros (musk-deer)
Nirger, Nirgir (Dahur)	nginakin (dog), tshûka (grass)
Nironof	ñaros (musk-deer), nyerbeke (hill)
Nankanchir (from Turuayagir)	nim (fish), nyunyaki (goose), nonno (lynx)
Nyanyagir, Nanagir (skin, side)	nyunyaki (goose), njangnja (dirt), njanjna (sky)
Uilagir (name: Uila)	ulguki (squirrel)
Obgihal	oksarang (owl)
Odinkagir -> Odyinkagir	edin (wind), agdi (thunder), ataki (spider)
Ogdirir, Ogdiril -> Odyigir; Chilchagir	agdi (thunder)
Igachagir, Igichagir -> Godyigir	oksarang (owl), gaza (duck)
Uchatkan (from Managir)	axani (loon)
Ochokoger	sogd, oxuson (fish)
Odyigir (underneath, e.g., snake/fish)	sogd (fish), kulin (snake), ôsikta (star)
Achikachagir -> Chukikagir	sogd (fish), osikta (claw), asaki (wing)
Odyal	ûle (bird), oli (crow, raven), ojo (badger)
Odyinkagir, Edzhen, Zhigan	adzhin (salmon), ulguki (chipmunk)
Asiwagat (M)	asjekta (fir), osin (spark)
Archemku (R)	ilkun (salmon), hesimki (trout), uluki (squirrel)
Umukta (snake, egg)	umjêtî (pheasant), emugde (deer), mejk (snake)
Xamene	hesimki (trout), imanna (snow), âmut (lake)
Ankagir	jenggur (wolf), hongo (musk-deer), inda (dog)
Uyagan (En)	ojo (badger), oyon (reindeer), (turtle)
etc.	

Note that there is no certainty about the synonymy in names. The comparison is based on suggested sound similarities.

It seems highly likely that some 'clan' names are the names of phratries and moieties. Others are supposed to be geographical names, e.g., band names that point to a place of origin and recent displacement. Distinguishing which is which is difficult, since translations are not provided. Somehow related to phratries and moieties may be names such as: Boltogir,

Kindigir (perhaps a moiety), Chilchagir (perhaps a moiety – not exogamous), Samagir (a possible phratry), Ogdilir, etc. Grouped together was Turujagir, Godyigir, Khamene, Chilchagir, Mukorir, Ogdilir etc. Another grouping had Borkochir, Godyigir, Murdocher, etc. Yet another group is Kindigir, Lokshikagir, etc.

Named groups or ‘clans’ could be large and scattered throughout the region, where various branches became non-exogamous. Presumably these were diminished and scattered regional bands that never were truly exogamous, consisting of different descent groups. The only exogamy would be limited to kinship restrictions, that it was difficult to find a spouse locally.

In order to compare so-called ‘clan’ names with totems, the author’s intention was to compare the names with native words for animals and natural phenomena. Unfortunately the Tungusic dictionaries that exist are difficult to use, since they are not intended for general readers, but were compilations of scholars’ research, who no doubt expected the languages to disappear. By the year 2000 Russian scholars would express surprise when they returned to places such as the lower Amur and found that languages were still spoken. Their task was never to restore or revitalize languages, but to record the relics of doomed cultures. This makes the comparison of native words a daunting task. Fortunately there are some data bases in English, but collating the material is challenging.

To arrive at a representation of a local totem clan distribution, two lists had to be made, one of the scholars ‘clan’ names in Tungus, a second of potential totems in English. The intention was to find potential totems in both lists. One problem is that neither of the 2 lists are complete, so the comparison is not only tentative but partial.

The following is a list of totem animals tentatively related to Tungus ‘clans’:

fish (ollo, olro, sogd, nim)	Samagir, Odyigir, Ochokoger, Achikagir, etc.
perch (keketch)	Kachiskiy
pike (gusen, sakanyin)	Kishigir, Zhigan
salmon (limwa, sugdzhanna, adzhin)	Kaptuker, Zhigan, Limâgir, Odyinkagir, Edzhen
trout (majma, hesimki)	Maimogir, Xamene, Archemku
snake (kulin, kulinda, mejk)	Karyntuo, Maakagir, Odyigir, Umukta
worm (kulikan)	Kurkagir
frog (erekî, kereki)	Kurkagir
insect (chimgi)	Chemdal, Chimchagir
spider (ataki)	Odinkagir
butterfly (lerede)	Laligir
bird (deyi, degi, gaza, mân)	Lakigir, Dojdal, Diger, Mukorir, Managir, etc.
sparrow (phiwi)	Bojaki, Chipchinut
woodpecker (kiretke, sendekûn)	Turujagir, Dyankir
cuckoo (keku, kukti)	Kokogir, Godyigir
chicken (tumiti, tshiko)	Chukikagir, Chakagir
cock (pjetux)	Betu
grouse (karaki)	Kargir
pheasant (umjêti)	Umukta
crow, raven (turaki, karak, ôli)	Dulugir, Kargir, Odyal
loon (axani)	Uchatkan
gull (khewu)	Govair
duck (mudiki, gaza, nyiki)	Kachiskij, Nikagir, Moktagir, Igachagir
goose (nyungnyaki, niongnia)	Nyanyagir, Nankanchir

swan (bagdaski, gâg, gar)	Boganyd, Gagdagir, Kargir
crane (karaf, kokoar)	Gagdagir, Kokogir
owl (ûmil, umil, deregdiwun, oksarang)	Dulivar, Malakul, Igachkagir, Obgihal, etc.
falcon (gêki, ternga)	Dunankan, Dulugir
hawk (hilakta, philakta)	Balikagir, Poligus, Lakigir
eagle (kîran, kiran, kusi)	Karyntuo, Kishigir, Kilen
bear (xomotî, puren)	Bultogir, Xamene, Chilchagir, Malukcher
wolverine (jantaki)	Chomkogir, Dyankir
badger (ojo)	Uyagan, Odyal
raccoon-dog (jandako)	Dyankir
marten (karse)	Galdyohir
sable (nêkê, balini, seÿep)	Beletski, Chagachibair, Nikagir
otter (dyukun)	Chukikagir
wolf (guske, jenggur, tölge)	Linagir, Ankagir, Kurka, Kongeda, Dulägat
dog (nginakin, ninihin, inda)	Nirger, Ankagir
fox (sulakî)	Cholkogir, Chokchogir, Soloyon
tiger (tasaka)	Dutkil-Dudki
lynx (luku, nonno, dejexe)	Dojdal, Lokshikagir
cat (koshka)	Malukcher, Gizhiga
animal (bejnge)	Bajagir
deer (segdzhen, sekserge, emugde)	Chakchir, Umukta
roe-deer (melkan)	Malukchen, Malakul
reindeer (oyon)	Uyagan
musk-deer (honggo, phongga, narôs)	Pankagir, Nasikagir, Nironof, Ankagir
elk-moose (tô, tôki, môti)	Dudki, Tekagir, Chachagir, Laligir, Murdo, etc.
horse (murin)	Murchen
sheep (konyin)	Kindi-gir, Kongeda
pig (puren)	Buldyagir
beaver (targa)	Dulägat, Dolgan
mouse (tepureken, tukalagda, singgere)	Tepkogir, Singirkochir
mole (muktu)	Moktagir
squirrel (ulukî)	Lokshikagir, Uilagir, Archemku
chipmunk (ulgukî)	Uilagir, Odyinkagir
hare (tuksakî, munnukân)	Tekagir, Karyntuo, Mongoli, Manegry
tree (irekte, momol, dayatshân)	Duligir, Dolgan
forest (momol)	Mamugir
pine (dzhagda, dyagda)	Chakchir
fir (asjêkta)	Asiwagat, Archemku
birch (tshalban)	Kongeda, Chalbanka
willow (tungde)	Dongot
grass (tshûka)	Nirger
fire (togo)	Dayadiyar
water (mû)	Murdocher, Mongoli
sea (lamu)	Limagir
river (birag)	Balikagir
rain (tigde)	Dayadiyar
snow (imanna)	Managir
ice (dyuke)	Chukikagir
stone (xise, djul)	Dyalanchen
earth-land (dupku, dunne, xere)	Tepkogir, Dunagir, Moktagir, Nyanyagir, etc.

island (bur)	Bulduti
sky-air (nyanyna, kej)	Nyanyagir
wind (udin)	Odinkagir
thunder (agdi)	Ogdirir, Odinkagir
moon (bjêga)	Bajagir
sun (dilatsha, sigun)	Dulivar, Zhigan
etc.	

Again it will be noted that there is no precise correspondence between totems and ‘clan’ names. This is to be expected, because people would not want to reveal their totems openly. The public names will be modified so as to hint at the totemic emblem, without announcing it clearly. People made imaginative names that would hint at their totemic and social identity. So names such as Boganyd, Gagdagir and Kargir might indicate a swan totem. And fairly nondescript names such as Moktagir could hint at various totems, earth, water, mole, elk-moose or duck. All identifications remain tentative.

In this revised list of possible totems there are 10 fishes etc. in 18+ ‘clans’, 20 birds in 28+ ‘clans’, 13 carnivores in 20+ ‘clans’, 15 herbivores in 25+ ‘clans’, and 22 non-animal phenomena in 27+ ‘clans’. This would allow for a wide selection of family marks in villages exceeding 300 people.

Then there are the clan stories. The Evenk would establish similar relations with animals as they do with humans. If a raven sees a man with weapons, it makes sounds and flies in the direction of game, leading the hunter to his prey, who reciprocates by leaving some meat for the raven (Shirokogoroff 1979: 44). The close relationship between the Evenk and wild animals would not be respected by outsiders such as Russians and Chinese, who went on to displace both the natives and the wildlife (op. cit.: 45).

Totemism entailed many misunderstandings in meetings with modern people. In one juxtaposition Russians were told that the Tungus were ‘wild people’ with no ‘clans’, in Russian ‘rod’; while in Tungus people would say that they always had ‘clans’ (khala), though ‘nowadays’ the ‘clan organization is declining’ (Shirokogoroff 1979: 124). This would imply that the Russian and Tungus words meant something different; the reference to ‘wild’ people may in a distorted way indicate a totemic affiliation.

Phratries

Based on what little information can be found about Evenk totemism in the sources, it can be assumed that totem clans were divided into groups of similar animals in what is here called phratries. The similarity, e.g., of birds, would lead the clans in a phratry to be considered ‘sister’ clans, and hence exogamic.

Unfortunately Russian scholar and other researchers would not distinguish clearly between totem clans, phratries and moieties, or indeed between local communities and ‘clans’. They would all be considered one of a kind, covered by the Russian word ‘rod’, ‘kind’. What led the scholars to throw them all in one sack was the practice of exogamy, that was frowned upon by the scholars for personal and ideological reasons.

There is a reference to ‘clans’ possessing a ‘river’, which may refer to the whole community or to a phratry-like division, each phratry hunting at the head of river branches (Vasilevich &

Smolyak 1964: 643). Members of 'several clans organized reindeer or elk hunts on a collective basis'; the catch was divided 'equally' among the members (ibid.).

This meant that the intricacies of the totemic organization among the Evenk, and in fact totemism in general, was brushed aside as a topic by the scholars. Such basic observations as grouping together similar animals were not made. Totemic relations were not favored by the scholars. The native people for their part were reluctant to talk about totemism, both because of the researchers' disdain, and because this was highly personal and socially significant information that should not be divulged to strangers. The hurdle that the scholars had to cross was to acknowledge – and respect – totemic beliefs, and they all stumbled and fell.

So it is simply stated here that the Evenk had 4-5 phratries, one with fishes and other scaly animals or insects, another with birds, a third with carnivores, a fourth with plant-eaters, and a fifth with other phenomena. The groupings would vary locally, in one place carnivores and herbivores could be one phratry of mammals, in other places they would be separate. Equally important was the division of phratries into two sides, in a pair of animals one would belong to either side of the village, here called a moiety. This was a crucial principle, since it created a complementary series of clans and crossing relations that unified the two sides of a local community, represented by its moieties.

Moieties

Turning to the latter subject, moieties were a little better known than phratries by Russian and other researchers (Levin & Potapov 1964: 9). This was because the principle is very clear, a local community is divided into two equal sides. Yet the deeper analysis of this kind of organization is missing.

Historical groupings, though the information is very scarce, indicate a division into two moieties represented by 'woodpecker' and 'hawk' totems. These in turn were divided into phratries represented by totems such as 'fish', 'duck', 'bear', and 'thunder'. In an 'upper' moiety would be: Samagir (fish), Turujagir (woodpecker), Godyigir-Mukorir (duck-bird), Khamene-Chilchagir (bear), and Ogdirir (thunder); a couple of totem clans would be defunct. In a 'lower' moiety would be: Borkochir (hawk), Godyigir (duck), Lokshikagir (lynx), Murdocher (elk-moose), Kindigir (sheep-deer), etc.; here also 2-3 totems would be lost. In the 'fish' phratry only one totem was left, while the 'bird' or 'duck' phratry had 'woodpecker', 'duck', and 'hawk', and the 'animal' or 'bear' phratry had 'bear', 'lynx', 'elk-moose', and 'sheep' or 'deer'. All these are tentative interpretations based on minimal information.

One author mentions moieties, without understanding what they entail. He thinks there are 2 moieties because there must be 2 people in a marriage! (Shirokogoroff 1979: 368). This is like saying that there is only one group of people from which it is possible to find a Wi. If there were 3+ groups people would get confused and could not marry.

The general misunderstanding is based on Marxist myths about 'group marriage'. The idea was that if people are grouped into exogamous units, then marriage is allowed for everyone across group lines. The complexity of native societies is completely ignored.

It should be noted that moieties are not primarily concerned with marriage. As has been indicated several times there would be a tendency for the whole local community to be exogamous, since people in both moieties were considered to be related. Moieties had to do

with the wider organization of the community. This would start with the living space, the distribution of houses in the village, and move on to the distribution of resources and political decisions. Often there would be two chiefs, a first and second chief, each linked to a moiety. This would create a social dynamic in which people had to agree across moiety lines. The division of phratries between moieties helped bridge this division, and people could generally agree on resource use and activities in a united council.

Beyond this the moieties were social groupings. They would typically operate in events where people were divided into two teams, such as as games and sports, but also funerals, trade, and, as noted, politics.

Communities, villages and bands

In historical records so-called 'clans' could be earlier bands that had been diminished or scattered. These supposedly were patrilineal, but with a bilateral appearance. For good measure scholars would add that after the Russian colonization the patrilineal ties were further weakened. Presumably these groups were never patrilineal units. The actual descent in a family or descent group could be patrilineal, matrilineal or bilateral. The available material prevents a detailed analysis of descent practices.

There are hints of a symmetrical clan structure in local communities. In one case, 'the Vanadyr tribe consisted of 6 clans' (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 645). For added confusion, the Vanadyr tribe was also called a 'clan' (ibid.). 'Joint possession of the territory by all the members of the community belonging to different clans became the rule' (ibid.). This is an almost perfect description of a local totemic organization, and the 'different clans' had always been 'the rule'.

There are indications that an Evenk village or community may have had roughly 12-14 clans, but this number could vary. The prevalence of totemic references leads on to a possible grouping of totem clans found in each Evenk village in prehistoric times: fish, snake, bird, eagle, bear, badger, wolf, lynx, deer, elk-moose, mouse, hare, tree, and rock. Conceivably there could be more birds: fish, snake, woodpecker, duck, swan, eagle, bear, badger, wolf, lynx, elk-moose, hare, sky, and earth. An alternative potential clan totems list could be: fish, snake (kulin, kulinda), raven, eagle, bear, badger, tiger, leopard, reindeer, deer, mouse, hare, etc.

All animals are supposed to be found in pairs, fish and snake, bird and eagle, bear and badger, and so on, where one animal is on one side of the village, and its partner on the other side. In this way two moieties can be envisioned, each containing a full complement of the 6-7 pairs, and distinguished by the alternate location of 'upper'-'lower', 'north'-'south', or some other distinction.

Based on what little is known about the moiety structure of Evenk communities, the following distribution of totem clans in a village will here be suggested: (upstream or N): sky or thunder, fish, woodpecker, bear, wolf or dog, deer, squirrel; (downstream or S): snake or frog, hawk, badger or sable, fox or lynx, elk-moose, hare, and earth. This is a tentative suggestion, one of several possible, aiming to show the general form of a local totemic organization.

As will be noted, each local community or village had control of its neighboring territory, usually identified with a 'river' name and domain. The use of local resources would be

divided among the resident totem clans, phratries and moieties in various ways, depending on the prevalence of the resource and by communal assent. 'For purposes of hunting, fishing and joint pasturing of reindeer, temporary associations were created among members of the community' (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 645). In biased fashion the scholars call this a 'contradiction', that people had both 'communal ownership' of land and 'private ownership' of goods, as if there could be only one kind of property (ibid.). Such ideological statements seem silly, but their ominous consequence was that the minority would lose its resources to the colonizers in modern times.

Village exogamy, misidentified as 'clan' exogamy, was the custom that lasted the longest after Russian rule was introduced (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 647). This would indicate that exogamy was practiced on many organizational level, from the totem clan and phratry up to the moiety and village. Of course villages were not fully exogamous, nor were they 'clans'. It was simply that due to marriage restrictions based on classificatory kinship, stating that people were not to marry kin, it was difficult to find a spouse locally, hence people were encouraged to find marriage partners from other communities. For all kinds of reasons this was a sensible arrangement, genetically, resource-wise, and in terms of external alliances.

Totemism would anciently extend to all levels of Tungus society. Larger units, such as bands, would have totemic names, misidentified as 'clan' names, e.g., Momol (tree). Whether the Evenki had a national totem is not clear; possibly this was a land creature such as elk-moose or bear.

Politics

In prehistoric times the Evenk and related groups had political systems of considerable extent. Their existence depended on a fairly stable local existence with representative chiefs. In a village with many totemic clans and a village-based distribution of resources, keeping the peace would be paramount. A clan 'is always ashamed' of 'having members who violate regulations, and it does its best to avoid being spoken badly of' (Shirokogoroff 1979: 197).

Leadership structures among the Evenk extended from local communities up to the tribal level. Each local community was led by 2-3 chiefs, first, second and assistant chiefs, referred to as 'princelings' (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 625). The first chief might also be called a peace leader, the second chief and adjutants being seen as 'military chiefs' (nëramni, nichen, soning) (op. cit.: 644-5). One term for a hereditary leader or 'elder' reportedly was 'daruga' (Czaplicka 1914: 51). In addition there was a village council of 'elders' (sagdagul), comprising the heads of extended households or totem clans, and who could be both women and men (op. cit.: 643-4). The meetings or councils were regularly held in connection with celebrations, where important topics were debated. The topics included the adoption of members, peacemaking, alliances, warfare, feuds, punishment, negotiations of disputes, law judgments, trade issues, external contacts, and more (op. cit.: 644).

Russian scholars would emphasize native militance, to match their own society's aggression. Claims were made that legends portrayed the evenk as heroic and militant. This was supposed to match the vast area over which they were scattered. Yet keeping peace would be far more important, though people at the same time were prepared for conflicts.

Local communities and bands were a part of larger Evenk tribes, which were large territorial entities. Each tribe usually held sway over a wide river valley. The Vanadyr tribe in the

Khatanga Valley included 6 regional bands, each led by elders or local chiefs, with a shared war leader or general chief as a tribal leader. Bands in a tribe were bound together by territorial interests, marriage, and common defense.

Russian scholars would turn peace negotiations into causes of war, such as disputes over women, vengeance, disputes about hunting territories, and theft. Needless to say mostly this would be settled by negotiations and councils, not warfare. Small war parties could occasionally operate. Such a party consisted of a leader, his warriors, a few old men giving advice, and a shaman reading omens. Tactics included attacking camps, killing the men and capturing women and children. Captured women could be married into the group. Fights could be settled by a duel between leading warriors, minimizing bloodshed. Such war parties presumably were limited events, that possibly increased in historic times due to Russian colonization, introduced diseases, loss of land and the dispersal of bands hit by epidemics (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964). Among similar developments in North America were the so-called 'Iroquois Wars', caused by European traders demanding furs, and a population reduced by epidemics.

The scholars would hesitantly add that tribal conflicts could be settled by peace negotiations. Elders, old women and men, served as messengers, while shamans helped set up negotiations. Peace was settled with a ransom for prisoners and a ceremonial peace settlement.

The missing element in this organization is the tribal chief. It seems clear that the Evenk were a chiefdom, led by chiefs from the local level up to the tribe as a whole, possibly embracing the whole Evenk nation. When no leaders are known, this is due to harsh Russian policies, based on divide-and-rule, and allowing no leaders who were not under Russian control. The Evenk nation would then stand without a leader.

Most scholars would add notes on the later situation, when Russian colonization would make a native political organization impossible. Trade and payment by furs created debt and inequality. The Russians installed selected clan heads as leaders. These would act as henchmen for the colonists, rather than as community representatives (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964).

Religion

The belief system of the Evenk and related peoples was quite extensive (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 647-9). 'The Tungus pray to the spirits of heaven' (buya) (Shirokogoroff 1979: 314). Divine entities included the sun, moon, sky, earth, thunder and many other phenomena (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 647). The creator, Ekseri, may have been the sun (op. cit.: 648). There were a good and evil spirit, two brothers, a belief found in many cultures (ibid.). The Evenk also shared the Earth Diver myth, where the world is flooded and god recreates the earth from dirt brought up by a diving animal, in this case a goldeneye duck (ibid.). Sacred animals, sometimes called 'totemistic', included raven, bear, reindeer, etc.

Among the Dolgan, sacred spots (saytaan) served as reference points in a vast and inhospitable environment (Popov 1964a: 665). This would be similar to sacrificial spots found among the Sami in the mountains, by the coast and on the tundra. They would provide solace to weary travelers.

The annual cycle of community celebrations is not well known. Apparently the ceremonial cycle followed the seasons for hunting, fishing and gathering.

One ceremony apparently was in autumn when the hunters set off to hunt squirrels and other game (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 628). In winter there were separate bear rituals, that included peculiar skinning methods and the burial of bones and skulls in 'a special structure' (chuki) (op. cit.: 649). 'The bear had as many as 50 allegorical names', possibly totemic names (ibid.).

Spring and summer celebrations would be associated with fishing and gathering, but also with political matters, councils, and matters of 'war and peace' (op. cit.: 644). Unfortunately the description of such grand celebrations and councils is missing; they would be superseded by forced Christianization and Russian control (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 647). During celebrations and at other times there were games (iken, evin) such as wrestling, running, jumping, archery, fencing, games of chance, etc. (op. cit.: 652).

Dancing was generally a round or 'ring dance' with singing and rhythmic foot-stomping (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 651). 'Dancing in a ring was very common among all Tungus groups' (Shirokogoroff 1979: 325). 'It was usually danced in the evening' (op. cit.: 651). Some dance songs were 'ye-khor-ye' or 'ekhe-gey-ye' (ibid.: 652). By 1928 this practice had been destroyed by Russian colonizers and missionaries (Shirokogoroff 1979: 325). The scholar lamely adds that the Tungus 'should not be considered a primitive and backward people', for 'similar dances' had 'lately developed greatly' in 'European-American' societies – the Charleston foxtrot (ibid.). He did not realize that considering people as 'primitive' was an aspect of colonial racism, found all over the north.

In historic times the shaman provided some comfort in the face of colonial oppression (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 624, 647). Each local community had its shaman, apparently since prehistoric times. The shaman mediated contact with the spiritual world and protected people from evil spirits. The shamans emphasized healing rites and countering the modern scourge of diseases. One scholar mentions shamans along with animism, but manages not to mention any animal spirits (Shirokogoroff 1979: 364). Spririt helpers (seven, kheven) would assist the shaman, pointing back to ancient beliefs (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 648). Nominally, people became Russian Orthodox Christians. Some Evenk became Christians, but retained a faith in shamans. In the south, Evenk had contact with Lamaism and Buddhism.

Culture

The richness of Evenk culture defies description. For transportation people used boats, sleds and skis, later also horses. Coats were adorned with a coat-tail behind. It could be used for sitting when the ground was cold. Women wore the Tungus breast cloth or apron, that was richly decorated (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 641). Unfortunately the designs are not described; suggested figures include: bird, bear, reindeer, elk-moose, tree, etc.

Art forms included bone and wood carvings, textile decorations, bead work and more. Designs included leaf and flower patterns, as well as figurative and stylized animals, representing fish, bird, animal, deer, reindeer, elk-moose, dog, tree, flower, etc. Colors chosen were red, white, black and blue (op. cit.: 652).

The rich Evenk mythology was composite and varied. Mention was made of: songs (iker, davlavur), myths (nimngakan, nimngakavun), animal stories, epic tales (nenevkel, tagivkal), riddles, ordinary stories (ulguril), etc. (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 649). Several stories concerned a trickster called Ivul or Ivyl, perhaps a pun on Ivan; though possibly based on bear imagery (op. cit.: 650). When sent to find ribs for a boat, Ivul kills his mother and brings her ribs. Myths included creation accounts, cosmology, tales of spirits, monsters and cannibals, as well as shaman accounts; 'chulugdy, evetyl, iletyl, deptygir' (ibid.).

Of particular interest here are animal tales and clan origin stories. Unfortunately the scholars dismiss these as 'tales for children', not wishing to relate to animal protagonists (ibid.). 'The tales used to be told in the dark' (ibid.). Characters and elements in the stories included: fish, monster, bird, bear, dog, fox, animal, reindeer, elk-moose, horse, hare, man, waterfall, earth, etc. Unfortunately little of this is available to the general reader.

Animal myths were about the origin of various traits of animals, birds and fish, as well as the transformation of animals into humans and vice versa. Many stories were about the fox (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 650). In one myth, a girl had a bear cub and a baby boy, in which the boy killed the bear when he grew up (op. cit.: 649). This may be a transformed totem clan origin story.

Tales, in particular animal tales, were surrounded by taboos and could only be given in winter 'in the dark'. This closely parallels traditions elsewhere in the north. Among the Shawnee totem tales can only be told in winter before the frogs start croaking. One reason may be to protect the integrity of clans and their totems, before all the totem groups are gathered in the village in summer. People telling stories about each other could cause some discord. More prosaically, winter is the period when people gather around the fire and stories are a nice way to spend the long nights.

Beyond the animal stories there were stories about heroes (soning) and other accounts. Scholars liked to compare stories about everyday life and challenges to Russian folktales, 'babushka'-talk.

Contact with Yakutic, Russian and Chinese culture created major changes in the way of life of the Evenks, from cooking and dress to language and beliefs. This would have an impact also on the ancient totemic organization, that was gradually weakened.

Evenk life courses had many rituals. The Evenki naming tradition is not well known. At birth, a woman was placed in a separate hut or tent. Child mortality was traditionally high, not helped by external colonization. Youth had sexual freedom until they married. 'There was strict division of labor between men and women. The men procured food and looked after the reindeer herds, while everything else was entrusted to the women' (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964: 646). That reality was much more complicated seems obvious. Funeral rituals were prominent life events. People were buried, and the grave was covered with logs and earth. Separate rites associated with burials included sending away the soul of the deceased. The souls of the dead (omi) live in the upper world, heaven.

Summary

The Evenk and related peoples shared the experience of Russian dominance. Russian scholars would note that the Evenk are a minority in Siberia, with Yakut and Russians as the majority.

Just before the Revolution the Russian economy failed, leading to a lack of trade and hardship among the natives. The Evenk were next recruited to participate in the Revolutionary War. In return the Soviet state took control of the Evenk national region in 1930 and enforced tough collectivization and repression. This led to arbitrary and shifting conditions for Evenk communities. The first boarding school was opened in 1927. The Evenk language was written down around 1929, but the state enforced education in Russian (Vasilevich & Smolyak 1964). The cultural repression included bans on shamanism, clan exogamy, and other 'un-Russian' practices. The conflict unfolds between Evenks and Russians on the local level; the latter do not want to make room for minority cultures. There also is an ongoing struggle over resources. Russians would claim hunting areas, money is drunk away in the towns, alcoholism is widespread, and children lose their language in boarding schools. In response, most Evenks try to stay away from the towns, moving into the forests. Privatization would become a hot topic after Glasnost, as people hoped to secure a livelihood.

These were region-wide developments. Among the Dolgan there was forced collectivization from 1930 onwards. Compulsory schooling in Russian was introduced. The most prominent measure of assimilation and dominance was language use. But the state impact would be felt in every area of life in the 21st century.

In 1990 there was a democratic move in Russia to offer some rights to the native peoples. At the same time the dominant Russian settlers were hostile to the natives. Russian women resented 'living with nomads' (Lappalainen 1993). It is highly significant that more first-language Evenki speakers are reported in China than in the much more spacious Russia. While Russian authorities listed 35,000 Evenki and 7,580 speakers in 2002, China reported 30,500 ethnic members, 19,000 fluent Evenki speakers, and 3,000 monolinguals. The people have a higher chance to practice their culture south of the border.

Precisely how Evenk culture can be revived is not known at this point. A first approach may be to dive into and publicize the rich cultural traditions of the people, of which totemism has been a part. The topic of clans and phratries, 'khala' and 'dokha', remains open to research.

Negidal

Aka: Elelkem-beje, Elkan-beyenin, 'local people' (own name), Ngegida, 'coastal people', Negda, Niyegda, Neydal, Nizhdal, Negedan, Nigidatter, etc. The name Ngegida may refer to the ordinary location of a village, 'shore-side'.

The native area is mainly on the River Amgun, a western tributary of the lower Amur River. Formerly people also occupied adjacent valleys to the south and north. The territory would exceed 30,000 km², with room for 8000+ people. People would extend their residence as far as the Okhotsk Sea. The tribe went to the sea to hunt.

Population estimates include: 1250 AD: 6,000+; 1500 AD: ca. 3,000; 1890: ca. 1,000; 1926: 426+; 1980: ca. 500-520, 150-220 speakers; 1989: 622, <200 speakers.

The people were divided into Upper aka Upriver and Lower aka Downriver Negidals in the Amgun drainage (Paproth 1976: 54). Place names include: Dal'dzha, Tsin, Samnya, Myl' or Mul, Ust'-Amgun, Im, etc; and Upriver: Veli, Bolin, Talikit, etc.; scattered settlements were at Tyr, Kal'ga, Kal'ma, Sorgol, Mochula, Yali, Udyl', etc.; and after 1930 there were: collectives at Krasniy-Yar (from Im), Dyl'ma, Dal'dzha, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 685; Smoliak 1970: 288-9).

Russian scholars would emphasize that Negidals lived scattered during much of the year, thus being able to portray a small, scattered, and seemingly insignificant population (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 686). This might be used to justify the unjustifiable Russian colonization. In the winter hunting camps people lived partly in tents and partly in huts made of bark.

Yet the Negidal had their permanent sites of residence and local territorial units. In summer the residences were oblong bark-covered wooden houses with gable roofs. These were replaced with Russian log houses in the 1800s (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 686). Historical summer settlements held 30-60+ inhabitants.

A collection of gable roofed houses constituted the summer village. The size of a Negidal village is not well known, but it can be assumed that in prehistory and early historic times it was fairly large, with up to 30+ houses. One can envisage the distribution of 1-2+ rows of houses on a terrace near a river. Nearby each house was a storehouse on scaffolding with four carrying posts. A storage unit could be a plank shed with a pointed roof. Part of the year people lived in smaller fishing and hunting camps, which would be the prominent type of settlement in historic times, with 1-3+ families 'in scattered groups' (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 686).

There actually was a rich variety of dwellings and houses. These included a tipi tent as among the Evenk, oval hunting huts of bark, plank huts covered with soil for use in winter, and durable winter houses with heated benches (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 688).

Ecology

The Amgun valley was a rich environment, which unfortunately led Russian settlers to take over most of the area after 1850. The traditional Negidal adaptation was one of hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering. In later historic time people engaged in agriculture (Ivanov et al. 687).

Historically, most Negidal lived in five major settlements along the Amgun River, called Ust-Amgun, Daldzha, Samnya, Yakhsa and Im. Some natives lived higher up at Veli, Bolin, Talikit, and other places.

History

Scholars would imagine that the Negidal originally was a group of Evenk who mixed with other people, Nivkh, Nanai and Ulchi, and thereby got their own territory on the Amgun and in nearby areas. Yet their residence may be ancient. Their culture combined features of both the Evenk and the peoples of the lower Amur. There also were ancient borrowings from Chinese culture.

The first known contact with Russians was with the Cossacks in 1636. The Cossacks established two camps on the Amgun River in 1682. In the 1800s, Russian colonists made settlements between the various Negidal communities on the Amgun, and the natives were crowded together in ever smaller areas (Ivanov et al. 1964b).

The five major and several minor settlements where Negidal lived were uprooted under Russian rule. The Revolution fared hard with the Negidal people, only half survived. Under communism, the tribe was resettled into three collectives on the Amgun River, called Krasniy-Yar, Dylma and Daldzha (ibid.). Russification gained momentum after 1917. Today the language is practically extinct.

Economy

The people subsisted from hunting, fishing and gathering (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 687). Fishing was an important food source, people caught salmon, sturgeon and carp fish. The main fishing season was from April to September. In the summer, enclosures, weirs and nets were used to catch salmon. Other equipment included fish spears and fishing rods. The main game animals included deer, elk-moose, duck, goose, and grouse. At the Okhotsk Sea, seabirds, fish, and seal were caught until the 1920s. A few reindeer were kept as riding animals and for transport (ibid.). The gathering of food stuff included berries, nuts, garlic, onion, roots, tubers, edible grass, green shoots, etc. (op. cit.: 688).

In historic times, fur animals such as sable and marten were caught to raise money and pay taxes. After the arrival of the Russians, the sable became extinct (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 688). Some Negidal were intermediaries in the trade between people on the Amur and the Evenk. The Burukan 'clan' exchanged silk and other Chinese products for Russian gunpowder and lead, which were later sold to the Manchus along the Amur. In recent times all such economic activities and trade would be under Russian overlordship (op. cit.: 689).

Kinship

The Negidal residential units consisted of households, extended families, and local descent groups, here called totem clans. Little is known about the composition of households, though they can be assumed to have been of the multigenerational and extended type.

The marital customs were said to be the same as those of the Evenk, with bride price and bride service. A man could fetch a wife from his mother's clan, a (classificatory) MoBrDa

(Ivanov et al. 1964b: 690). Then the bride price was half of what it would be at other marriages (ibid.). Presumably marriage restrictions and rules of exogamy were weakened as the population fell to a fraction of what it used to be. When an oBr died, the widow married a yBr, a custom called levirate. The age difference at marriage was often large, such as a 20-year-old woman taking a 6-year-old boy for her 'husband', or old men marrying young girls (ibid.). Presumably this also was due to population loss. Polygamy was rare.

The kinship terminology was of the Tungus type, i.e., the 'use of one term for people of different generations'; not a clear statement (ibid.). The basic kinship system was bilateral.

Differentiation

Potential Negidal totems were: fish, carp, sturgeon, salmon, snake, seal, bird, grouse, duck, goose, eagle, bear, badger, sable, wolf, dog, fox, deer, elk-moose, beaver, squirrel, hare, tree, birch, fire, water, earth, sun, etc.

Scholars assumed that in ancient times the Negidal had exogamous patrilineal clans (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 689). Reportedly 12 Tungusic 'clans' were said to live on the Amgun River in 1682 (op. cit.: 687). Whether these were descent groups or reduced villages is not clear. The number tantalizingly hints at a totemic reckoning of clans.

The totemic base is further hinted at in accounts of clan traditions. It was said that, as among other Tungus, each clan had a mythical ancestor, a shared fire, an ancestral spirits, clan prayers before the hunting season, and other customs indicating its unity and persistence.

The largest clan was Nyasikhagil, followed by Burukan, Dunkan or 'hill people', Khatkhil, Uda, and others. Several groups, Burukan, Dunkan, and Khakhil, today are assimilated or identified with the Ulchi people. The clan system disintegrated in the 1800s.

Clans (khala, xala) would include the 12 'clans' noted on Amgun River in 1682. The 'clan' system was largely destroyed by the Russian colonization during 1800-1899.

Negidal 'clan' names include:

Burukan (market place)

Tapkal, Topkal

Toromkan

Duncan, Tonkal ('hill')

Toyemkon

Khakhil, Khatkil

Khodyo, Xödyö (Nanai)

Kishigir

Khamajil, Xamajil (cf. Samagir)

Chokchajil, Chuckhagir

Chomokhojil, Chumykagil

Samagir -> Khamajil

Laligir, Lakigir

Moktajil

Maimogir

Nasikhajil, Nyasikhagil, Neachikagil

Jukairi, Yukagir

Udan
Odinkagir
Oldakhankan (cf. Odinkagir)
Ayumkan, Ajunkan
etc.

As noted, the reference to 12 'clans' in 1682 may have been a symbolic number (Smoliak 1970: 273-4). This would contrast with 18+ 'clan' names being known. It was claimed that 'among the Negidal, almost every clan reckons its origin from some animal, such as the tiger, toad, or bear' (Shternberg 1999: 172).

Clans were grouped into larger groups called 'dokha', either phratries or moieties (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 689). These larger groups were also referred to as 'clan associations'. The terms 'khala' and 'dokha' will be further discussed later on. At a guess a local organization of Negidal totem clans could be: fish, snake, goose, hawk, bear, ferret, dog, fox, deer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, sky, and earth.

Politics

Due to long-term external influences and colonization, the independent structure of the Negidal polity is not known. It can be assumed that there were village chiefs and second chiefs, leading up to alliances and chieftaincy on the band and tribal levels. Each village presumably had a council of clan elders and chiefs who would settle disputes and ensure peace.

Religion

Due to forced Christianization the native religion is not well known. It can be assumed that people worshipped nature gods, such as the sun and mother earth. Apparently there was an annual cycle of ceremonies in each local community. Each 'clan' or local group had its bear festival. Presumably this was a part of the annual cycle. Special food for the Bear Festival was a kind of fish paste or jelly (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 688). In historic times the shaman may have played a role, but little information is available on native religion as a whole.

Culture

The rich material culture of the Negidal included a variety of house types. Other artefacts were skis, sleds, birch bark canoes, flat-bottomed boats, cradles, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964b).

The food consisted of fresh and dried fish, roe, meat, and some vegetables and berries. Among the berries and fruits gathered were blueberries, blackberries, cherries, honeysuckle. More general vegetable foods were grass seeds, roots, tubers, onions, green shoots, and more. A mixture of berries, salmon roe and cod liver oil was eaten in winter. A jelly was made from fish skin, cod liver oil, garlic and onions, and eaten in large quantities during the Bear Festival. Food traditions would change through Chinese and Russian influences, with new foodstuffs such as millet, rice, tea, sugar, flour for pancakes, and more. The Russians brought vodka, that would impact native society with alcoholism and social disruption (op. cit.: 688-9).

Clothing included skin garments with a split in the middle, sealskin and fishskin clothing, and other attire (op. cit.: 689). There were Chinese influences showed in clothing, such as robes and blouses. Women wore 'Evenk-type chestpieces with ornamentation' (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 689). Unfortunately there is not much information on the decoration of clothing, whether it has animal figures or similar.

Figurative and non-figurative art forms are known, such as silk embroidery, birch bark figures, and clothing decorations (op. cit.: 690). The motifs are not indicated. Nor is the oral folklore well known.

Summary

Russian scholars would note the domination of the Amgun valley by Russian colonists and the destruction of Negidal culture. Some Negidal were assimilated to the Ulchi culture, but mainly on the Amgun River it was the Russians who dominated. After 1870 the Russian villages occupied the best spots, wildlife such as the sable was destroyed, and the colonists destroyed the Negidal control of the area and their access to resources. The Revolution put an end to Negidal hunting and fishing at the Okhotsk Sea. The Negidal were forced to move to collective farms under Russian control (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 685, 690). Russian paranoia, such as fear of 'Japanese' influence, led to harsh repression of the natives. 'The Negidals now live in houses of Russian type, and their daily life is very similar to that' of Russians (op. cit.: 690). A strict Russification was carried out.

The contrast to the prehistoric and early historic world, when the Negidal lived in peaceful villages along the Amgun River, is thought-provoking. Needless to say the Negidal never posed a threat to Russia. Yet their rights were not protected, and what little they had was taken from them. Through traditions such as totemism it is possible to look backwards to the peaceful origins of Negidal life, and hopefully forward to a revitalization as well.

Ulchi

Aka: Ulch, Ulcha, Ul'chi, Olcha, Hoche, Hol-Chih, Olch, Lchi, Olchis, Ulych, Ultsi, Oltsa, Wuchi, Mangun, Nani (own name) – cf. Nanai, etc.

Historically the Ulchi occupied a territory of more than 30,000 km². This was expanding in historical times, so a prehistoric territory may be closer to 15,000+ km². This would be ample for a premodern population of 6000+ people.

The Ulchi lived on both sides of the lower Amur River, below the Nanai, and above the Nivkh. The land is one of forests and great and small rivers, rich in wildlife and fish.

Some population estimates are: ca. 1250 AD: 4,000-6,000+; 1800: ca. 2000-3000; 1890: ca. 1,500; 1926: 758-1000+; 1970: 2448; 1980: ca. 2,600, with 500-1,000 speakers; 1989: 3233, with ca. 500 speakers; 2010: 2,800+, 150 speakers.

Ulchi village and settlement names (in 'phonemic' order): (in 'pointed' brackets (<>): local 'clans')

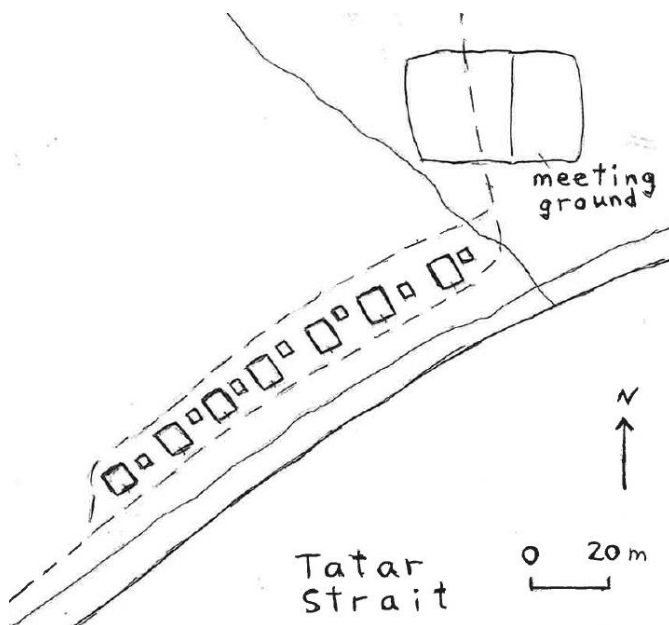
Peda <Galdancha, Mulinka, Munin, Moudancha, etc.>, Pakhta-Koymy <Cherul, etc.>, Pakhta-Mariinska <Beldy, Bral, Kilor, Konincha, Avali, etc.>, Pashiya <Beldy, etc.>, Puli-Bogorodskogo <Tumali, Samar, etc.>, Bolba <Bral, Kilor, Dyarincha, Senkian, Moudancha, Avali, etc.>, Pulsa <Dechuli, Duvan, etc.>, Silchuru <Dungke, Khatkhil, Khodzher, Dyatala, etc.>, Pulya <Galdancha, Samandin, Lonki, Mulinka, Moudancha, etc.>, Bulava (100+ houses (1950)) <Dechuli, Duvan, Udzhai, Olchi, Orosugbu, etc.>, Dudi <Rosugbu, Agdumsal/ Ygdymseli, Aldusal, Aimka, etc.>, Dokhta <Rosugbu/ Orosugbu, etc.>, Daldaki <Orosugbu/ Rosugbu, etc.>, (Ferma -> Novaya-Ferma), Dyren <Dechuli, Kuisali, etc.>, Tencha-Bogorodskoye <Khodzher, etc.>, Daydeu <Kilor, Gail, Avali, etc.>, Tavravni <Orosugbu, etc.>, Kada-Osero <Beldy, Duval, Kilor, Gail, Senkian, Moudancha, Udzyal, Olchi, Avali, etc.>, Kada-Savinskogo <Bayausal, etc.>, Kadaki <Khatkhil, Khodzher, etc.>, Kadushka <Baldu, etc.>, Koton <Dechuli, etc.>, Kudyum <Rosugbu, etc.>, Kazima/ Kadyama <Khodzher, etc.>, Karpachi <Punadi, Konincha, Senkian, etc.>, Kholdzhukta-da <Beldy, Tumali, etc.>, Kolchom (50+ houses (1950)) <Dungke, Khatkhil, Dyatala, Udy, Ygdymseli, Ayumkan, etc.>, Khalan <Pilduncha, Tumali, Gubatu, Gail, Sulaki, Avali, etc.>, Klinovka, Dzholoko/ Joloko <Pilduncha, etc.>, Kenzha <Udy, etc.>, Koyma <Bayausal, Dyatala, Cherul, Sigdeli, etc.>, (Khyvyndani -> Novaya-Ferma), Dzholmaki/ Jolmaki <Pilduncha, Aimka, etc.>, Suchu <Pilduncha, etc.>, Sulanksi <Dungke, Dyatala, etc.>, Mulka <Dechuli, Duvan, Kholgoy, Udzyal, etc.>, Monokodava <Kholgoy, Orosugbu, etc.>, Mongol <Baldu, Dyaksul, Dyarincha, Sigdeli, Samar, Senkian, etc.>, Mai <Beldy, Baldu, Duvan, Dyaksul, Angin, etc.>, Novaya-Ferma <Punadi, Dechuli, Gail, Cherul, Sulaki, Samandin, Munin, Moudancha, etc.>, Uidali/ Undali <Galdancha, Samandin, Moudancha, etc.>, Udan <Dechuli, Tumali, Kholgoy, Kuysali, Sulaki, Ygdymseli, Udzyal, etc.>, Ukhta <Khodzher, Gileseli-Dekal, Cherul, Ulcha-khala, etc.>, Angan <Beldy, Dechuli, Tumali, Kilor, Gail, Avali, etc.>, Van <Konincha, Avali, etc.>, Vesse <Ygdymseli/ Agdumsal, etc.>, Verkhnyaya-Gavany <Dyarincha, Samandin, Lonki, Moudancha, Munin, Ydysi/ Odesin, Avali, etc.>, Auri <Beldy, Rosugbu/ Orosugbu, Angin, etc.>, etc.

After the Revolution, Ulchi were settled at Auri, Bulava, the collectives 'Five Year Plan' (with Russians), 'Salmon-Trout' and 'Lenin', Koyma, Kolchom, and Ukhta. Recently the Ulchi have been settled in about 10 villages, most of them along the Amur from Kalinovka upstream to Ukhta downstream (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 721). People also lived in a wider area,

from Nikolaevsk and the mouth of the Amur up to Timmermanovka. Away from the main flood are Kolchom at Lake Udyl, and other settlements.

Russian scholars liked to portray a small and scattered population, to justify colonization. It was claimed that in the 19th century the villages or settlements were 'tiny', with 2-5+ houses (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 724). Yet in earlier times the settlements must have been several times larger. By 1650 AD villages were described as 'large' with permanent houses and store houses (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 768). Around 1250 AD a village might hold 30+ houses and 150+ people. In early history there were about 40 villages (ibid.). Prehistorically this might hint at 6,000+ people.

Houses were of several kinds, including permanent houses, tents (aunza), temporary huts used during fishing, hunting, and more. More permanent summer and winter houses (khagdu) were oblong, with gable-roofs made of thin vertical logs cut into four corner logs. A village can be envisaged as consisting of 1-2+ rows of houses parallel to a river or lake, each of the 6-14+ totem clans occupying a separate and similar position in the row or rows.



Conceptual early historic Ulchi-Oroch village N of De Kastri

Ecology

The natural area included the impressive lower flood of the Amur and its surroundings of vast forests, lakes, hill and mountains. The area provided ample resources in the form of fish, game, plant foods, and mineral and vegetable materials. The wealth of animals included tigers, bears, and musk-deer (Ivanov et al. 1964g). This would form the daily world of the Ulchi, and also the symbolic elements for a totemic social organization and nature-based beliefs and knowledge.

History

The poorly known Ulchi history is based on prehistoric speculation and linguistic similarities. Linguistically they are closely related to the Nanai people. Along with other Tungusic peoples, the Ulchi have populated the Amur valley since time immemorial. The Ulchi culture shows protracted contact with the Nivkh.

The 'Wuchi' or Ulchi are mentioned in Chinese sources as early as 500 AD, indicating a long history of southern contacts. Yet sources are scarce, and it can be assumed that the Ulchi possessed their territory more or less undisturbed until at least 1250 AD. There would be a number of known and unknown upheavals across the period 1000-1800 AD, including epidemics, external raiding and colonization attempts, trade intervention, and similar.

After the Treaty of Nerchinsk between Russia and China in 1689, China tried to subjugate the peoples along the Amur River. Local chiefs or leaders (*gasyanda*) and elders (*khalada*) were singled out among the villagers, and the elders were tasked with making tax lists and levying taxes on all men over 15. The tax was one sable per year. However, the tax lists were never made, and men only paid taxes when they came to trade with Chinese or Manchu merchants. The tax was seen by the natives as a trading levy. In exchange for furs, they received food products and necessary goods from China.

The Russian colonization began with the military ship *Baikal* arriving at the mouth of the Amur in 1849, where the post *Nikolayevsky* was built in 1850. A few years later, Russian peasants began to settle along the lower Amur, on the territory of the Ulchi (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 722). Within a short time, the Ulchi lost both access to important hunting territories and control of fishing in the river.

Conditions later would be even harsher. There would be forced collectivization after 1925, and Russians would take control of all areas where Ulchi lived (*op. cit.*: 732-3). The native population would remain fairly stable, though recently declining, but native speakers are virtually gone, and the exercise of Ulchi culture remains restrained.

Economy

Fishing was the main source of livelihood among the Ulchi. The amazing Amur River was teeming with fish, salmon, sturgeon, carp and more. People developed advanced fishing methods, such as flotation nets, fixed nets, throwing nets, hook and line, rods, ruses, weirs, fish spears, torch-light fishing, ice fishing, and more (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 722).

Especially important was the salmon season, which determined the amount of fish supplies the family had available in winter. Mostly this took the form of dried salmon aka *yukola* (*ibid.*). The women participated in the fishing by rowing, throwing nets, and securing the catch. Fish, whether dried, raw, frozen, smoked, boiled or fried, constituted the main diet. The remains were used to feed the dogs, of which there were many, used as guard dog, for transportation and in hunting (*op. cit.*: 722-4).

Hunting was secondary to fishing and included game such as deer, elk-moose and bears, as well as fur animals such as squirrels, sable, marten, otters, and more (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 722). The meat was distributed among all the inhabitants of a settlement or camp (*op. cit.*: 729). Hunting took place on the snow and ice, or by boats in the summer when the animals came to drink. Bears were hunted with spears, especially in winter when they were chased out of the den and killed while still drowsy (*op. cit.*: 722).

The basic work of gathering plant foods and vegetable resources is mostly left out in scholarly accounts. There was a wealth of resources that could be gathered. There are notes that wild plants were an important dietary supplement, including berries, nuts, roots, leek, grasses,

lichen, ferns and green shoots (op. cit.: 723). By 1900 people also engaged in simple agriculture (op. cit.: 731).

To raise money, people went to Sakhalin on sable hunts. Groups of 6-8 men went over in the spring and returned home in the fall. Ulchi also went to the Tatar Strait to catch seals in teams of 7-8 men in the spring. Boats were up to 10 m long with 5-6 pairs of oars (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 723). Based on such information it can be assumed that teams, at least for hunting, were phratry based and included members from 4-10 clans, with 5-10 hunters and other members assisting with processing meat and skins, and other tasks.

A full range of products were manufactured. Fiber thread was produced from nettles using a spindle (porpu). Household and personal belongings include foodstuff such as dried fish and meat, and artefacts such as houses, tools, boats, nets, and more (ibid.).

The Ulchi must have been part of an extensive trade network, reaching as far as China in the south and the Okhotsk Sea to the north. Trade routes ran from Manchuria to the Tatar Strait and Sakhalin. According to reports Ulchi people held a 'prestigious position' in the 'Santan trade', trade between the Amur, Sakhalin and countries to the south (Zgusta 2015: 151). In historic times hunters would keep the furs they obtained for use in trade and to pay taxes. Under Russian rule taxes and trade became more a matter of intervention, and people would gradually lose control of their resources after 1850, as Russian colonization set in (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 722).

Russian scholars would claim that an increasing economic differentiation developed as trade relations grew, but this was a fairly programmatic ideological statement. People were thought to be divided into those with a lot of private property, the common people, and poor hunters, based on a crude Marxist model. It was thought that the rich natives took to dominating trade alongside foreign traders (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 723, 729-30). This could be turned around to say that as external colonists took control they would use local people as henchmen, who in return were granted privileges and property.

Kinship

In the old villages households formed part of local totem clans. Such a clan could equally be described as a local descent group and a kind of extended family, crossing several generations. As noted the Ulchi occupied a variety of houses, based on the season and if the residence was in a permanent location or a temporary camp for hunting, fishing or gathering.

A village house reportedly had two hearths, one fire for the forest god and one for the water god (duente tava, temu tava). From the hearths there could be pipe passages to the plank beds that ran along three of the walls – a type of heating that came from Manchuria (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 724-5). Houses also had a separate feeding platform for dogs. There was a special post where the bear stood tied during the bear festival. In sophisticated fashion the walls could have windows of fish skin, later with glass. Light was supplied by blubber lamps. It is said that the plank beds were covered with mats, and were intended for several families in each house (op. cit.: 725). This would depend on the size of each house, and could refer to extended families. Though it is not impossible that a houses had 2 household head representing 2 descent groups, a form of dual clan known from Native American villages, often distinguished by colors, e.g., 'white' and 'black' wolf.

A special type of summer house (*genga*) stood along the winter or permanent house (*khagdu*), was long and erected on stilts, and had a raised storehouse at the end. Sometimes people built a separate storehouse or barn (*taktu*), as well as a storage rack for dried fish (*peule*). Other buildings included temporary tents (*aunza*, *namu-aunzany*) (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 725).

Scholars would emphasize a gender-based division of labor, but most tasks could be performed by either gender. Women supposedly stood for much household work, such as making clothing, weaving baskets, sewing, embroidery, and many other tasks. Men made objects from wood, bone and fibres, including boxes, bone carvings, fishing nets, ropes, ironwork and more (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 723). The women had a fairly high status in the family, although they had to work a lot (op. cit.: 730).

Marriage customs included bride price (*kalym*) and bride service. There also was a tradition of dowry (*olbú*), belongings and valuables that were assigned to a woman at marriage. The dowry included fur clothing, coat, hat, necklace, trousers, shirt, other clothing, kettle, plates, jewelry, earrings, valuables, etc. This dowry a woman received from her Fa and family members. A man worked for the wife's parents for 1-3+ years. In Russian views, when the service was completed the wife could be taken to the groom's home. Probably the couple could live either in the wife's or husband's village, a mix of patri- and matrilocality. Supposedly, when a wife moved to her husband's residence, there were wrestling matches between her and her Hu's clans, indicating bilateral residence options. Reportedly the Ulchi practiced polygamy, where rich Ulchi men had several wives (Ivanov et al. 1964b: 730). How extensive this practice was is not clear, but it would be part of the Russian justification for repression.

There were many words for marriage restrictions, sororate and levirate (*nökítí*); unfortunately much of this is not well studied. Exogamy extended from local totem clans to phratries, moieties and even to the local community as whole (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 730).

Scholars claimed there was an age-old rule for men to marry a cross cousin, the daughter of the MoBr or FaSi (Ivanov et al. 1964: 730). Yet this may be based on a misunderstanding of kin terms. It was also based on the scholars' own ideology and bias, a myth of 'group marriage' that never existed. Supposedly, 'from generation to generation, two clans exchanged wives' (ibid.). No doubt this was a mistake. This might simply mean that two clans 'exchanged' wives across two successive generations – which would always be the case; spouses and their parents are in different generations. One reason why long-term marriage exchange is unlikely, is because it would diminish the solidarity of the different local clans. If clans A and B marry, then clans C, D and so on would be left out. If cross cousin marriage and direct marriage exchange at one time was practiced, this may be a result of disastrous population losses in historic times. Alternately the reference may be to classificatory cross cousins, e.g., MoMoMoBrSoSoDa, or other distant kin, where the scholar has misunderstood the kin term as descriptive.

The basic assumption, one that Russian scholars and officials resisted, is that Ulchi society practiced extensive exogamy. Not only totem clans, but phratries and moieties could be seen as exogamous, and for practical purposes so could villages as well, since the classificatory use of kin terms would make it difficult to find a local spouse.

The Ulchi supposedly had the same kinship terminology as other Tungusic people. 'Gusi' supposedly denoted MoBr and FaSi, though possibly these were modified in-law terms due to

depopulation (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 730). The MoBr had a special responsibility for training the SiSo in childhood.

Differentiation and social organization

Russian scholars found it difficult to discuss totemism, such as among the Ulchi. This was because they had a pre-determined, received view of totems, seeing them as the symbols of large corporate groups vaguely called 'clans'. This was based on a modern biased view of social organization. That totem clans were small and a part of a series or complement of local totem clans, with limited incorporation below the village or community level, was impossible to understand. Each village was a corporation that controlled a local territory and its resources, with the complement of totem clans appearing as subordinate units, represented in the village council. Totem clans were local descent groups without specific resources and with little independence from other clans in the local community. Such a group would be impossible to understand for a modern scholar who would link named groups to property and corporation. A totemic organization is different; each named group is part of a larger whole, a local settlement or community.

Scholars were curious about what held a 'clan' together or unified it. They immediately assumed that the unity was material and property-based. Such suggested material elements would include: land, hunting territory, a 'common ancestor', 'clan name', 'common fire', products and 'catch', solidarity, leadership, 'court', 'vendetta', inheritance, 'clan spirits', 'bear festivals', etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 727). The scholars would quickly add that the 'clans' had 'disintegrated' before 1850 (ibid.). That 'clans' actually were defined in relation to other clans, as represented by totems, and not by material resources, was something the scholars could not imagine.

The researchers would automatically claim that Ulchi 'clans' were patrilinear, but this is not at all certain (ibid.). The claim could simply be a bias against matrilinear organizations. Reference would be made to 30+ 'clans' in ancient times; these could be matrilinear or bilateral, and they could be composite groups such as regional bands or wider communities.

As in the case of the Evenk, Nanai, Oroch and other Tungus peoples, there is a conundrum of names and totems that renders it hard to clarify the topic of 'clans' and related groups.

As in other cases, the totemic universe will here be presented first, followed by so-called 'clan' names, with an attempted synthesis at the end.

Some likely (and unlikely) totems are: fish (sugbu, sugdata, cf. rosugbu), carp (chik), catfish, sturgeon (kirpu, adyan), white-fish (various: laqa, sawu, sargadi, qoru, sakanu), salmon (dawa, nyimu, kēta, yažin, silč'in, čimada), taimen-salmon, seal (daungari, baqada), whale (kalim), starfish, snake (mui, weren, žabdan), worm (qulan), frog (xereke), crawfish (čēni), cockroach (tarakan), toad-frog (khere, xere), bird (degde, deur), small-bird (čičon, sindi), cuckoo (keko), woodpecker (pilaqta, kurekte), woodcock-grouse (various: qar, pinu, nakun, olgoma), crow (toraki), raven (oli), aquatic-bird (gasa), duck (gasa, ganguli, tarmi, gilenetu), goose (nyuņnya, qilala), swan (kuku), gull (qewara, kilaa), owl (gaaran, sindi, uqsaran), eagle-owl (uqsaran), hawk (gexō), eagle (gusi), bear (nepu, xužuli, monoko), wolverine (oņdo), badger (oyo), raccoon-dog (yandaqu), marten (kaks, kars), weasel (solig), ermine-sable (žielin, sēpe), otter (žuk, dyuk), wolf (tulk, jeņgul, ngele), dog (iņda, prysku), fox (suli), tiger (tas), lynx (lok), animal (buyu, buyun), deer (mulk), reindeer (oron, olcha, cf. orosugbu), roe-

deer (gulu), musk-deer (pongol), elk-moose (tô, tanga), horse, sheep, boar (nekte), bat (xele), hedgehog (puntulche), beaver (targa), marmot-gopher-mole (mukt), squirrel (xolo, log), ground-squirrel, chipmunk (ulži), hare-rabbit (toqsa, mund, gulmakhund), tree (mô), fir (xasta), root (teg), seaweed (qalžuqta), man (naj), water (voysi, voysi-nyaali), rain (tewks), snow (simana, simata, imana), earth (nâ), stone-rock-flint (žolo), sky (ezeke-uyli), thunder (agdi), sun (siun), etc.

A tentative comparison of Ulchi ‘clan’ names and ‘totems’ can be attempted:

(A = Ainu; E = Evenk; N = Nivkh; Ne = Negidal; O = Oroch)

Bobyk/ Bobul	baqada (seal)
Beldy (cf. Pilduncha, Valdju)	nepu (bear)
Pilda (cf. Beldy)	pilakta (woodpecker)
Pilduncha (Pilda + Udi)	pilakta (woodpecker), puntulche (hedgehog)
Baldyu (cf. Beldy)	pilakta (woodpecker)
Prysku (dog)	prysku (dog), pilakta (woodpecker)
Bural, Bral	pilakta (woodpecker)
Punadi, Punadinka	pinu (grouse), pongol (musk-deer)
Bayausali, Bajausali, Bayauseli	beyu (animal, deer)
Deduska (cf. Dechuli; cf. Hodyer)	deur (bird), toqsa (hare)
Datala (cf. Dyatala)	deur (bird)
Dekal (cf. Gilemseli)	degde (bird), toqsa (hare)
Dechuli	tas (tiger)
Dili (cf. Dyari)	tulk (wolf), toraki (crow)
Tarakan (cockroach; tiger)	tas (tiger), tarakan (cockroach), targa (beaver)
Talym	tarmi (duck)
Damkan -> Dankan	tanga (elk)
Tumali	tô (elk)
Dankan, Dungke, Dunkan (‘hill’) (Ne)	tanga (elk)
Duvan, Duwaan (A)	dawa (salmon), daungari (seal)
Dauncha (from Day)	daungari (seal), dawa (salmon), deur (bird)
Gubatu	gulmakhun (hare)
Khatkil (Negidal)	keta (salmon), kaks (marten)
Kidincha (village: Kidi)	keta (salmon)
Kuchekta	guzi (eagle), gaza (bird), keko (cuckoo), (swan)
Khodzer, Khodzher, Xodyer (cf. Kuysali)	xužuli (bear), gasa (duck), gexō (hawk), (otter)
Kholgoy	xereke (frog), kurekte (woodpecker), (grouse)
Kiler, Kilor, Kilaa (E)	kilaa (gull), qoru (whitefish), qilala (goose), etc.
Kalym (cf. Talym)	kalim (whale), qilala (goose), kirpu (sturgeon)
Gul’makhuncha, Gulmahuncha	gulmakhun (hare), khere (frog), xolo (squirrel)
Gilemsel, Gilamsal (N) (cf. Dekal)	kalim (whale), gilenetu (duck), kars (marten)
Koloncho	kholo (squirrel), qulan (worm), (owl), (deer)
Gimsali (cf. Gyusali)	qewara (gull)
Konincha	ganguli (duck)
Gail	hgene (wolf), qewara (gull), keko (cuckoo)
Kuysali, Gyusali, Kwizali (A)	qewara (gull)
Dzyatala, Dyatala, Gyetala, Jatala	žabdan (snake)
Dzhaksor, Dyaksul, Diaksul	žuk (otter), chik (carp), čičon (small-bird)
Dyari (cf. Dili, Dyarincha)	čičon (small-bird), žielin (ermine)
Choruli, Cherul (cf. Chomli)	žielin (ermine)
Dyorincha, Dyarincha (cf. Dyari)	žielin (ermine)

Chomli (cf. Choruli)	čimada (salmon), čëni (crawfish)
Chaisal	dyuk (otter)
Sypin	sepe (sable), žabdan (snake)
Skadyka	sakanu (fish), sugbu (fish)
Suchuncha (island: Suchu)	sugbu (fish), žuk (otter)
Sulaki (O)	sulu (fox), solig (weasel), žielin (sable), (stone)
Suluncha	silč'in (salmon), suli (fox), sargadi (white-fish)
Samandin	simana (snow)
Syny	sindi (owl), sawu (white-fish), (salmon), (sun)
Senkian	sindi (owl), siun (sun)
Rosugbu (cf. Orosugbu)	sugbu (fish, fish-skin)
Lonki	laqa (white-fish), lok (lynx), log (squirrel)
Mulinka (O)	mulk (deer), murin (horse)
Munincha, Munin (O)	monoko (bear), mui (snake)
Moudancha, Movdancha	mui (snake), mukt (marmot), mund (hare), (tree)
Ngele	yengele (wolf), nyimu (salmon), nyunya (goose)
Yengele -> Ngele	yengele (wolf), yandaqu (raccoon-dog)
Udi, Udy, Udii (cf. Ujli, Pilduncha)	deur (bird)
Edisi, Ydisincha (O)	agdi (thunder)
Egdemseli, Agdumsal, Ygdymseli	uqsaran (owl), agdi (thunder)
Hodyer, Odyer, Hojer (cf. Khodzer)	adyan (sturgeon)
Olchi, Olcha (Oroch)	oli (raven)
Ujli, Ujal (cf. Udzhali)	oli (raven)
Voysi (water)	voysi (water)
Udzyal, Udzyali, Ujal (cf. Ujli)	voysi (water)
Ezeke-Ujli (sky)	sky: ezeke-ujli
Olchi, Olcha, Ulcha-khala (reindeer)	oron (reindeer), olgoma (grouse)
Valdyu (cf. Beldy)	ulži (squirrel), weren (snake), voysi (water)
Orosugbu (cf. Rosugbu)	oron (reindeer)
Angi, Angin, Angda, Anga	sugbu (fish), dawa (salmon), oŋdo (wolverine)
Ayumkan, Aimka (Ne)	oyo (badger), yandaqu (raccoon-dog)
Avali	oli (raven)
etc.	

The Ulcha reportedly had 30+ clans (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 727; Smoliak 1970: 271). The actual number would be many times this figure; the 50+ known 'clan' names only represent a small part of the potential totemic units that once existed.

Potential totems can tentatively be related to 'clan' names:

fish (sugbu, sakanu) (4+ 'clans'): Skadyka, Suchuncha, Rosugbu, Angin or Angda
 carp (chik) (1+ 'clan'): Dzhaksor
 sturgeon (kirpu, adyan) (2+ clans): Kalym, Hodyer
 white-fish (qoru, sargadi, sawu, laqa) (4+ 'clans'): Kiler, Suluncha, Syny, Lonki
 salmon (dawa, keta, čimada, silč'in, nyimu) (9+ 'clans'): Duvan, Dauncha, Kidincha, etc.
 whale (kalim) (2+ 'clans'): Kalym, Gilemsel
 seal (baqada, daungari) (3+ 'clans'): Bobyk, Duvan, Dauncha
 snake (žabdan, mui, weren) (5+ 'clans'): Dzyatala, Sypin, Munincha, Moudancha, etc.
 worm (qulan) (1+ 'clan'): Koloncho
 frog (khere) (2+ 'clans'): Gul'makhuncha, Kholgoy
 bird (deur, degde, gaza) (6+ 'clans'): Datala, Deduska, Dekal, Dauncha, Kuchekta, Udi

small-bird (čičon) (2+ 'clans'): Dzhaksor, Dyari
 woodpecker (pilaqta, kurekte) (6+ 'clans'): Pilda, Pilduncha, Baldyu, Prysku, Bural, etc.
 cuckoo (keko) (2+ 'clans'): Kuchekta, Gail
 grouse (pinu, olgoma) (3+ 'clans'): Punadi, Kholgoy, Olchi
 crow (toraki) (1+ 'clan'): Dili
 raven (oli) (3+ 'clans'): Olchi, Ujli, Avali
 gull (kilaa, qewara) (4+ 'clans'): Kiler, Gimsali, Gail, Kuysali
 duck (tarmi, gasa, ganguli) (4+ 'clans'): Talym, Khodzer, Gilemsel, Konincha
 goose (qilala, nyunya) (3+ 'clans'): Kiler, Kalym, Ngele
 swan (kuku) (2+ 'clan'): Kuchekta, Kiler
 owl (sindi, uqsaran) (3+ 'clans'): Syny, Senkian, Egdemseli
 hawk (gexō) (1+ 'clan'): Khodzer
 eagle (guzi) (2+ 'clans'): Kile, Kuchekta
 bear (nepu, monoko) (4+ 'clans'): Beldy, Khodzer, Munincha, Valdyu
 wolverine (oŋdo) (1+ 'clan'): Angda
 badger (oyo) (1+ 'clan'): Ayumkan
 raccoon-dog (yandaqu) (2+ 'clans'): Yengele, Ayumkan
 otter (žuk) (4+ 'clans'): Khodzer, Dzhaksor, Chaisal, Suchuncha
 marten (kaks, kars) (2+ 'clans'): Khatkil, Gilemsel
 weasel (solig) (1+ 'clan'): Sulaki
 sable (sepe, žielin) (2+ 'clans'): Sypin, Sulaki
 ermine (žielin) (3+ 'clans'): Dyari, Choruli, Dyorincha
 wolf (tulk, hgene, yengene) (4+ 'clans'): Dili, Gail, Ngele, Yengele
 dog (prysku) (1+ 'clans'): Prysku
 fox (suli, sulu) (2+ 'clans'): Sulaki, Suluncha
 lynx (lok) (1+ 'clans'): Lonki
 tiger (tas) (2+ 'clans'): Dechuli, Tarakan
 animal (beyu) (1+ 'clan'): Bayausali
 deer (beyu, mulk) (2+ 'clans'): Bayausali, Mulinka
 reindeer (oyon) (2+ 'clans'): Olchi, Orosugbu
 musk-deer (pongol) (1+ 'clan'): Punadi
 elk-moose (tō, tanga) (3+ 'clans'): Damkan, Tumali, Dankan
 horse (murin) (1+ 'clan'): Mulinka
 hedgehog (puntulche) (1+ 'clan'): Pilduncha
 beaver (targa) (1+ 'clan'): Tarakan
 marmot (mukt) (1+ 'clan'): Moudancha
 squirrel (kholo, log) (4+ 'clans'): Gul'makhuncha, Koloncho, Lonki, Valdyu
 hare (toqsa, gulmakhun) (5+ 'clans'): Deduska, Dekal, Gubatu, Gul'makhuncha, etc.
 tree (mō) (1+ 'clan'): Moudancha
 water (voysi) (3+ 'clans'): Voysi, Udzyal, Valdyu
 snow (simana) (1+ 'clan'): Samandin
 earth (na) (1+ 'clan'): Anga
 stone (dyul) (1+ 'clan'): Odyal
 sky (ezeke-ujli) (1+ 'clan'): Ezeke-Ujli
 thunder (agdi) (2+ 'clans'): Edisi, Egdemseli
 sun (siun) (2+ 'clans'): Syny, Senkian
 etc.

It will be noted that some 'clan' names are virtually identical with a 'totem', e.g., Gulmakhuncha and 'gulmakhun', hare; while other names bear no clear resemblance to any

totem, e.g., Deduska. Yet one name may bear quite as strong a totemic reference as the other. Precisely what the reference is will depend on the knowledge of the 'clan' members and their stories – that unfortunately for the most part are not available.

Some particular clan names are: Rabbit River Clan, Fox Island Clan, and Fishskin Clan, with both a totemic and a local reference. One scholar vehemently noted that these were place names, not totemic references – as if place names cannot have a totemic significance (Smoliak 1970: 271-2). Many names had cross-references, e.g., 'Dyatala' was related to 'Dyaksul' and to Nivkh 'Dekal'. Unfortunately what is presented is only a partly list. In addition to the 30+ 'clans', such as Beldy etc., there are numerous named subdivisions and local families that might be added to the list.

'Clan' origin stories could dispell some confusion, but are poorly known. There is one story in which the Angda or Anga 'clan' descended from a sheat-fish or catfish. In this story a woman saw a big fish in the Amur and thought it was the 'master of the river'; the fish came to her house and asked her to eat it. The fish turned into a young man, who 'entered her bed', and they had three children together, progenitors of the Angda lineage (Zgusta 2015: 311-2). The lineage was specified as having matrilineal descent (Van Deusen 2001: 168). The Kilaa group was said to descend from a swan (Van Deusen 2001).

Lineages or totem clans seem to have kept their own ritual emblems. Mention is made of 'separate lineage flints', bear ceremonies and 'sky offering rituals' (Zgusta 2015: 153). As in other cases this may partly refer to former reduced villages, though the possession of a flint fetish may be a household and totem clan practice.

As noted, members of so-called 'clans' were linked through conditions such as: clan houses and residence, a shared fire, and more (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 727). The list of elements could apply to a variety of groupings subsumed under the word 'clan'. Precisely what was limited to a totem clan or local descent group is hard to indicate, since researchers made no distinctions. In general terms, everything limited to a household would be a totem clan's domain – but also some affairs of a public nature, such as being represented at and attending village festivals and councils.

Phratries

One seemingly straightforward observation is that 'clans' were grouped together into larger units referred to as 'clan alliances', 'associations' or 'phratries', 'duha' or 'dokha' (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 730; Zgusta 2015: 154). In trying to define the 'dokha', the scholars would use the same material features as for the 'clan', such as solidarity, bear festival, revenge, 'courts' etc.; producing an indistinct impression (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 730). Instead the phratry should be seen as a relation between clans based on symbolic connections such as similar totems and classificatory kinship. Such 'phratries' were exogamous and supposedly participated in blood revenge. Court hearings at the 'phratry' level supposedly were held to prevent bloodshed and feuds (ibid.).

One reported 'doha' or 'dokha' alliance included: Dechuli, Gulmahuncha, Egdemseli, Suluncha and Koloncho (Zgusta 2015: 153). The historical 'dokha' seemingly were not conventional phratries but a collection of similar or dissimilar local 'clans' or groups that had been united following epidemics and other dispersals. Yet over time they may have conformed to a former phratry alignment, with similar totems in each dokha. One group may

have had families with fish, bird, duck, swan, crow and owl totems, e.g., egg-laying animals. Another had bear, tiger, fox and dog, or carnivores. A third had deer and hare, or herbivores, as well as tree or root, plant-oriented emblems. For comparison, something similar may have occurred among the Oroch, where one 'dokha' held totems like fish, salmon, bird, duck, cuckoo, crow, owl and eagle; while another had bear and tiger; and a third had deer and rabbit, as well as stone, cliff and seaweed, mineral and plant entities. All these reorganizations are tentative, but may point back to early historic-prehistoric times when phratries consisted of groups of similar totem clans, birds, fishes, animals and other beings found in various and distinct local configurations. Swan (Lebedev) and cockroach (Tarakan) would later be found as family names, the latter perhaps a nickname.

Moieties

There is strong evidence that early Ulchi villages were moiety based. Such a 'dual organization' is noted by scholars (Levin & Potapov 1964: 9). This would take the form of a local division into 'upper' and 'lower' halves, each half consisting of a roughly equal number of totem clans. Based on interviews, there was a distinction between 'upstream' (solincha) and 'downstream' (hudinchi) parts of a village. There also was reference to a middle section (tokondu) apparently associated with chiefs, and perhaps referring to the area near the village plaza or meeting ground. This layout might vary between villages. Unfortunately little is known about Ulchi moieties, though the organization into village halves may have been similar to that found among the Nanai.

Villages

The view taken here is that Ulchi local communities or villages to a large extent were exogamous. This would be in contrast to Russian scholars, who favored endogamy, and tended to avoid or disparage the topic of exogamy. In a totemic society exogamy is crucial, since it provides relations with other communities, and fosters alliances, trade, and in some cases a tribe-wide political organization. It also prevents 'inbreeding', something native people seem to have been aware of.

Some common totems in a village could be: fish-salmon, bird-woodcock, swan-eagle, bear, wolf, deer, hare, sun, snow, etc. Based on the prevalence of certain totem names a tentative structure of a local totemic organization can be suggested: (upstream or solincha): sky or sun, sturgeon, grouse, bear, wolf, deer, beaver; (and downstream or hudinchi): salmon, hawk, otter, fox, elk-moose, hare, and earth or snow. Needless to say this configuration can be varied or permuted in countless ways. The sky and earth clans might occupy a middle (tokondu) part of the village, perhaps associated with local leaders.

The totemic organization in its time would reach into every aspect of Ulchi social life, spanning from the individual up to the tribal or national level. A suggested national totem for the Ulchi is tiger; it could also be fish or salmon (Zgusta 2015: 309).

Social distinctions

As opposed to totemism, Russian scholars would be far more amenable when exposing or constructing 'class' conditions. As noted, they emphasized a difference between 'rich', 'common' and 'poor' people, fairly in accordance with Russian views on social life. The claim was that through trade, property disparities arose, including a degree of native slavery

or exploitation (Ivanov et al. 1964g). This has to be seen in relation to external influences, such as Chinese and later Russian work to colonize the area.

Politics

Ulchi politics began with local leadership and the management of shared community resources, such as hunting and fishing grounds. Beyond this it is hard to say how far the political organization extended, since the Ulchi early came under external influence, Chinese and Russian.

The Chinese in the 1700s installed local leaders, 'clan' elders (khalada), and village elders (gasyanda) as leading figures (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 721). The native leaders or elders answered for the tax collection in each local district. The tsarist authorities to some extent continued this system, with Russian administrators (ibid.).

An image of the native political system emerges. Each local community or village had an echelon of leaders, here referred to as first, second and assistant chiefs. These were seconded in councils by representatives of each of the 6-14+ local totem clans. This represented a powerful representative system where chiefs from different villages could form band, division and tribal alliances and leadership. The Ulchi nation would then have a unified leadership. There also was a legal system. Court cases (bayta) would be settled by 'an elected arbitrator or judge' (manga) (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 730). A fairly extensive, native political system is indicated.

In historic times all this would change. Externally introduced epidemics and pressure would reduce the population by 60+%. Villages would be decimated, and external influences, Manchu, Chinese and Russian, would take control.

Russian scholars tended to focus on native violence, perhaps to justify their nation's colonization. It was claimed that if court hearings (bayta) of a 'phratry' or village council failed, blood vengeance would take place. At such a court hearing an elected mediator or judge (manga) from a neutral 'clan' or group would negotiate peace. Probably most violence would take place outside local control in the face of external and historical suppression.

At the same time scholars conceded that the Ulchi had peaceful regional ties. Intercourse and intermarriage with other tribes along the main river was common. In the villages one finds persons and 'clans' who by origin are Nanai, Oroch, Negidal, Nivkh, etc., but who spoke Ulchi. This opens for the possibility that there not only was a tribal but a regional leadership, where representatives from all the lower Amur groups could get together and decided on political matters. Curiously one scholar suggested that 'the Nanays, Ul'chi, Oroks and Orochi' were 'one nationality' (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 691). This may indicate an earlier sodality that was broken down in colonial-Russian times, when each group was suppressed.

Religion

Russian scholars would somewhat inanely note that the ancient religion was spirit belief. There were 'masters' in nature, spirit forces such as the sun, sky, mountains, rocks, forests, taiga, and water. People sacrificed to the 'masters' for them to send game, fish, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 730).

Three 'main prayers' for hunting and fishing were to the heavens, the water, and the taiga (ibid.). They may have been associated with an annual cycle of ceremonies, spring, summer and fall. A ritual addressing the master spirit of the taiga may have been in the fall, when people prepared for the hunting season

The festival of bears (buyumpa khupi), perhaps held in winter, was associated with the prayer of the taiga spirit, and resembled a celebration among the Nivkh. One difference was that the 'clan' members of the bear master were allowed to eat of the flesh (ibid.).

Possibly a spring ritual was directed towards the water (voysi-nyâli), since the fishing season began (ibid.). In summer there may have been ceremonies directed to the sky (ezekhe-uyli) and to wider relations in human lives, such as trading and summer travels (ibid.). Unfortunately the ceremonial cycle is poorly known.

It was noted that shamans did not participate in the rituals of sky, water, taiga or bear cult (ibid.). These were communal ceremonies, and shamans would gain their prominence later in history when the native ceremonies were curtailed by Orthodox Russian colonists.

Myths prescribed rituals and warned against deviation from rituals. The twin cult dealt with twin births, a supernatural event; the relatives had to observe many taboos. If the taboos were broken, this could damage relations with the forest 'masters'. Twins were sacred, one was a 'forest' person, the other a 'water' person; these could be associated with the moiety distinction.

As noted, in later history shamans would take prominence as a more secluded form of ritual practice. Ulchi shamanism was like that of Nanai. Many clans did not have a shaman. Only large shamans ('day samani': a sinicism) could perform large funeral feasts.

Many notions were taken over from the Manchu and Chinese. When the Russians arrived, the natives were Christianized on a pro forma basis, practically by force. Christianity was generally without influence on native religious beliefs.

Culture

The Ulchi had a rich material and expressive culture. Boats (ugda) were a basic means of transport. They were built on three main boards that rose in a sharp bow ahead. One variant (kensume) had a flat bow; an ancient pattern. Boats were decorated with bird figures. One type had rectangular sails of fish skin. For hunting, one often used canoes of planks (omorochki), wooden logs (utongo) or bark (zai). Other means of transport were dog sledding and skiing; the harness resembled the Nivkh type (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 724).

The cuisine was based on the preparation of fish in all shapes. Today, Russian foods are adapted to local tastes, in dishes such as gruel (badu), minced fish (tala), potato-'tala' and 'mosi' (Ivanov et al. 1964g).

Fish skin of salmon and pike was used for clothing and shoes. Clothing material was hammered with a club (pâty) on a wooden stool (peli), tanned with wormwood, and finally stretched and dried. The garments were robes of Manchu cut. Animal skins were also used, later imported textiles. The men's hunting clothes and fur coats were of a more native touch. Other pieces of clothing were leggings (garu) and women's breastcloth (lelue) decorated with

beads and copper. The women's wedding hat was of lynx skin, in ancient times also used on festive occasions. For weddings and winter parties, women also wore sable fur coats (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 723, 725-7). Unfortunately the decoration of clothing is not described; there would be totemic figures, such as stylized fish, birds and animals.

Like the Nanai, the Ulchi appear to have wedding dresses aka women's chest plates or aprons decorated with totemic drawings. One richly decorated dress shows: fish, forest birds, animals, trees or branches, water, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964g: 728). Precisely what animal is represented is unclear, possibly an elk-moose. Another totem represented seems to be woodcock. These will be more closely discussed under the Nanai section.

Crafts included basketry, wickerwork, hat weaving, wood carvings, yarn making, etc. Blacksmithing was known in the 1800s. Art motifs were ornamental, applied to bark, skirting boards, implements, boxes, and more. Clothing and bedding were embroidered and applied. The women's patterns were inherited. The use of color was white, black, red and blue. Decorations were geometric and figurative. Stylized animals also occur (op. cit.: 731).

The folklore ranged from proverbs to stories. The cosmology is linked partly to a cultural hero, Khadau, and partly to a twin cult. Old poems (telengu) were about hunting, travel, 'blood vengeance', and more. Fairy tales (ningma) were often about animals (ibid.). Such stories would have a totemic significance, but have not been extensively published.

Native life courses are not well known, but were surrounded by poignant rituals, in particular at funerals. The dead were buried in the woods. Beautifully carved tombs were built for the dead, as well as small plank houses. People who had drowned, twins and their mother were buried with special rites. A notion that dead spirits took the form of a dog came from the Nivkh, while the belief that a shaman brought the soul to hell was that of the Nanai – presumably a Russian interpretation (op. cit.: 730-1).

Summary

When the Russians arrived after 1840, they began to buy fish from the Ulchi. The Ulchi were given sturgeon nets and firearms for hunting, and agriculture was introduced. The Russians controlled all trade and spending. Plank houses were introduced after the year 1900. Some traditional summer houses (daura) would still exist, used by the old or as summer kitchens. Also native storehouses erected on scaffolding were retained, switching place from the front or side to the back of the house. After the Russian colonization, the hunting territories of the 'clans' or bands disappeared. People lost the rights to hold meetings and maintain their communities. After the Revolution, interventions against the Ulchi became far more oppressive. After 1925, fishing cooperatives were organized under Russian leadership, which 'educated' native fishermen and villagers. Collective agriculture was introduced after 1930, and fishing was mechanized. The Russians were responsible for the economic management and most of the agriculture. Communist teams were organized in each village after 1929. People were schooled in communism, hygiene, and writing. Health care was organized from 1929, with vaccination against smallpox. Health workers also were required to 'fight' shamans. The mortality went down, but at the same time people lost the control of their society. Boarding schools were located in Ukhta and Koyma, with Russian teachers. After World War II, children and young people were sent away to Russian centers such as Khabarovsk for education (Ivanov et al. 1964g).

In the 1930s there were 15 larger villages, in 1952 reduced to 10 'consolidated' or relocated villages, with up to 200 inhabitants. The collective village 'Five-Year Plan' was mixed with and ruled by Russians. In the collective villages, the houses were lined up along a leveled street. Bulava had about 100 houses in 1952, with a school, hospital, village Soviet, etc. Kolchom had 50-60 houses in 1952, built along straight streets. Kolchom was 'wealthy', with its own primary school, library, nursery, health centre, post office and shop. The 'intelligentsia' consisted of teachers, librarians, pre-school teachers, postal officials, collective accountants, village Soviet officers and about 20 young communists. A separate communism-training organization for Ulchi and Russians was created in 1952. The female Soviet leader in Bulava won the 'Red Challenge Banner' in 1950. The dress was Russified, though some native garments were kept, such as leggings, and traditional clothing ornamentation (Ivanov et al. 1964g).

The future of Ulchi life is under strain. Yet the richness of the culture and the wealth of historical and cultural material should promise a continuation of native life and traditions. One small facet that may be explored and elaborated further is the fascinating existence of elements such as 'kala', 'doha' and totem-related social forms. They open up an alternative view of native life with a regional cast.

Nanai society

Aka: Nanay, Nanaj, from 'nay', 'man'; Gold, Goldi, 'Fishskin Tatars', Hezhen, Hojen, Hezhenai, Khedyen, Khechen, Khoden, Xožen, Xeže-naj, Nânaj, Nani, Natki, Ngatki, Akani, Akkani, Achany, Kile (cf. Evenk), Gilami (cf. Nivkh), Vaerka, etc. Etymology: 'khodilo', 'below', as opposed to 'soli', 'above', e.g., the Solon tribe (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 694-697; Jettmar 1937; Shirokogoroff 1979: 81).

Territory: close to 200,000 km², with room for 60,000+ people. The prehistoric population could easily reach 100,000 inhabitants.

Population: 15000+ in 1600; 1890: 10,000-15,000; 1897: 5439+ in Russia, ca. 2000 in China; 1926: 7,300-8,000, of which 5,800-6,300 in Russia and 1,500-1,800 in China; 1970: Russia: 10,005, China: 1,000, total: 11,005; 1979: officially 10,516; 1989: officially 12,023; 2010: 17,000, 1400 speakers.

The main groups or sub-tribes are the Nanai (Khedzeen) in the north along the Amur, the Kile in the west and the Akani (Goldi, Soldon) in the south by the Ussuri River.

Names of groups were used slightly differently depending on one's whereabouts, e.g., a relative location 'up' or 'down' the river.

The Nanai and some other peoples such as Ulchi, Oroch and Nivkh are central to an understanding of totemic traditions in eastern North Asia. For this and other reasons, such as research interests and the unresolved topic of the 'khala' and 'dokha' terms, a closer look will be taken at the large number of native local communities and settlements.

Around Komsomolsk people were: Nani or Nanai-Negidal:

Groups included: Samagir, Digr or Dyigr, Al'caka, Ajmuka, Tumali, etc.

Reported districts included:

Ia: Amur River: lower

Ib: Amur River: upper; including Sikachi-Alyan, Torgon-Naychin, Gorin etc.

II: Ussuri River

III: Sungari (Songhua) River

Nanai districts can be listed as:

Ia: North or Tsimmermanovka district; together with the Ulchi

Ib: Gorin district: a part of the Manguni, including Hejeni etc.

II: Sikachi district: part of Manguni or Goldi

III: Kur district: part of Manguni or Goldi

IV: Lower Ussuri or Khor district: part of Akani

V: Middle Ussuri or Bikin district: part of Akani

VI: SW or Sungari district: together with Birar etc.

Within the suggested districts some villages, places and clans are:

(a few local 'clans' are indicated in pointed brackets <>)

Ia: North or Tsimmermanovka district: Tsimmermanovka village.

Ib: Gorin district:

Upper Gorin villages.

Middle Gorin: Talomda <Samagir 13 p>; Boktor <Samagir 35 p>; Khuinda <Digr 31 p, Alchaka 7 p>; Naan <Samagir 47 p, Aymuka 6 p, Nya/ goose; bear>; Gorin; Kondon

<Samagir 97 p>; Yamikhta <Samagir 52 p, Alchaka 4 p>, Sorgol <Samagir 14 p, Aymuka 42 p, Tumali 4 p>, Bureya/ Biraya, Yukichi, Dosmi, etc.

Gorin-Amur-N, around present Komsomolsk: Bichi; Tamodeskoye; Namekan <Samagir 22 p>; Kalbo.

Gorin-Amur-S

II: Sikachi district:

N and SW: no specified villages.

SE: Sakachi-Alyan aka Sikachi-Alyan.

III: Kur district: no specified villages.

IV: Khor district:

Khor-Lower to Ussuri: <Kile>.

Khor-Middle: not specified.

Khor-Upper: not specified.

V: Bikin district:

Villages not specified.

VI: SW district:

On the Amur below Sungari (going up) were settlements such as: Kaidali <200 p. (1928)>, Etu <20 p. (1928)>, Derkhi/ Derchi/ Telotsi <80 p., 10-20+ fams (1928-30)>; Gaisa/ Gaij/ Kaichinkou <50 p., 6-20 fams (1928-30)>; Chai <15 p., 5 fams (1928)>, etc.

On or near Sungari river (going up): Molochunko/ Muruhungku <60-80 p., 6+ fams (1928-30)>; Tsitsihar/ Chishika <6+ fams (1930)>; Lahasusu/ Tongjiang <40 p., 4-5 fams (1928-30)>; Niurgu/ Nurgu <30 p., 4-6 fams (1928-30): reduced>; Tusheho/ Tutzeko <70-100+ p., 5-10 fams (1928-30)>; Fujin/ Fuktyin (Chinese; old center; 20-30 p., 2-3+ fams (1928-30)); Gaerdang/ Gardang <6 fams (fams)>; Datun/ Ta-t'un/ Tatzet'un/ Nongchang <80+ p., 20-70 fams (1928-30)>; Susutun <12 fams (1930)>; etc.

The following settlements are (temporarily) unplaced:

Pakta <Diger>

Kakate <Diger>

Sargu <Sargukan, Belday 34 p, Tumali 15 p, Possar 13 p, Samar 12 p, Dzhaksor 11 p, etc.>

Seroha <Diger>

Yargika <Diger>

Hagdu <Diger>

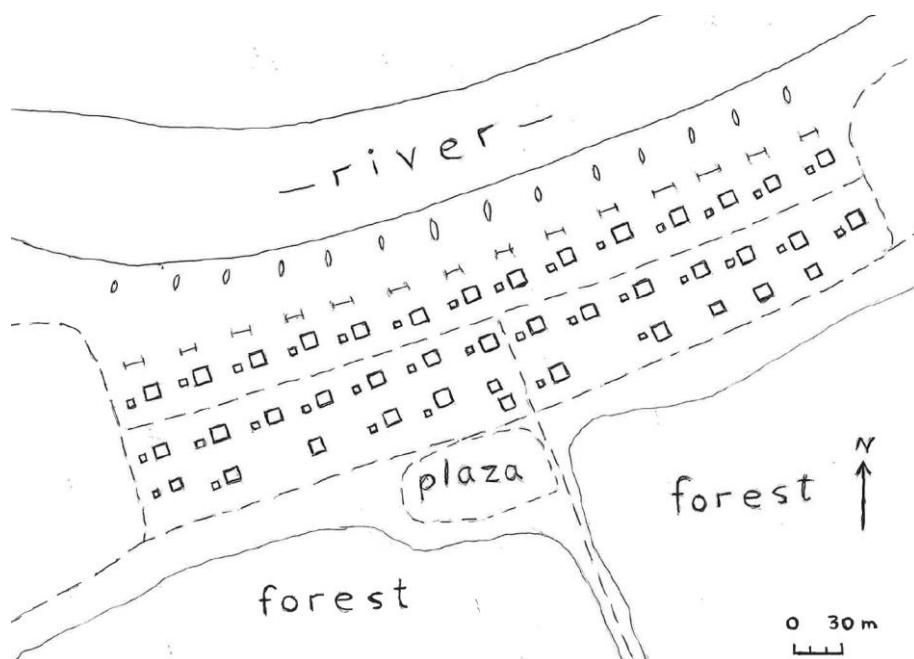
- and many more...

One erratic scholar noted recent village names such as: Naykhin, Dondo, Torgon, etc. (Van Deusen 2001). Kondon was referred to as a Nanai village. Three Geiker 'camps' were called Simasi, Kargi and Adi. Additional places include Lower Tambov, Khalby or Nizhnye Khalby village; the author included a reference to 'drunk Nanai' (ibid.). It was noted that Kondon in 1850 was 'wealthy', but by 1994-95 the local museum was 'robbed' by looters. The size of native villages or camps was described as 2-5+ houses (Van Deusen 2001: passim). This is included here as one example of the often confusing references to native settlements.

A summary of Nanai village names: (Pointed brackets < > note 'clans')

Padali <Gail, Oninka, etc.>, Bichi <Digir, Dyolor, etc.>, Belgo <Tumali, Samar, etc.>, Bolon <Diger, Khodzher, Kile, etc.>, Tusser <Dyolor, Samar, etc.>, Targoi <Zaksor, Oninka, etc.>, Gassi <Beldy, Kile, etc.>, Golbo <Bolo, Samar, etc.>, Kormu <Zaksor, Oninka, etc.>, Khalanda <Beldy, Yukomzal, etc.>, Khummi <Geyker, Samar, etc.>, Kondon/ Khuinda <Diger, Geyker, Dyolor, Samar, etc.>, Khungari <Tumali, Kile, Gail, Oninka, etc.>, Kevari <Geyker, Samar, etc.>, Dzhify/ Dippy <Tumali, Kile, Gail, Zaksor, Oninka, etc.>, Chogmi/

Dzyongmi <Tumali, Samar, etc.>, Churakan (Tumali, Geyker, Zaksor, Samar, Saygor, Mokte, etc.), Simata-Boochan <Beldy, Kile, Oninka, etc.>, Sargol <Bisyanka, Samar, etc.>, Suygo <Permenka, Pusar, etc.>, Mungen <Beldy, Zaksor, etc.>, Nergul <Khodzher, Kile, Odzyal, etc.>, Naykhin <Khodzher, Oninka, etc.>, Yri <Gaer, Chaysal, etc.>, etc.



A suggested Southern Nanai or Goldi village (based on modern Datun)

Population estimates sometimes are based on 'clans', e.g., in 1897: Pusar or Puskar had 247+ people. Bel'dy/ Bel'dai: 929+ people. Perminken: 56+. Diger: 129+. Tumali: 161+. Donka, Donka, Dunkan: 128+. Khodzyar: 456+. Kile, Kilen: 581+. Geyker: 238+. Gail: 188+. Dzhaksor: 263+. Sotgor, Sot'gor, Soygor, Sorgor: 33+. Samar: 425+. Luer, Nuer: 8+. Neyergu (Anyuy): 122+. Yukaminka, Yukamey: 66+. Udinka: 46+. Akhtanka: 63+. Odzhal, Odzyal: 235+. Hodzher/ Hojer: 456+. Oninka: 248+ (Smoliak 1975: 107). How useful such population figures are is uncertain, except for indicating the recorded variation in the size of native 'clans'.

The 'Bel'dai' 'clan' was said to be of heterogeneous origins and was found in 35 Nanai settlements. Hojer was in 14+ settlements; Oninka in 8+; etc. Some 'clan' names may refer to old tribal bands or districts, such as 'Diger' associated with the Gorin valley, 'Neyergu' or 'Nuer' connected to the Anyuy valley, and 'Pusar' or 'Fuskar' below Khabarovsk. Other 'clan' names may refer to old settlement or village names, while others have a tribal or interethnic origin.

From Neolithic times, 3 camps at a fishing site have been excavated, perhaps indicating the presence of 2 moieties, each with 3+ clans, occupying a settlement. Though how complete such excavations are can be questioned. Models of Nanai villages indicate 8-10 houses along the Amur River. The number of houses could be greater, 14+. Houses would be surrounded by storage houses, racks for fish nets and for drying fish, and boats on the bank. Some recent villages have 50-60 houses and 200-300 inhabitants.

In the old days there were summer and winter villages, with summer and winter houses. Presumably these were single villages with outlying settlements. Besides the village there were temporary fishing and hunting camps with huts and tents of various kinds.

Some villages along the Amur flood must have been great, with 500+ inhabitants. They would be like a metropolis for totemic groups. Most likely the clans in such villages were matrilineal, though patriliney cannot be excluded. The manner of organization may have varied from one village to the next. Unfortunately we do not have detailed information on how native people lived in each settlement, at least not in reference to a pre-colonial situation.

Ecology

The Nanai occupied an ecologically rich area. They lived along the beautiful Amur River, above the closely associated people Ulchi. Nanai lived partly in China, south of the Amur, where they were called Goldi. The territory is characterized by the river Amur, higher up branching and quiet, further down wide and majestic. In the monsoon or rainy season in summer, July-September, flooding is common. The region is very scenic, with forests, marshes and mountains. The climate is temperate, but cold and snowy in winter. A major food resource was salmon and other fish (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 694-5).

History

Along the lower Amur in neolithic times people had subterranean houses, flat-bottomed pottery with spiral patterns, and other traditions. Similar pottery points to Manchuria and China rather than to Baykal and Siberia (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 691). The diffusionist scholars speculated that the Neolithic inhabitants were related to the Nivkh, while the Tungus speakers moved in from the Baykal and upper Amur region and displaced the former residents. The predecessors of the Manchu came first and ended up in the south. Then came groups that were closer to the Evenk in language and filled the lower Amur Valley and the coast to the east. The culture had an inland angle, with skis, tipis, canoes, cradle boards, and more (op. cit.: 691-3). Most likely the speculations are wrong. The Nanai may have lived in their historic habitat for thousands of years.

The Tungus peoples along the lower Amur, towards the Straits of Tatar and in parts of Sakhalin, the Ulchi, Nanai, Oroch and Oroch were considered by some to be one people, since they used the name 'nani' to refer to themselves. Many 'clan' or band names are also similar (op. cit.: 691). The Nanai absorbed groups of Evenk origin, such as Samagir (Samar) and Kire (Kile). Evidently these are distinct tribal peoples, with histories running back hundreds or thousands of years.

The Nanai were decimated by epidemics at various times over the period 1300-1850. One Nanai story details a pestilence roughly dated 1300-1500 AD. 'They died one after the other, the people of that village... And over the plain rose acrid smoke and a numberless crowd of fat flies... [one] woman crawled from an earth hut... she could defeat the black death, which had destroyed the tribe.' She would 'resurrect' the 'ancient clan' by having children, thus becoming the ancestress of a clan (Van Deussen 2001: 91f). This story resonates with accounts found elsewhere, and indicates the devastation wrought by epidemics on the native population. It also indicates that people would regroup and 'resurrect' descent groups of which they or a few persons were survivors. As noted elsewhere, this would create a new situation for the formerly stable and well organized totemic system found in the area, as villages were reduced to a fraction of their formerly stable size.

The resident Amur culture has been influenced by Manchu and Chinese culture since time immemorial. The Manchu influence on the Nanai was so strong, that some scholars see them as a Manchu people. In the myths of the Amur peoples there are references to the Mongol rule in China 1280-1368 and to the Ming dynasty from 1368 to 1644. The Chinese war leader Ishika went down the Amur valley to the Amgun River in 1413 and 1434 to claim tribute tax. The custom of heated benches was taken over from the Manchus in the Ming era. Both Manchus and Chinese were admitted into the tribe in ancient times. The Manchu and Chinese rule had a military character, with sentries and war camps, forced collection of taxes, and armed threats. The Russian Cossacks penetrated the Amur Valley after 1643, when the Nanai lived along the Amur below Khabarovsk and in other areas. The Nanai were under Chinese rule ca. 1650-1850, and later under Russian rule as well. After the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, the Russians withdrew from the Amur and the Chinese gained control (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 692-3).

After 1858, the Russians returned and occupied the Amur Valley with disastrous results for the natives. The Russians initiated a mass colonization with poor Russian peasants. The colonists were Cossacks, settlers, and exiled citizens. The natives were evicted from their river fishing spots and immediately experienced poverty and hunger (op. cit.: 693). During the colonization of the Russians, poor Nanai people sometimes sold a child to a rich family for a bowl of millet. By the 1890s, the sufferings of the natives along the Amur were so intense that the local colonial authorities had to take action, allowing some relief. Intermarriage with the Russian population and training in agriculture were seen as a 'promotion of higher culture'. At the same time, this ensured Russian control of the area.

Exogamic 'marriage rules' became 'less strict' among Nanai in China by 1930. This was due to 'the general breakdown' of native society by the dominant Chinese (Lattimore 1933: 50). Yet a man who shot his yoSi for 'having an affair' with a 'clan' relative was let off with 'a light sentence', showing how severely a breach the rules was still viewed (op. cit.: 51).

Economy

The Nanai economic adaptation included hunting, fishing, gathering and agriculture. Historically it was noted that the natives lived mostly by hunting and fishing, and along the Sungari also by agriculture (Shirokogoroff 1979: 81).

Traditionally, the fishing of salmon and sturgeon was most important. Carp fish, pike, and other fish catches also mattered. The vocabulary for fish and hunting and fishing gear was very rich and shows how important fishing and partly hunting was. The summer fishing for salmon was most prominent (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 699).

Hunting and trapping for meat, skins and fur for trade was important in autumn and winter. Animals hunted included roe-deer, elk-moose, bears and boars (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 699-700). Fur animals taken included wolf, sable, etc. The equipment included bows and arrows, self-shots, spears and traps. Firearms were introduced around 1850. Among other things, people caught deer by pursuing it on skis and sticking it with spears. Local households cooperated in hunting and fishing. Russian scholars in the Communist era would twist this into an issue of 'exploitation', allowing harsh repression of the natives (op. cit.: 697).

A simple agriculture and the gathering of roots such as ginseng for trade were old supplementary industries. Plants grown included 'a form of millet' (Lattimore 1933: 31). Domesticated animals included pigs (op. cit.: 32).

Dogs and later horses were used for transportation. The dog sled was of the Tungus type, with a simple pull line. Wooden implements included boats, skis, sleds, etc. People would manufacture products in bone, bark and fiber, such as fishing nets (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 700-2). Boys were trained in crafts from the age of 12. From the 1600s people picked up blacksmith work and other metalworking (op. cit.: 700).

Reciprocal exchange relations between villages are mentioned in communist times. In such exchange 'gift packages' of fish or yukola, berry cakes, grain, flour, and more were sent from a village to friends in a neighboring village. Trade with the Manchus and Chinese dates back to before 1000 AD, including in Dondon. Native goods included skins, furs, roots, etc. Deer horns etc. were sold to the Chinese as an afrodisiac. Chinese goods were millet, barley, beans, spirits, household goods, metal goods, silk and cotton clothes. In the 1700s the Chinese charged a tax from every man over the age of 15 of 1 sable skin per year. Some Chinese settlement took place (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 697-8). But it was only with the colonization of the Russians that local resources disappeared from the hands of the natives.

Kinship

Households lived in wooden houses. The summer house (dauro) was rectangular. In ancient times houses were bark-covered. The summer house could also be spherical, called 'anko'. A house's door would generally be facing the river. Winter houses could be excavated houses (seroma), half-excavated houses (khurbu) or Chinese-inspired houses (fanza) with heated benches. Eventually Russian wooden houses would be adopted. Tipi tents or huts (choro) were used for hunting etc. Nearby the houses had one or more storehouse and provision houses built on stilts, as well as scaffolding for dried fish, meat, skins, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 702-4).

In 'fanza' houses there were clay stoves and heating canals. On three sides were benches for sleeping, eating and resting in winter. Windows were covered with fish skin or Chinese paper. In the middle of the house stood a large platform on stilts, used for work tools, hunting and fishing equipment. In the house were Chinese objects such as dressers, coffins, etc., but not in those of poor people (op. cit.: 703).

The main diet was mostly fish: dried, smoked, frozen, raw, boiled or cooked in fat (taxane). Supplementary foods were meat of game and pigs, collected plant foods such as grass, mushrooms, berries and fruits, and eventually agricultural products to a greater extent. Favorite dishes were millet porridge with turnips (boda), raw minced fish (tala), dried wild cherries in cod liver oil (firun), etc. Delicacies were salmon heads, bone marrow and squirrels filled with nuts (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 708).

The household in early historic times supposedly comprised a large patrilineal family. There supposedly were traces of 'maternal' clans as well. Each person had his own sleeping place on the benches, couples closest to the stove (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 703, 708).

Nature-based and totem-like symbols were common. In front of a shaman's house stood poles with carvings of dragons, worms, lizards, frogs, etc. In front of the house of an adjudicator or

a leader married to a Manchu officer's daughter, stood poles with carvings of cuckoos. At the base of the poles were wooden figures of ancestral spirits. In recent times, people had Russian houses with one hearth and two benches, one on each long wall. Supposedly this coincided with the breakup of the old clan family (Ivanov et al. 1964a).

The heavily biased scholars posited marriage with a cross-cousin as a prescribed spouse. Along the same line they claimed that two clans exchanged partners over time. A man could marry across the generations, marrying his 'sister's daughter'; probably this was exceptional and related to classificatory kinship. Marriage customs included the levirate (ibid.).

In kin relations the maternal brother had a special responsibility for the upbringing of the sister's children (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 708). Inheritance went to (bilateral) kin. The kinship terminology merged relatives in the sibling and parent generation, as in other Tungus societies. That is to say, the same terms were used for Br and Si, first cousin, second cousin and so on.

Differentiation and social organization

The Nanai had a composite social organization, made even more complicated by historical developments. Scholars would muddle the issue by constructing fixed traits of 'patriarchal clans' such as 'property', 'clan cults', 'clan courts', etc., that mostly were fictive (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 709). The relational and complementary aspects of totem clans were overlooked.

Potential Nanai totems: *fish (xolto, holto, sobgo, sogdata), white-fish (various: laqa, sao, gučen), coal-fish (audja), sturgeon (kirpu, adyan), catfish, *carp (chip), *salmon (dawa, keta, oyo, nyimo, žoi, aži), seal (xete), dolphin (pomi), whale (temu), *turtle (kaylan, hayla), *snake (muyki, muiki, mujki, žabda, dyabzha), worm (kōlā:n, qolā), *lizard (puymur), *dragon (mudur, lung, kirin), *frog-toad (xere), shellfish (kakhta), fly (dilūəktə), *spider (atakā:n), bird (deg, mando, gasa, qori, twerko, nyicen), small-bird (various: čipiaqo, čičo), sparrow (yergeni), cuckoo (kəku:), woodpecker (pilaqta, kurekte), grouse, hazel-grouse (qarqay), black-grouse, *woodcock (various: qarqay, čiqo, pimu, olgomi), *chicken-cock-rooster (chiko), crow (ga:ki, torâki), raven (xoli), cormorant (qara), water-bird (gaza), duck (gaza, gasa, angi, qango, tarmi, qarmor), goose (n'əŋn'a, nyoŋnya), swan (ku:ku, kulikte, garu), crane (kəkəars, yatenia), owl (əksarān, oqsarā), hawk (gixō), fish-hawk (pilaqta), *eagle (guzi, gusi), *bear (mapa, puren-mapani, xuygulue, žari, monoqo), wolverine (oŋdo), badger (oyō), *raccoon-dog (yandaqo, naoto, ŋoketo), marten (qarsa), weasel (solu), ermine-sable (želi, sêpe), otter (duki, tiedei, duki, žukun, mudu), *wolf (yengur, jəŋgur), dog (inda, kiaktan), *fox (soli, kičiri, xeldegže), *tiger (tasak, tashka), snow-leopard (jarga), panther (jarga), lynx (lok), cat (kekse), *animal (uzelte, sesin), *deer (bocca, boka, beju, sirü), stag (qomaqa), roe-deer (giu, gulu, pung), reindeer (oron), *musk-deer (poŋgol), *elk-moose (beju, bejun, to, tō, tok, oyča, mek, guranta), horse (morin), cow (iyān), boar (nekte, likete, moyxa, segži), pig (olgian), bat (xelegdexi), hedgehog (puncilke), beaver (targa), marmot-gopher-mole (muktur), mouse (siŋgəŋə), *squirrel (xulu, khulu, kulu, olog), ground-squirrel, chipmunk (ulgi, ulki), *hare (gərmayōn, kolmakon, toqsa), man (nay), house (dio), boat (ogda), berry (amtaka), *tree (mō), forest (giria, duente), cedar (koldon, saktu), fir (xazikta), larch (sisi), birch (chalba, piagdan, pagda), alder (chugda, ažuŋdan, puŋda), man (nay, nⁱi), house (dauro), fire (tawa), *water (muə, muä, mulge), river (bira, oni, mangbo), lake (kheven), sea (namo, temu), rain (tugde), snow (simana), cloud, sky (apkwa), thunder-dragon (aqdi), mountain (xuren), hill (kuntkyke), stone (žolo), *earth, land (nâ, toyalä, toy), star (hosikta), *sun (siun), etc.

Creatures that appear in contexts where they can be interpreted as totemic, such as on wedding gowns, have been marked with an asterisk (*). It should be noted that not all totemic emblems are distinct, and there are symbolic cross-overs between totems. Typical examples would be a bird, that could represent most flying creatures. Woodcock and chicken or rooster appear figuratively mixed in clothing decorations. Aquatic birds, such as duck, goose and swan, may be blended in totemic images. Dragon and thunder are thought of as related beings. Wolverine and badger appear as related. The label 'deer' could cover any large herbivore, or be broken down into more minute designations. All such general and mixed totems constitute a part of the flexibility of the totemic system and totem designations. People tried to keep their totems secret and opaque, so as to avoid unwanted curiosity about their belonging, such as from nosy scholars.

The amazing art of the lower Amur people is rich in animal symbolism that indicates likely totems. Based on this symbolic information a series of totems are suggested: fish, snake, woodcock, eagle, bear, tiger, wolf, fox, deer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, tree, sun. These 14 totems can be grouped in pairs, such as fish-snake, woodcock-eagle, bear-tiger, etc. This would form a nice complementary system of a fixed number of totem clans divided into two moieties, and presumably with 3-4 phratries as well, egg-laying animals, carnivores, herbivores, and other beings.

Also 'clan stories' must be taken into account. In one story a girl 'cohabited' in a tent with a tiger. Her son was called Aktenka, 'born of a tiger', a progenitor of the Aktanka 'clan'. Curiously she is in a camp surrounded by hunters, who find her in bed with the tiger and scared it away (Zgusta 2015: 310). This would indicate that a 'clan' can be replenished with new animal blood, which might not even be the same kind of animal. In historical times what was called a 'clan' were often composite groups derived from demographic catastrophies and migrations. A group such as Aktanka might include the remnants of several former families and descent groups, and possess a variety of totems, so that a girl having a tiger baby would not be a new experience. In a curious epilog it was claimed that Aktanka members demanded compensation from other people whenever a tiger was killed, 'in the form of vodka and food', which will be a recognizable medium of payment even to modern travelers in the Russian Far East. Of a more traditional bent was 'the Aktenka lineage tree' at which the compensation council was held – followed by 'a week of drunkenness, cursing and fighting', bringing the story once more back to the present (op. cit.: 311).

There were numerous taboos concerning the tiger, bear, fish, and other totem animals. The elk-moose was seen as a cosmic symbol, uniting the sky and earth in its wanderings (Okladnikov 1982: 18). The 'tree of the world' or 'tree of life', found on wedding gowns, combines the elements of the environment, fish near its roots, birds in its branches, and animals by its trunk (op. cit.: 19). On wedding gowns were beings such as: fish, salmon, snake, dragon, frog, bird, hen-woodcock, rooster, swan, owl, hawk, eagle, bear, wolf, fox, tiger, deer, roe-deer, musk-deer, elk-moose, hare, tree, sun, etc. Not all of these designs are properly documented. Making a complete list of totems or emblems is impossible until more exhaustive studies of the wedding gowns, aprons and related garments are available. Other Nanai costume decorations include: fish, shark, dragon, shrimp, swan, hawk, fox, etc. Needless to say people were unlikely to have 'shrimp' as a totem, but every creature in nature was of interest to the native mind. Nanai-Goldi shaman costume designs and furs included: tiger, dragon, snake, lizard, frog, bear, fox, raccoon, deer, etc. The Shaman's spirit helpers were like a repository of totems: fish, catfish, snake, lizard, dragon, frog, toad, insect, seal, dolphin, bird, hen, swan, bear, wolf, dog, tiger, deer, elk-moose, man, etc.

Special attention has been paid to the wedding dresses or festive gowns of Nanai women. These supposedly incorporate the main totem of each woman, and thus, if investigated in full, would provide an image of the distribution of totems on both a local and regional scale. Unfortunately such an investigation has not been feasible, so only a partial material is presented.

Among the major totems groups are: aquatic and scaly animals, such as fish, salmon, sturgeon, dragon. Next there are birds, mainly woodcock, including chicken-cock-rooster, pheasant-grouse, etc., plus fish-hawk, eagle, etc. Carnivores include bear, tiger, wolf, fox. Herbivores are represented by deer, including musk-deer, roe-deer, elk-moose and, occasionally, horse, as well as squirrel and hare. Finally, non-animal beings include thunder-dragon, and probably other entities as well, such as tree and sun. All in all the wedding gown patterns correspond well with the distribution of local totem clans in a village or settlement.

Clans

The analysis of totem clans among the Nanai is complicated by the non-specific use of the term 'clan' by Russian scholars and others. The 'clan' system was convoluted, both from the point of view of local variation and because incorporation and intermarriage with other peoples gave rise to separate 'clans'. This convolution was compounded by Russian scholars using the term 'clan' very widely, confounding it with local communities, settlements or bands. Scholars predicated 'clans' as patrilineal and exogamous. 'Clan' or band members shared various social and religious precepts and taboos. This included a shared 'clan' fire, distinct 'clan' or phratry cults, and 'clan' councils, or rather, local community councils. So-called 'clans' or local communities once controlled hunting and fishing grounds (Ivanov et al. 1964a).

The convoluted views of scholars carried over into the mystery of 'clan' names. Such names were partly the same as those of neighboring peoples. There were references to whale-sea (temu), eagle, tiger (aktanka), water-lake (kheven), river (mangbo, bira, oni), man (naj), foot (beldy), and more. Most were untranslated terms, Donkan, Khedzer or Khoder, Gail-Kile, Gejkar, Samagir-Samar, Jukeminken, Udynken, etc. 'Stranger' names were Ainu (Kui), Mongol (Morial), Passar and Odzhjal (Manchu), Sandukan and Najmuk (Chinese), etc.

That 'clans' occasionally were earlier desimated village or band groups is indicated by the extended yet limited exogamy rules. E.g., sections of the Bel'dy 'clan' in 'non-contiguous territories' were considered 'marriageable', where members could marry if not related in other ways (Smoliak 1970: 269). The 'Oninka' clan was related to the Udege 'Kialundziug' clan, perhaps through an old alliance, with exogamy imposed (ibid.).

The native word for 'clan' is given as hala, xala or khala.

Below is a (partial) list of known 'clan' names or family names among the Nanai, compared to potential 'totem' terms: (A = Ainu; C = Chinese; E = Evenk; M = Mongol; etc.)

Bu (cf Budzhala)	beyu (deer)
Futer, Futar, Futa, Fu, aka Maranka	pagda (birch)
Budzhala (cf. Odzhala)	beyun (elk-moose), bocca (deer)
Fushkar (cf. Possar)	pongol (musk-deer)
Possar, Passar, Pular, Puskar (snake)	muiki (snake), roe-deer (pung)

Beldy, Bel'dy, Belday, Beldeg (foot; bear)	puren (bear), tasak (tiger), pungda (alder)
Perdaki, Birdaki, Bi, Pi	pilakta (woodpecker), bira (river)
Boral	puren (bear), puymur (lizard), (birch)
Pyrimunka, Perminken	pumi (woodcock), pomi (dolphin), (bear)
Diger, Digr, Digor, Dyigr	deir, deg (bird), toraki (crow)
Tumali	tô (elk-moose), (duck), (salmon), (whale)
Donkan, Donka, Dunkay (cf. Kile)	dukin (otter), tok (elk-moose), (rain)
Devzhak	toksa (hare), tasak (tiger), targa (beaver)
Dohanka	dawa (salmon), toɣala (earth), (forest)
Gakhil, Gekir -> Gaier	kəkoars (crane), kakta (shellfish), (seal)
Gykhynke	gixō (hawk), keku (cuckoo), (swan), etc.
Khedzher (cf Khodzher)	keta (salmon), khete (seal), (white-fish)
Khodzher, Hodzher, Hojer	gixō (hawk), kokoars (crane), (cat), (fox)
Kili, Kile, Kilen, Kiler, Kilany, Teli, Yu (E)	guzi (eagle, hawk), xulu (squirrel), (frog)
Gordamonkan, Gorblamunkan	kirpu (sturgeon), (elk-moose), (hare)
Kumara, aka Ho	kolmakon (hare), qomaqa (stag), (duck)
Kui (cf Beldy) (A) (temu: sea, whale)	xuygulue (bear), kaylna (turtle), (lake)
Khaytanin	kiaktan (dog), xeldegzhe (fox), (bear)
Gaier, Gakhil, Gakhir, Gekir, Gail, Ko	qori (bird), kokoars (crane), gaza (duck)
Koyar	kiaktan (dog), kokoars (crane)
Geyker, Geykar, Geiker (cf Gaier) (tiger)	keku (cuckoo), gâki (crow), kûku (swan)
Dzhikher	čiqo (woodcock), (carp), (small-bird)
Dzhaksor, Djaksor, Saksor	žukun (otter), chugda (alder)
Dyusher -> Dzhaksor	čičo (small-bird)
Dzholor	žolo (stone), žari (bear), želi (sable)
Chaisal, Khoisal (cf. Yringke)	chalba (birch), žoi (salmon)
Sotgor -> Soygor	suktu (cedar), sogdata (fish)
Saksor -> Dzhaksor	segži (boar), sisi (larch), sesin (animal)
Sorgol (cf. Soygor)	žari (bear), želi (ermine), solu (weasel)
Sargunkan (pl: Sargu)	žari (bear), soli (fox), sirū (deer)
Samagir, Samagiry (cf. Kile)	simana (snow)
Samar, Samnli	simana (snow)
Shimuru, Shimura, Su	simana (snow)
Sandukan (C)	singere (mouse), siun (sun)
Sunmun	siun (sun)
Soygor, Sotgor, Sot'gor, Sorgor	žoi (salmon), sogdata (fish)
Soyanka	žoi (salmon), sao (white-fish)
Luire, Luir, Luer, Lu (cf. Nuer)	likete (boar), lok (lynx), olog (squirrel)
Malakul (Birar)	mulke (water), mapa (bear), mudu (otter)
(Maranka -> Marinka, Futar)	mek (elk-moose), mulge (water)
Marinka, Maranka (cf. Futer)	morin (horse), mek (elk-moose)
Morial (M)	mô (tree), morin (horse), (dragon)
Mengir, Mengyir, Mengjir, Meng	mek (elk-moose), muktur (marmot)
Mankhala	monoqo (bear), mangbo (river), (bird)
Manyakhir (cf. Mengir)	muyki (snake), mando (bird), (boar)
Neyergu (cf. Nuer)	nekte (boar), ŋoketo (raccoon-dog)
Naymuk, Naymuka (C) (cf. Aymuka)	nyonya (goose), nâ (earth), namo (sea)
Nuer, Luer, Nair, Nayer, Nara	nay (man), nyicen (bird), (sparrow)
Yukomsal	yergen (sparrow), nyimo (salmon)
Yukaminka, Yukaminkan, Yukeminken (cf. Kile)	yengur (wolf), yarga (panther), (crane)

Ofunka	apkwa (sky)
Udinka, Udynkan, Udingke, aka Wu (cf. Kile)	dukin (otter), atakã:n (spider)
Aktanka, Akhtanka, Aktenka (tiger)	aktanka (tiger), agdi (thunder), (boat)
Uksumi, Uksumik	oksarang (owl)
Hojer -> Khodzher	aži (salmon), ažugdan (alder)
Odzyal, Odzial, Odyal, Ojal, Uza, Udzhala	uzelte (deer, animal), adyan (sturgeon)
Uza -> Odzyal	hosikta (star), oron (reindeer)
Alchinka, Alchaka, Al'caka, Alchuka	ulgi (chipmunk), olog (squirrel), (fish)
Yringke, Uringke (cf. Chaisal)	uzelte (animal), olgomi (woodcock)
Eminka	amtaka (berry), inda (dog), angi (duck)
Oninkan/ Oninka (cf. Kukchinka)	nyonya (goose), oni (river), (woodcock)
Aymuka, Naymuka	oyoñ (badger), nyimo (salmon), etc.
etc. (Karger 1929; Larkin 1957; Sem 1959).	

The Nanai were reported to have 23 'clans' in 1897 (Smoliak 1970: 272). This would only be a tiny portion of the hundreds of local 'clans' or totemic groups in the tribe.

It was said that each Nanai 'clan' had its own 'land of the dead' (buni). This would indicate that in some cases so-called 'clans' were former villages or local bands. As noted elsewhere, the origin of the modern 'clans' varied, some hailed back to decimated villages, others were named after external social groups and places, some were descent groups, or there was a combination of local origins.

A few totemic 'clan' stories are known. There is mention of a catfish clan with matrilineal descent (Van Deusen 2001: 168). In one story a 'woman was carried off by a bear', that 'married her' in his cave, going out every day and bringing her food. A daughter was born, and she and her Mo were rescued by a hunter, a clan 'brother', who married the girl. The modern story was meant to explain why a MoBr could claim his SiDa as a Wi, though strictly forbidden; mainly the myth is a typical clan story, the origin of the bear clan (Lattimore 1933: 50). The Aktanka descend from the union of a tiger 'with a woman', holding 'high status' among the native lineages (Zgusta 2015: 112). Hundreds of clan stories must have existed, but few have been recorded and made available to investigators.

It is worth noting that native informants would refuse to speak about clan origins. When asked about this, the 'Gold themselves denied' that they 'descended from a bear' or any other totem animal; they were 'reticent on the subject' (Lattimore 1933: 50). Yet they would use totemic designs to decorate clothing and other materials. Totems are not either-or phenomena, they are composite and negotiated situations of people in a complex landscape, ranging from the individual and her totem clan to wider groupings of phratries, moieties, villages and tribal organizations.

Phratries and moieties

Several clans were part of so-called 'phratries' or 'clan groups' (dokha, doha) (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 710). These supposedly were exogamous. Scholarly bias indicated precepts of blood vengeance, shared cult, and more. It was claimed that 'dokha' relations resulted from 'the breakup of the originally unified clans, when territorial unity was lost', and 'as an alliance between clans of different origins' (ibid.). Most of this seems wrong. Totem clans were never 'unified', since they were found in every community, and the 'origins' would concern totemic similarities, such as different kinds of birds. It would seem that a modern 'dokha' may refer to

an alliance between quite divergent totem clans, and perhaps represented attempts at local reorganization after the historical decimation of the native population.

The Kile 'phratry' allegedly included Donkan, Jukeminken, Udinken, Samar, and other groups. Beldy included Kui and Morial. Chaisal had Yringke, Gykhynke, Gorblamunkan, Pyrimunka, etc. Other combinations were Soyanka and Gordamonka, Khalanka and Cholachinka, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 696-7).

A 'dokha' may be described as a 'clan group' or assemblage of former, decimated 'clans', some with similar totems, others quite different. The 'dokha' would then not correspond completely to what is here called a phratry, though there would be some degree of overlap. A phratry, in the narrow sense, would be a group of local totem clans whose totems were similar, such as bear, badger, raccoon-dog, otter and sable, all ursine-mustelid creatures. Other typical phratry groupings would be birds or herbivores. The precise composition of ancient Nanai phratries is a matter for conjecture; also the degree to which recorded 'dokha' correspond to a phratry grouping of totems; these are subjects for future research.

Moieties paradoxically represent a simpler and more complex issue than the 'dokha' or phratry groups. On the simple side, moieties would represent the two sides of a village, such as an 'upstream'-'downstream' or N-S division. Such distinctions were common in native villages. On the complex side, moieties are rarely referred to in Nanai sources. There is a striking contrast here to western Siberia, where moieties are a prominent part of social organization. Modern villages on the Amur have physical divisions, but these are often along ethnic lines, such as between Russians and natives. It may be that moieties were overridden in historical Nanai villages by a need for unity, and that the alliance-making 'dokha' groups served this purpose, while the dualistic moieties were discarded.

Scholars thought the supposed historical breakup of 'clan' groups was linked partly to trade, especially money and taxes, and partly to Chinese and Russian colonization. Money spending and taxes meant that the large 'clan' groups were dissolved into smaller units, in that the individual had to pay taxes and debts (Ivanov et al. 1964: 710). Poverty, however, meant that the smaller households cooperated in hunting, fishing and other food gathering. Russian scholars claimed that in ancient times there were rank differences including 'slavery'. People from other tribes could be 'slaves' (akha), but also Nanais (ibid.). The slaves were often Chinese, and one word for slave (nekan) also means Chinaman. Taxes, trade in fur, and money use led to increasing inequality between households. Poor families had to work for richer households on fishing and in other work. Appointed official leaders or seniors constituted a privileged class under Manchu-Chinese rule. Among other things, they managed the hunting territories (ibid.). After 1858, native control of resources was completely set aside by Russian settlers.

In a Nanai village

A village such as Sikachi-Alyan may earlier have had totems such as: fish-salmon, snake, grouse-woodcock, raven-eagle, bear, raccoon-dog, wolf, fox-tiger, musk-deer, elk-moose, beaver, hare, sky-sun, and earth-bow. Needless to say this is a tentative outline with many possible permutations and variations. Nanai villages in early times may have had a fairly stable structure, consisting of 2-3 rows of houses belonging to 12-14+ totem clans along a river or shore-line. There would be local variations in clan composition, but the overall

community structure was stable and fairly uniform. This would be a continuation of a totemic organization with roots in the stone age.

As with other northern people it can be claimed that the totem system extended from the local community to wider leadership levels such as bands and tribal divisions. For the Nanai nation as a whole an 'elk-like' animal (guranta) was a known totem (Zgusta 2015: 309). This national totem could be compared to the emblems of other peoples, such as tiger for Udehe, creating an ecumene of potential alliances on the interethnic level.

Politics

In prehistoric times the Nanai had a complex political system, uniting local communities, bands, sub-tribes and the nation as a whole, but how the system worked is not known. Since before 1600 external powers, Manchu, Chinese and Russian, would work to take control.

Russian colonizers would recognize 'clan elders' (khalada) and 'village elders' (gasyanda) that they tried to use as henchmen for tax collection and native suppression (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 693). Mention was also made of a 'constable' (sedikhien) (op. cit.: 697). This hints at an earlier system with chiefs and totem clan leaders who led village councils and managed a stable local life. There might be a first, second and assistant chief in most villages.

Following epidemics and external colonization the stable political system would break down. In the biased views of scholars, the Russian colonization 'promoted the penetration of a higher culture to the peoples of the Amur' (op. cit.: 694). Probably the natives had an alternate view.

Religion

In recent times the people officially were Russian Orthodox Christians, but this had little impact on daily beliefs. Chinese and Manchu beliefs also influenced people's religion. Shamanism and so-called animism continued to dominate native beliefs. Spiritual qualities were associated with objects and creatures, sometimes given human characteristics. There were 'master' spirits associated with the sun, fire, water, mountains, forests, etc. The lord of fire had the form of an old woman, 'fadzya mama'. Old men approaching the fire in the woods in winter said, 'Fadzya Mama, move aside and give me a place by the fire' (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 712). Youths were not allowed to move quickly up to the fire, since it would disturb her (ibid.).

The spirits were somewhat like humans, they had children together, only that when they grew old they did not die but renewed themselves. The spirit masters demanded respect and sacrifices from people. The offerings included pigs and agricultural products. Some spirits moved freely about in animal or human form. Carved figures of the spirits were made and placed in forward places during the rituals. A distinction was made between heavenly and earthly spirits. Earthly spirits included auxiliary spirits (seven) who could be good or evil, and harmful spirits (beseu, besyu) from people who committed suicide, slaves, and people who broke exogamous rules. The leader of the wicked was called 'sayka' or 'satka' (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 712).

People believed in a hereafter world (buni) where the souls went, which resembled the this-sided world (ilu), except that things could be opposite. When it was summer in Buni, it was

winter in Ilu, and vice versa (op. cit.: 714). There was belief in a form of soul-wandering. Children's souls or spirits in general took the form of birds, 'soul-birds' (omya-gasa) that lived in the 'soul tree' (omyamoni) outside the house like ordinary birds. From the bird, or perhaps a fish, the soul was transferred to a pregnant woman, but the soul remained a bird until the child was one year old (op. cit.: 712).

The annual cycle of ceremonies is known only in outline. In mid-winter there was a ceremony including a sacrifice of pigs or chickens to carved poles or totem poles (Lattimore 1933: 57-58). Among the totems honored was squirrel (op. cit.: 57). Another animal celebrated included 'wild boar' (op. cit.: 58).

Bears were respected, but the bear festival is little known; supposedly it was discontinued in historical times. Bear meat was eaten according to several rituals, while bear bones were hung in a bundle on a tree. The tiger was looked upon with awe, though ceremonies are not known.

An annual or regular ritual was a cult called 'edzekhe uyleri', in which 'clan' or band members took part. All male 'clan' or band members took part in the 'edzekhe' prayer together. During commemorative feasts people ate a ritual food consisting of bird meat. The god-drink was millet-mead (Ivanov et al. 1964a).

After colonization shamanism took on a growing role of providing solace for the people. The shaman was the link between this world and the next. Various shamans had abilities that progressively went from healing the sick (siriunki-saman), to performing death wakes (ningmaney-saman), predicting the future, and leading the souls of the dead to heaven (kasatey-saman), the latter being the most powerful. Shamans were both women and men, except the most powerful were mainly men. The shaman suits included a skirt, jacket, belt and other elements. The suits' decorations represented creatures such as worm, lizard, frog, antler, bear, wolf, fox, raccoon-dog, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964a).

Manchu-Chinese influences appear, among other things, in New Year's celebrations, in a separate Mao cult, Mao icons, and more, probably as a protest against Russian colonization. Around the year 1900, a messianic cult linked to a legendary shaman, Kheri Mapa, appeared. It was later suppressed. Religious freedom never reached the Nanai (ibid.).

Culture

The Nanai language is Amur Tungusic, with loanwords from Manchu, Chinese and extinct Amur languages. In recent times, Russian and Chinese have taken over as official languages. Many historical objects are of Chinese and Russian types. Native objects such as bowls, spoons and tools were made of wood, bone and bark (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 700).

Native clothing marked status differences and affiliation with dominant people such as Chinese and Russians. Rich Nanai wore silk robes in ancient times (op. cit.: 706-7). Under the Russians these were replaced with store clothes. Ordinary people nevertheless continued to wear fish and animal skin clothing until the 1920s.

The women's wedding costume was very richly decorated with embroideries and hem decorations. This festive garment, called a wedding dress, apron, breast plate, etc., becomes a testing case of totemic traditions. Unfortunately, as noted elsewhere, systematic investigations of wedding dress decorations have not been made or are not available. The basic totem on the

dress is usually represented by two figures of animals or other beings at the center of the embroidered plate. Why there are two figures is sometimes explained by totemic ancestors coming in pairs, as a kind of twins (Van Deusen 2001: 26). Anciently there may have been two descent groups for each totem clan in a village.

Some further notes can be made on why Nanai wedding gowns, as well as shaman's coats, tend to show pairs of similar animals, deer, wolf, and so on. One possible explanation is that they represent a male and female of the species, and thus indicate a married couple. It is also possible that the double depiction is a form of emphasis, to show that this is a person's totem or animal protector.

One intriguing interpretation is that totem clans may appear in pairs. It is known from North America that totemic clans often are represented by two families in each village; as a dual clan. These are usually distinguished by the labels 'white' and 'black', e.g., 'white wolf' and 'black wolf', though also by other contrasts, red-green, big-small, etc. They form part of the same clan and occupy the same position in the village, but are divided into two families or descent groups, side by side. Similar arrangements may be found in other North Asiatic communities, which allows a demographic expansion of local families without breaking the pattern of a set number of totemic clans. Such dual clans have been noted in a few cases already.

One source indicates some totemic motifs on wedding gowns: dragon (mudur), tiger, deer, horse, etc. (Van Deusen 2001: 193-195). The decoration on each gown would generally include: fish, bird, woodcock, rooster, tree, flower, water, star, sun, etc. (ibid.). Birds were said to represent the spirits of children about to be born (op. cit.: 195). The fish may represent ancestors' spirits; the imagery of birds and fish may blend into each other, as future and present spirits. All this will have a bearing on totemic views and awaits further study.

Cultural elements were both native and imported. The men shaved their heads with hair whips in the Manchu-Chinese manner from the 1600s (Ivanov et al.: 707). The art of tattooing was kept alive until the 1900s, with a tattooed forehead, nose and hands (ibid.).

The Nanai had a rich folklore of music, arts and narratives. The ancient musical instrument, a drum, was supplanted by mouth drum, jew's harp, fiddle and flutes (Ivanov et al. 1964: 710). Embroidery was well known, and women developed many figures with needle, thread, and application (ibid.). House-posts (baksa torani), house ridges, window edges, funeral houses, etc., were richly carved. Burial huts (keren) were decorated with carvings (ibid.). Wood carvings could be painted red and black. The patterns were geometric, such as spirals, but also animal and plant figures were found, lizard, frog, snake, fish, bird, etc. There is also a Manchu-Chinese inspiration for dragons, bats, roosters, old women, coins, etc. Poles (toro, soro) placed near houses with carvings, akin to totem poles, included figures such as: fish, sturgeon, bird, wood-pigeon, cuckoo (kêku), bear, otter, weasel, dog, animal, horse, squirrel (ulki), totemic ancestors, etc. (Lattimore 1933: 54-59). Some poles would have 7-8 figures, including: fish, snake, turtle, lizard, dragon, frog, bird, eagle, human, spirit, etc. (Lattimore 1933: 56-57). The poles were said to represent 'every kind of spirit' or being, hinting at a totemic repertoire (op. cit.: 59). People's worship ensured a good relationship with animals and other beings; as they said, how else 'should we find animals to shoot' (ibid.).

The shaman robe had figures of trees, dragons, lizards, insects, birds, horsemen, and human figures. On sheets of cloth or paper people made iconic representations of landscapes with

figures of shaman spirits and animals in symmetric compositions (Ivanov et al. 1964: 711). The depictions were somewhat reminiscent of Buddhist images.

Oral traditions and mythology spanned from riddles to epic accounts. A distinction was made between fairy tales (*nengma*) and legends (*telungu*). Legends told by men (*khuse-nay-ningmani*) contained songs, while women's stories (*ekte-nay-ningmani*) had no singing, as women were not allowed 'to sing at all', probably false (Ivanov et al. 1964.: 710). Fairy tales deal with animals and animal transformations. Unfortunately most stories are not available. Some protagonists were: fish, salmon, snake, dragon, frog, duck, bear (*mapa*), wolf, dog, fox, tiger, elk-moose, horse, mouse, cloud, sky, sun, etc. (Van Deusen 2001). In the movie about *Dersu Uzala*, set in 1907, he gets angry when the Russians throw meat bones in the fire, objecting that tomorrow many 'fellows' will come looking for food, such as badger, wolverine, crow and mouse, in the subtitles also translated as 'weasel' and 'woodchuck'. He views the animals as people who need to eat, so it is disrespecting to throw food in the fire. The Russians sit in stunned silence by his views, incredulous. Yet the old hunter viewed animals as people, such as deer and wild boar.

Russian scholars would rather focus on legends dealing with battles between native heroes and alien giants. The heroes were conquerors who made a living by 'exploiting' ordinary people and going on war raids. One hero was the hunter *Mergen* who fought the warrior woman *Pudin* of a conqueror lineage. She is both domestic, good at sewing and embroidery, and belligerent. The legends are supposed to be true, but are also myths about heroes and tigers, bears, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 720).

The Nanai shared in rich life courses and rituals. The rituals were needed as there would be challenges from birth. Native houses had dirt floors in ancient times and were unclean, supposedly leading to high infant mortality (Ivanov et al. 1964a).

Male names include: *Syoakta* (sagebrush), *Kuku* (swan), *Genzy* (naughty), *Sigakta* (gadfly), *Nesula* (bean-porridge), *Audja* (coal-fish), etc. Some female names are: *Deduke*, *Koptoki* (swimmer), *Galokto*, *Kontoki*, *Dyabzha* (snake), *Ledzheke*, etc. Most recorded names seem to be nicknames.

Men and women reportedly had separate roles with distinct tasks, but the roles were flexible. Russian scholars would note the important role of women. Women did housework, but also took part in most other activities. Many women were engaged in hunting, and all took part in fishing (Smoliak 1970: 296).

As noted, the soul of a child was a bird until the child was a year old. A small child who died was not buried but swaddled in bark or cloth and laid in a hollow or the branches of a tree. Other dead were buried in the soil. Some possessions were buried with the deceased, others were scattered around the tomb or burned during a series of vigils (*kasa*). Grave objects were always broken or destroyed first, in order to free the soul in them. In ancient times, people were buried in tomb-houses (*keren*). The first vigils (*ningman*) took place right after the death and on the seventh day after the funeral. A grave cushion (*fanyan*) and a wooden figure (*fanyalko*) which both depicted and housed the soul of the deceased were then prepared. Other wakes were held until the largest vigil, '*kasa-maeri*', which took place after a suitably long time at great cost. A shaman then 'carried away' the soul of the dead to the next world (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 712-3).

Summary

Chinese-type robes, etc., show ancient Manchu-Chinese influences. The Russian communists in 1926 adopted a self-government for native peoples based on so-called 'clan' and local soviets (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 714). This was not carried out at the Amur 'because the clan structure in different villages varied' (ibid.). Instead, a forced collective formation took place from 1930 onwards. Small local units were relocated in larger village collectives. Fishing was mechanized and organized under Russian administration. Nanais were sent out sea fishing for days on end, and it happened that collective fishermen exceeded the annual plan by several hundred percent. Hunting and agriculture were organized and collectivized. The 'New Road' collective in Naykhin engaged in fishing as well as hunting and farming; a nursery, bathhouse, vegetable warehouse and fishing lodges were built; in addition there was a school and hospital (Ivanov et al. 1964a).

In the village of Troitskoye there was a house for the local Soviet and a school, hospital, shop and dwelling houses both of timber and of the old type (op. cit.: 717). A barter practice that had been preserved in 1950, was to send 'gift packages' from a village to friends in the neighbouring village. The gift included both 'national' dishes such as wild cherry cakes and yukola, as well as sugar, brandy cakes, cookies, flour, grain, and more (ibid.). Some old houses and storehouses on scaffolding still existed.

Old people took care of clothing traditions such as leather shoes and mittens. Chinese jackets were used locally in the 50s. Russians were in charge of the administration, education and health care. Children were taught the Nanai language in grades 1-2, but from the 3rd grade the teaching was in Russian. At one time the literature in the Nanai language was quite extensive, especially by the poet Akim Samar who died at the Battle of Stalingrad. Some Nanai took up modern occupations, such as construction worker, carpenter, mechanic and electrician, partly in cities such as Khabarovsk (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 718-720).

Imagine how valuable the ancient traditions are when Japanese collectors are willing to pay millions for Nanai artefacts. Finding out more and preserving the native cultural expressions is a vital task that awaits further implementation. Here the ancient totemic groups form part of the totality, wrapped up in the mystery of 'khala' and 'dokha' designations – an enduring theme.

Oroch

Aka: Orochi, Oroči, Orotsi, Nani (own name, cf. Ulchi and Nanai), Orochony, Orochen, etc. To some extent the Amur Tungus can be considered to be one people, since they shared self-designations, intermarried and spoke similar languages (Ivanov et al. 1964a: 691). Yet they occupied separate territories, and identified themselves by the places in which they lived and the lands they controlled.

The Oroch occupied the area between the Amur Valley and the Tatar Strait, in river valleys along the coast. Their land was the Maritime Province, with the valleys of Tumnin, Hadi and Kopi or Koppi, extending up the coast to De Kastri and beyond (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 750). In modern times they were relocated in and near the village of Uska, near the mouth of the Tumnin River, while some lived on the Chungari River and elsewhere (ibid.).

The territory was ca. 30,000+ km². This could amply afford 10,000+ people. So the 1250 AD estimate would be at least 10,000 people.

Population estimates: 1600: 2,500-5,000+ people; 1925: ca. 700+ people; 1927: 405 + 241 = 646+ people; 1970: 1089; 1979: 1198; 1980: 1200; 1989: 915; 2002: 686; 2010: 596; 2021: 527+; <8-15 speakers.

It immediately becomes apparent that the Oroch experienced terrible losses in historical times, having lost 90+% of their population by 1920.

The Oroch in their native areas suffered intense discrimination from local Russians after 1991. Apparently the natives were chased from Uska-Orochskaya around 1999 in a kind of 'pogrom'; only a few families were allowed to stay as 'token' Oroch, while the village as a whole was taken by Russian squatters. Significantly 288 Oroch were reported in Ukraine in 2001, possibly expelled from their Tumnin village by Russians (Wikipedia n.d.). It is highly significant that the number of Oroch has been reduced by more than 50% since 1980. The language is virtually extinct. This provides a backdrop for understanding the cultural situation of the Oroch people.

What follows is an attempt to indicate aspects of Oroch society and culture in earlier times, before the modern destruction.

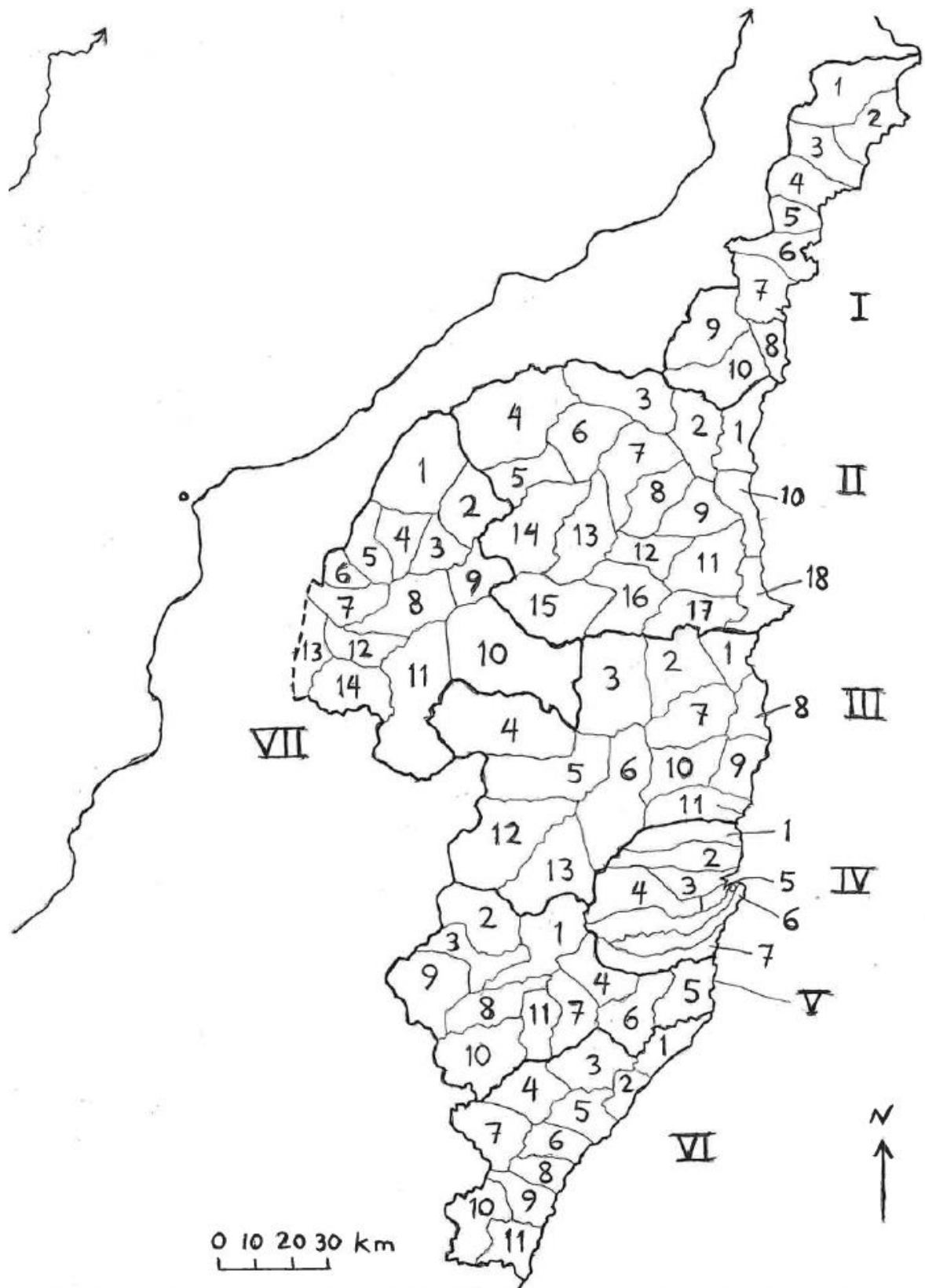
The following local areas are named and numbered according to the map from N to S, with a western division at the end:

I: De-Kastri region (Northern region):

1: Nigir; 2: Psyu; 3: Kadi; 4: Kizi; Tabo; 5: S Kizi; Chilba; 6: (De-Kastri); Somon; Chichacheva; 7: Duy; Arfa; 8: To; 9: Muty; Peri; 10: Uy; Bolotniy.

II: Upper Tumin region:

1: Suzuman; 2: Snezhnaya; 3: Chichamar; 4: Ukioi; Kema; Chechen-Salasu; Utuni; 5: Lyuzi; 6: Utuni; 7: Upper Tumnin; 8: Okhozo; 9: <no name>; 10: Ukomu; Komus; 11: Zymyannoya; 12: Khulkom; 13: Uini; 14: Aly; 15: Muli-Datta; 16: Kenada; 17: Koto; Kopni; 18: Syurkum; Starka.



Oroch local areas

III: Lower Tumnin region:

1: Aukan; 2: Akur; Tuluchi; 3: Alur; 4: Upper Khutu; 5: Guduskone; Pinda; 6: Middle Khutu; 7: Tumnin; 8: Biki; 9: Ulike; Tara; 10: Khutu; 11: Mongokhto; Datta; Uska; 12: Buta; Mopau; 13: Adzhalami.

IV: Sov-Gavany region:

1: Dyudanka; Toki; 2: (Vanino); Muchke; Mitsuyevskiy; Chustovodnaya; 3: (Zanadny); Pel; May; 4: Desna; Gatka; Khadya; Tutto; 5: Lososina; Esse; 6: Kekurniy; Situan; Lososina; Khadzhi; 7: Upper Khadya; Tukhoe; Gidzhu; Manacha.

V: Koppi drainage region:

1: Ioli; 2: Iggu; Leti; 3: <no name>; 4: Kirpichi; 5: Koppi; (Innokentyevski); Byacha; Gniloy; May; Shumny; 6: Topty; 7: Byapoli; 8: <no name>; 9: Upper Koppi; 10: Dzhausa; Bo-Dzhausa; 11: <no name>.

VI: Southern region:

1: Es; Icha; Nachazu; Uspepiya; 2: Adzhima; Vstrechniy; 3: Mulpa; 4: <no name>; 5: Botchi; 6: Ikpa; 7: Upper Botchi; 8: Vuglaura; 9: Nel'ma; 10: Ukhty; 11: Rtichya; Adimi.

VII: Western region (Gur, Khungari, Chungari):

1: U Uktur; Piche; 2: L Udomi; 3: E Uktur; Aksaka; 4: Uktur; Pochepta; Yezd; 5: (Gurshoe); Gur; 6: Snechniy; Kun; 'Red Taiga'; 7: Khodzhar; 8: Kenay; 9: U Udomi; Oune; Noszrambo; Opikosnoya; Yanetoyesny; 10: Upper Gur; 11: Dzhaur; 12: Yodi; 13: Lower Gur; Toloma; Khoso; 14: U Khoso.

Historically there were 5-6 settlement areas (or more):

I: Amurskaya (N of De Kastri)

II: Kun

III (IIIa: Khutu: north part: Syurkum)

III (IIIb): Khutu (south part)

IV (between Koppi and Sov Gavany)

Innokentyevski could be an earlier location for the Koppi settlement.

V (between Koppi and Uktu)

Below is an attempt to indicate some Oroch place names and place data:

(in 'phonemic order'; an asterisk (*) = main places; 'clans' are in pointed brackets <>; fam = families; hs = houses; p = people; numbers refer to location, e.g., Buta (3-12) = region III, local area 12)

Buta (3-12) Peda (1/7-x) (1926: 5 fam, 39 p), Podi (7-x) (1897: 3 fam, 7 p) <Akunka 4, Bukhinka 3>, Buge (2/3-x), Biki (3-8) <bicha (deer)>

Bochi*/ Botchi (6-5) (1888: 8+ hs; 30+ p) (1908: 1 hs, 18 p),

Bechi (3-8), Bese, Pochepta (7-4), Bo-Dzhausa (5-10), Psyu (+Medved) (1-2), Puli (1/7-x) (1897: 11 p) (1926: 3 fam, 26 p) <lenka 11>, Bolbi (1-x?) (1897: 13 p) <Senkiyanka 13>, Bolotniy (1-10),

<pilakte (woodpecker)>, Ferma (1-x),

Bulinge (5-x), Peri (1-9), Pel (3-3), Bolotniy (1-10)

Bungsa (2/3-x),

Punachigaycha (5-5?) (cf Byacha) (1897: 1 fam, 4 p),

Punyaki (6-x),

Byapali/ Byapoli/ Byapali-Datta (5-7), Pyada (1/7-x) (1897: 11 p) (1926: 1 fam, 4 p) <Galdancha 10, unknown 1>, Byacha (5-5)

To (1-8), Du/ Duy (1-7) (1888)

Tobo (2/3-x)

Tabo (1-4), Tepty/ Topty/ Tepty-Data (5-6) (1926: 4 fam, 17 p),

Tippali (4-x)

Datta*/ Data (3-11) (1888: 10 hs, 59 p) (1897: 12 fam, 41 p) (1908: 4 hs, 37 p) (1926: 1 fam, 1 p!), <Punadinka 15, Ulyanka 24; Khutunka 2> (cf. Muli-Datta)

Tutte/ Tadka/ Tutto/ Duti (4-4),

Daktybacha (4-x) (1926: 5 fam, 21 p),

(De-Kastri) (1-6), Toki (4-1/ 4-2), Tokolinku (2-x), Tiktamu, Tukhoe (4-7), Desna (4-4)

Duluke (4-x), Tara (3-9), Tuluchi (3-2), Toloma (7-13),
Dulenge (5-x), Tulinskoye (1-5)
Tumaku (4-x), Domokha (7/4-x?) (1897: 2 fam, 21p) <Vagla 9, Ulyanka 12>, Teman (1-2), Tumnin
(3-7), U Tumnin (2-7)

Koppi* (5-5) (1888: 7 hs, 37 p) (1897: 3 fam, 28 p) (1908: 13 hs, 97 p),

Kepka (5-x),

Gupomyo (4-x),

(Khadi -> Khadya),

Kadi (1-3) (cf Khadya)

Koto (2-17)

Khutu-Data*/ Khutu-Datta (3-6) (1897: 1 fam, 20 p) (1908: 7 hs, 53 p) (1926: 15 fam, 83 p) <Akunka/
Aukanka 20>, Khutu (3-10) (1888: 5 hs, 25 p), Kitabyaka (7/4-x?) (1897: 2 fam, 8 p) <Bisyanka 8>,
Khutudane (1888: 4 hs, 23 p), Gatka/ Gadki (4-4/ 4-5) (1897: 1 fam, 6 p) (1926: 2 fam, 7 p) <Ienka
6>, Khutunka, Khadinka,

Kukchi (6-x), Geka (2-29), Kekurniy (4-6)

Khicha (2/3-x), Khadya/ Khadi*/ Khadacha (4-5) (1888: 6 hs, 35 p) (1926: 2 fam, 10 p), Khadzhi (4-
6), Gidzhu/ Gidyu (4-7) (1908: 1 hs, 8 p), Kizi (1900: 240 p) (1-4), S Kizi (1-5) Khoso (7-14), (cf. De-
Kastri); Gur/ Gurskoe (7-5), Golbi (1-x), Karpachi (1/7-x?) (cf Golbi) (1926: 2 fam, 26 p)

(Grossevichi) (6-5), Korovina (5-5), <kolmakon (hare)>

Kumpte/ Kumte (2/3-x) (1897: 2 fam, 1 p!) <Emunka 1>, (Komus -> Ukomu)

Gumomsa (2/3-x), Kun (7-6) (1926: 29 p),

Khunda* (2/3-x), Kenada (2-16)

Kendekhe (2/3-x), Kangunka, Gniloy (5-5), Kenay (7-8), Kinyo (5-x?) (1897: 2 fam, 10 p),

Khoyo (cf Khoso) (1-10/ 2-1?), <khoyo (salmon)>, Koynaku (3-x?) (1897: 2 fam, 6 p),

Keuti (7-x) (1897: 5 p) <Yominka 5>,
Geoni (2/3-x), Gauni (7-x) (1926: 8 fam, 58 p),

Dzhyu (5-x),

Chapsari/ Chopponay (2/3-x) (1897: 1 fam, 13 p) <Emunka 13> (cf Chichamar),

Dzhyoko (on Khadi/ Khadya R.) (4-x) (1897: 2 fam, 15 p) (1926: 4 fam, 17 p) <Bisyanka 15>,
Dzhigdase (2/3-x),

Dzhugdzhya/ Dzhogda (2/3-x) (1897: 4 fam, 25 p) <Akunka/ Aukanka 25>,
Dzhugdzhya-(b) (2/3-x)

(Dzhakumay/ Dzhyakume -> May), Chichacheva (1-6), Chichamar (2-3), Chustovodnaya (4-2),
Chilba (1-5)

Dzolo/ Dzhulda (2/3-x) (1897: 4 fam, 19 p) <Akunka 19>,
Dzhulke/ Dzhylka (2/3-x) (1897: 5 fam, 14 p) (1908: 3 hs, 29 p) <Bisyanka 4, Emunka 10>,
Chumma (3-9), (Dzempy -> Uy),

Chonoko (5-x),

Dzhanko (7-x) (1897: 6 fam, 34 p) <Ienka 12, Peulyanka 12, Samandiga 6; Emunka 4>,
Dzhuode (5-x),

Dzhausa (5-10),

Dzhausa-(b) (2/3-x),

Dzhausa-(c) (2/3-x),

Dyuanka*/ Diuanka (4-1) (1888: 5 hs, 25 p) (1908: 6 hs, 29 p),

Syudeleni (2/3-x),

Sidima (cf. Suzuman) (1-8?/ 2-1?), Sitami/ Sizimi (1-x?) (1897: 4 fam, 14 p) (1926: 2 fam, 4 p)

<Akunka 2, Udegeychy 12>, Starta (2-1), Starka (2-18), Sadinga (3-11), Situan (4-6),
Syurkum/ Syokum (2-18) (1897: 1 fam, 3 p) (1926: 7 fam, 35 p) <Mulinka 3>, Skalistiy (6-2),
Suchova (1-3), Suzuman (2-1)

Solomi (4-x), Sandi (cf Shumniy) (5-x) (1926: 1 fam, 10 p),

Sanku (5-x), Somon (1-6), Shumniy (5-5), Znadniy (4-3), Snezhniy (7-6), Seocho

Rtichya/ Retichya (6-11), Lososina (4-5), Landishi (2-29), Laukela (5-x), Lovastiy (1-4)

Ma/ Ma-Data/ May (4-3/5?) (cf Manacha) (1897: 3 fam, 15 p) (1926: 1 fam, 5 p) <Sechyonko 3, Khutunka 10; Kamdziga 2>,

Miki (2/3-x),

Muty (1-9), Moudacha, Muchke/ Mukcha (4-2), Mitsuyevskiy (3-2), Mosolova (1-8)

Muli-Data*/ Muli-Datta/ Mulida (2-15) (1897: 7 fam, 33 p) (1908: 2 hs, 21 p) <Mulinka> <elk-moose>, Mulpa (6-3)

Mongo (4-x)

Mungidani (3-x) (1897: 2 fam, 6 p) <Muli 6> <elk-moose>,

Mongokhto (3-11) (1897: 3 fam, 14 p) (1926: 15 hs, 100 p) <Khutunka 14>, Manacha (4-7), Monchi (7-x) (197: 1 fam, 8 p) <Mulinka>,

May/ Mayda (4-3) (1897: 2 fam, 9 p) (1908: 5 hs, 31 p) <Vagla 4, Kendu 5>,

May-(b)/ May-Datta/ Dzhakumay/ Dzhyakume (5-5) (1897: 2 fam, 9 p) (1926: 1 fam, 12 p),

Naggakhe/ Nachazu (6-1), Nigir/ Nezir (1-1), Nelma/ Nel'ma (6-9)

Nizhnyaya (2/3-x),

Nyugdzhya (2/3-x),

Niese (2/3-x),

Nyannyanku (3-x) (1897: 1 fam, 9 p) <Sechyonko 9>,

Yangau (4-x), Ioli (6-1)

U (cf Ue) (2/3-x),

Abu (4-x)

Abula (6-x), Udomi (7-9) (1926: 13 p),

(Eki -> Es), Ogi/ Ochi (7-x) (1897: 12 p) <Dzharincha 5, Yominka 7>,

Iggu (5-2), Ikpa (6-6), Uktu/ Uktur/ Uktudani/ Uktu-Datta (7-3) (1897: 4 fam, 29 p) (1926: 30 p) <Akunka 24, Punadinka 5>, Ukhty (6-10),

Uktuka (2/3-x),

Ikika (6-6)

Egecha/ Eggakha (4-x) (1897: 1 fam, 3 p) <Bisyanka 3>, Ekche (3-11), Aksaka (7-3)

Akur-Data*/ Akur/ Aku (3-2) (1908: 4 hs, 40 p) <bear>,

Ukomu/ Komus (2-10), Ekhemu, Vuglaua (6-8), Ukioi/ Ukloi (2-4)

Icha (6-1)

Adyami/ Adimi/ Adzhima (6-2), Adzhalami (3-13),

Esse (4-5), Es/ Eki (6-1), Uspepiye (6-1), Vstrechniy (6-2), Astami (5-x), Asiktani (3-x?) (1897: 5 fam, 17 p) <Ienka 4, Mulinka 6, Samandiga 6, unknown 1> (cf Uska),

Us'ka*/ Uska/ oska (3-11) (1888: 5 hs, 27 p) (1897: 1 fam, 7 p) (1908: 3 hs, 32 p) (1926: 10 fam, 53 p) <Akunka/ Aukanka 7>, (Osero-Bolshoye) (6-1),

Asinka (6/3-x?) (1897: 1 fam, 7 p) <Bisyanka 7>,

Eli (5-x), Aly (2-14), Arfa (1-7), Ulike (3-9), Ilika (7-x) (1897: 3/5 fam, 20/30 p) <Ulyanka 20;

Akunka 15, Eminka 10, Mulinka 5>,

Verkhnyaya (2/3-x), Urma (5-x) (1926: 1 fam, 3 p),

Ilyangakhe (5-x), Ulanka

Omoko (5-x),

Inda (5-x), Anna (1-2), Oune (7-9), Angai (7-x), Vanino (2-31), Arfa (1-8)

Ongyo/ Angai (2/3-x),

Angan (1/7-x?) (1897: 3 p) <Moudanka 3>,

Uy/ Dzemy on Uy R. (4-2/3) (1888: 5 hs, 29 p) (1908: 7 hs, 50 p) (1926: 3 fam, 18 p), Uy (1-10),

Eye (5-x)

Oyonku (2/3-x),

Ue/ Oe (6-3?) (1926: 1 fam, 6 p),

Auka/ Aukan/ Autka (3-1) (1897: 1 fam, 7 p) <Akunka/ Aukanka 7>, Aukan (2/3-x),

Eucha/ Aucha (5/6-x?) (1897: 1 fam, 3 p), Uini (2-13),

etc. (cf. Larkin 1964: 14-23).

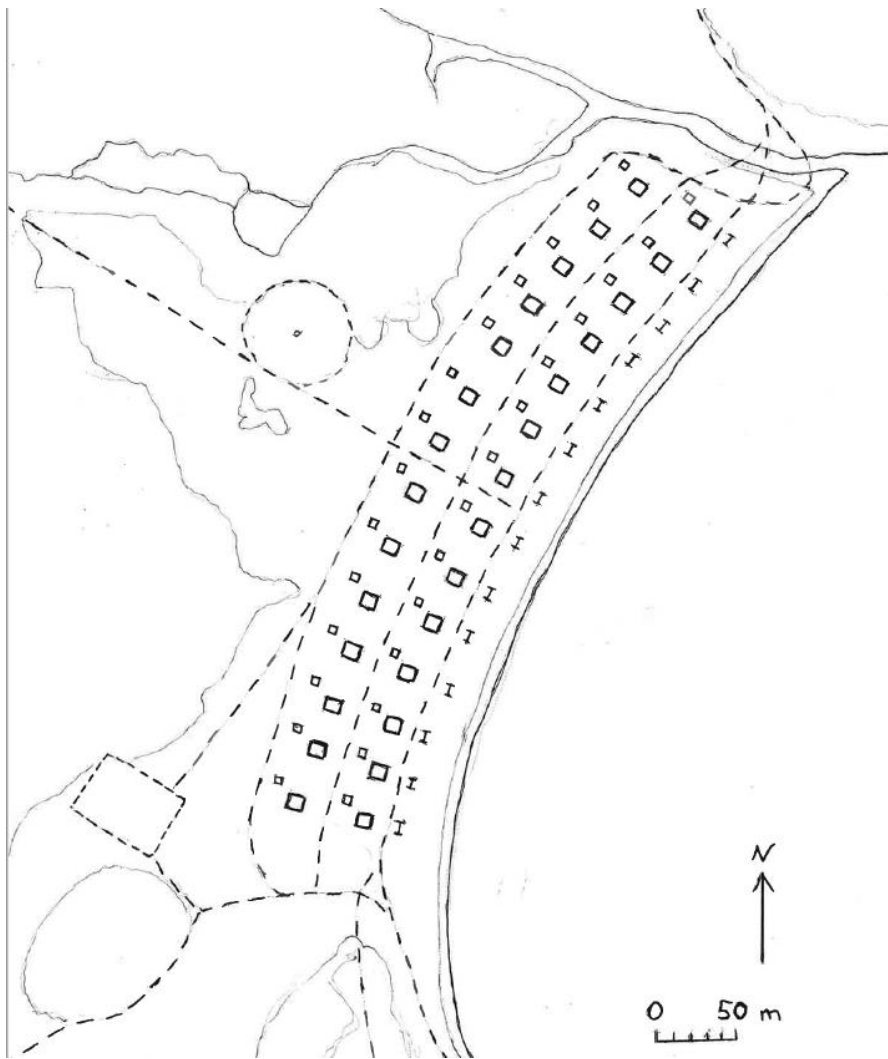
The early ‘censuses’ ca. 1880-1908 seem to indicate that people scattered when the Russians came to count their houses and people. Perhaps this was due to the season, but probably people fled to distant camps because they knew the colonists had no good intentions with their count.

Modern settlements are much more restricted: In the north the Oroch were settled near De-Kastri. Nearby, by 1900 ca. 240 Oroch were settled at Lake Kizi, and supposedly were incorporated with the Ulchi (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 750). Older villages near Kizi were Peda, Puli, Undani, etc. Kun or Kon with the collective ‘Red Taiga’ was at Chungari aka Khungari or Gur River. Nearby was Snezhniy. Most Oroch would be settled Uska aka U’ska or Uska-Orochskaya; nearby Uska-Russkaya was Russian. Some Oroch settlements could be found on the Tumnin. Dotta or Datta is at the mouth of Tumnin. Innokentyevskij was on the coast. Koppi – a place taken by Russians; etc. Oroch settlements were ‘re-settled’, e.g., forced to leave their residences, in the Soviet era. As noted, the oppression continues, and the Oroch have been gradually forced out of their communities by aggressive Russian occupiers.

In ancient times the Oroch had summer and winter villages. The winter village was relatively permanent, located near a river in a taiga and hunting area. Summer villages were located along major rivers or at estuaries on the coast, and could be moved based on fishing locations and other circumstances. It can be assumed that in prehistoric and early historic times the summer villages were named and permanent settlements that controlled an area of 300 km² or more. It would consist of 1-2+ rows of houses. In addition there were storage houses. In front of the houses ‘there stretched lines of racks for jerking fish and drying nets’ (Ivanov et al.: 754). On hunting and trapping expeditions people had temporary camps of tipi tents (‘aanga’, ‘night-rest’). A prehistoric or early historic settlement could have 140-180 people.



Part of an Oroch settlement around 1920 (they didn't know what was coming)



Conceptual Oroch village at Innokentyevski ca. 1300 AD

Ecology

The Oroch occupied a rich natural area of valleys and coasts along the Pacific Ocean. There were fertile valleys and expansive forests with an abundance of wildlife and resources of all kinds. Rivers and ocean provided aquatic resources such as fish, seals and shellfish. This was a hospitable and beautiful area that the Oroch unfortunately were not allowed to keep, as it was taken by Russian colonists after 1890.

History

The Oroch have been under outside pressure since 1800. The population may have dropped from 10,000+ in 1250 AD to 646+ in 1927, a disastrous decline that may have continued gradually over the period 1340-1950. The main cause of the population decline must have been epidemics and diseases, but contributing causes would be an exposed situation near the coast with external raiding and aggressive colonialism, particularly by the Russians. This aggression seems to continue today, as the Oroch lose their last living areas.

The Oroch were linguistically and culturally related to Udege, so that the two peoples were sometimes confused. E.g., 'wedge' in Oroch is 'typpe' and 'tykpe' in Udege, while 'eight' is

‘dyappu’ in Oroch and ‘dyakpu’ in Udege. In spite of such similarities the two people are quite distinct.

Russian scholars like to portray the Oroch as of ‘mixed’ ethnic origin, with ‘clans’ descended from the Udege, Nanai, Ulchi, Negidal, Nivkh and Evenk (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 751). There had been long historical contact with the Manchu and Chinese (ibid.). This supposedly ‘mixed’ origin and contact may have been an excuse for Russian displacements.

In the late 1800s, a small group of Oroch of 240 people settled near the Amur, and were incorporated with the Ulchi population. In the early 1930s, the Orochi National District was created, but it was cancelled shortly thereafter ‘due to a lack of native population’ (Wikipedia n.d.). The Oroch were not allowed to control their own areas.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union there apparently was a change, when the Oroch were recognized as an indigenous minority and was granted control of forests near their village. This was the preamble to disaster, as the natives were dispelled from their village before 2000 by Russians, who took over their houses and the forestry business, in a kind of pogrom.

Economy

The main ecologic and economic adaptation of the Oroch was hunting, fishing and gathering. There supposedly was no agriculture before ca. 1900, which may not be quite true (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 751). Some plants may have been cultivated before this period, though not properly documented. In one account they lived by hunting, and also had tame reindeer, which were lost during the 19th century (Shirokogoroff 1979: 82). This may simply be a reference to their name, which supposedly refers to reindeer.

Fishing was mainly in the rivers and ocean. People would hunt seals and small whales near the coast. Fishing was done year-round, in the summer especially for salmon, and otherwise for sturgeon and carp (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 751). The salmon was dried as yukola. The fish waste was used as dog food. The fishing equipment was boats, nets of nettle thread, fish spears, fishing rods, traps and more. There also was torch-light fishing and ice fishing. After the Russians came in the 1800s people might borrow small nets from them, but at the same time the access to fishing became limited. When fishing failed, there was famine, and hunger was a common experience among the Oroch after Russian colonization began (ibid.).

Sea hunting included seals and sea lions that yielded meat, blubber, and skins. At sea people used a plank boat with a crew of 6-8 men and 2-3 pairs of oars. They also used small hollowed-out canoes for 1-2 men. Seals were taken with spears, later with guns. Moored logs were used as traps when the seals came in to breed (op. cit.: 751-2).

Land hunting included elk-moose, deer, wild boar, bear and smaller fur animals (op. cit.: 752). One list of game animals included musk-deer, red-deer, elk-moose, wild-deer, wild-goat, squirrel, wolverine, sable, otter, wild-boar (Startsev n.d.: 83). The list could be expanded in many ways. The hunting weapons were bow and arrow, crossbow, and spear for bear hunting, later firearms were used, and traps for fur animals. During the autumn hunt, elk-moose and deer were lured with birch bark horns, musk deer with bark flutes. Deer were chased on skis in the winter. The meat provided food and skins provided clothing (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 752).

Gathering activities included the harvesting of roots, onion, garlic, green shoots, berries, nuts, etc. Agriculture and animal husbandry supposedly were introduced in the 1900s, though a simple use of domesticates may have occurred before this (ibid.). As will be seen Oroch activities were carried out along ecological and sustainable lines that cannot be emulated in modern societies.

Old crafts included work with fish skin, leather and fur, bark and wood, basket weaving and netmaking, as well as blacksmithing. The pottery that existed in prehistoric times was forgotten when traders brought iron pots. Thread from fibers was made with hand-held whorls. Modern tools eased the production of boats, canoes, riverboats, dog sleds, and other artefacts (ibid.).

Transportation included boats, dog sleds and skis (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 753). The dog sleds had one harness strap, as in the case of the Nivkh. The hunting sled was pulled by the hunter and dog together. The ordinary skis were 2 m long and up to 18 cm wide, while in spring the ski type was smaller and without fur coverings. The native handcraft was carefully and artistically executed. Native blacksmiths made knives and more (op. cit.: 752).

Historically, sable furs were used in trade. As contact with the Chinese and Russian traders and colonists grew, the economic disparity between people increased. Some Oroch became traders on a par with the Russians and Chinese and built themselves furnished wooden houses in the Russian style (op. cit.: 752, 754, 756).

Kinship

Households had permanent residences. Both the summer and winter houses had ridge-roofs. Summer houses could have two doors, front and back, while winter houses had only one. The house was built around two end-posts with a ridge-post in between. From this went slanted logs that were covered with bark of birch or larch. One type of summer house (kava) had both walls and ridge-roofs, and one door in the short wall. The winter house could have two layers of larch tree bark. A hearth lay lengthwise in the middle of the house with a smoke opening above. Along the side walls were sleeping places. In the summer people lay on birch bark mats on the floor. In winter they used low plank beds (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 753-4).

At the summer house was a scaffolding to dry and smoke fish, yukola. In winter the scaffolding stood outside. On beams under the roof hung dried fish and other supplies. Near the village houses were separate storehouses with ridge-roofs like the houses but built on scaffolding. In front of the houses were separate drying racks for fish and nets. Before the Revolution one found a bear-cage in the villages, they also kept foxes and eagles in outdoor cages (op. cit.: 754).

The basic diet was fish, varied with meat, blubber, berries and vegetables. People collected wild onions, lily roots, and other plants. A favorite dish was dried fish and berries in seal blubber sauce. Earlier people ate dogs killed by suffocation or, during rituals such as the bear feast, by being hit in the head with a club. Dog meat was a characteristic food for people engaged in dog breeding (Ivanov et al. 1964: 755-6).

There were gender-based tasks and activities, though the distinctions may be exaggerated. Men worked with wood, bone and other materials, women with bark, leather, skins and clothing (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 752, 759).

Supposedly the father was seen as the head of the family. In an overblown bias, it was stated that the Oroch family 'was based on the absolute right of the father' (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 756). In the next sentence this was modified. While a woman was thought to be subordinate, she reportedly enjoyed greater independence 'than the Nivkh woman' (ibid.). Needless to say this was a working relationship; women and men were relatively equal.

Russian scholars posited that people practiced cross-cousin marriage, in particular with MoBrDa but also FaSiDa and even SiDa. Probably this is a recent view based on a scholarly misunderstanding of classificatory kinship (Larkin 1964: 92). It was thought that sister exchange between men from different clans was favored. Women could be exchanged in marriage between specific 'clans', quite likely a biased view. This was called 'sister exchange' (tamumuna), and may refer to the limited case of two men marrying each others Sis (Larkin 1964: 88). Children could be promised away in marriage, and marriages between people of different ages were common (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 756). Marriage rituals included negotiations and bride price. A man, or his Fa, paid a bride price (te) of silk robes, pots, spears and, in modern times, sums of cash (Larkin 1964: 90; Ivanov et al. 1964d: 756). The woman in turn brought with her a dowry that was often worth as much as the bride price. A woman's pots or kettles symbolized her marriage. It also happened that a man had to do bride service for his wife's parents. Instances of polygamy were reported. There was a practice of levirate in which a man married his Br's widow. In rare cases step-parents and step-children could marry. In cases of infidelity a man might slap (sorode) his wife (Ivanov et al. 1964d).

Extensive rules of exogamy and marriage restrictions, extending up to the community level, meant that people habitually found spouses from other villages and bands, and even from other ethnic groups. Russian scholars saw this as a weakness, since they favored endogamy and disapproved of ethnic intermarriage. It was thought that Oroch, Ulchi and Oroch intermarriage created a 'heterogeneous mixture', as if marrying others meant that people lost their identity (Shternberg 1933: 394). Rules of exogamy may paradoxically have exacerbated the Oroch minority situation, since most people today marry Russians (Wikipedia n.d.).

Property could not be inherited by people outside the 'clan'. Probably this meant that resources were community owned or controlled.

The kinship terminology was classificatory, as with other Amur Tungus. Some basic terms are: apanga (GrFa), atanga (GrMo), etc.

Between 1963 and 1993, major changes took place in Oroch families: Almost all Oroch marriages became inter-ethnic; in 1951-1955, 73% of Orochi marriages were mono-ethnic, and in 1991-1995 only 9%. The share of Oroch-Russian marriages increased sharply from 9% in 1951-1955 to 82% in 1991-1995. The maximum size of an Oroch family decreased from 10 to 7 people from 1963 to 1993. The average family size of the Oroch in 1993 was 2.9 people, compared to 4.8 in 1963 (Wikipedia n.d.). This development had to do with the gradual expulsion of the Oroch by the Russians from their native villages.

Differentiation

What follows is an attempt to associate potential totems with known Oroch 'clans', an experiment that has also been attempted for other Tungusic peoples in this treatise. It goes without saying that all comparisons are impressionistic, and that further work needs to be

done on totemic identifications. Even so, in accordance with the premise or ‘axiom’ of an earlier existing totemic system, any attempt to get a closer view at totemic emblems may be useful in bringing new knowledge into the field.

Some potential Oroch totems are: fish (sugžasa, okto), fish-rack (peulya), greyling (ńū-ča), perch (sagati), pike (koshe), white-fish (saū), small-fish (kambuti), smelt-fish (aku, ahku), herring (kumuke), goby (laka), salmon (sugžasa), chum-salmon (dawa), pink-salmon (uku), taimen-salmon (khoyo), trout (uyu, owacho, ochkho), shark, *sea-mammal, seal (hutu, xete), seal-type (daungai), fox-seal (urike), sea-lion, whale (khalima), killer-whale (teemu, tuumu, temu), dolphin, snake (mīki), serpent, big-snake (žabda), worm (kula), crawfish (čeņei), *bird (degil), myth-bird (kōri), cuckoo (keku), woodpecker (pilakta), wagtail (čičoku), forest-bird (kara), woodcock (kara), grouse, hazel-hen (ximmui), chicken or rooster (čoko, naku), crow (tuwaki, kark), raven (oli), water-bird (gasa), cormorant (kuja), *duck (gasa, naku), duck-type (auņa), duck-type (tauma), goose (ńuņńa, nyanya), swan (kuku), owl, eagle-owl, horned-owl (garua, uksara), hawk (gāki), falcon (kiran), eagle (guzi), *bear (mafa, mapa, nepukte, ugguli, orko), wolverine (lunsanu, kuktetki, liņgapu), badger (ojo, jadači), raccoon-dog (jandaku), ferret (chohchohi), sable (noso), ermine (želeki), *otter (žūku, žūkun, mudye), wolf (ņöksjö, ńiņgu, sīwi), myth-dog (sīwi), dog (inaki, inahki), fox (sulaki, sulahki), fox-type (kiti), *tiger (tasha, amba ‘chief’), lynx (loke, chivzoki), *animal (buyu, bejun), deer (bewi, soņočo), reindeer (oro), musk-deer (xoņgolo, bewike, anda), red-deer (bicha), wild-deer (usdake, iju), *elk-moose (bewi, tokhi, sornocho, tipanga, uricha), wild-goat (uta), wild-boar (nekte), ox, pig, bat (xelegduki), beaver (tarka), marmot, gopher (ugguli), squirrel (oloki), ground-squirrel, chipmunk (ugguke, ugguky), hare, rabbit (tuksan, chagzampa, kolmakon), tree (mō), taiga (bua), birch (pē), spruce (aikta), forest (kakatyamu), wild-rosemary (senki), moss (napuka), seaweed, fire (pudya), sky, universe or taiga (bua), water (teemu), sea (nāmu, teemu), earth (nā), stone, flint, rock (žolo), cliff (gula), moon (be), sun (seun), etc.

Some prominent totem creatures are indicated by an asterisk (*). As in all cases presented here this is a partial list; some native words for potential totems, such as seaweed, are not known, while other words may be wrong or misunderstood. Far more significantly, what totems if any were associated with social groups such as extended families will depend on whatever information can be elicited from informants and sources, information that for a large part is not available at present.

Clans

Below are some Oroch ‘clans’ placed in ‘phonemic’ order:

(pl = associated w place name; A = Ainu; E = Evenk; N = Nanai; U = Udege)

Bagla -> Vagla

Pudzya (cf Bia?) fire: pudya

Bochinka/ Bese [pl] red-deer: bicha

Bese -> Bochinka

Bisyanka, Pisanka VI [pl] (cf Peulsanka) red-deer: bicha; woodpecker: pilakta

Beldy (N) bear: puren

Pya (element in clan names) animal, deer: buyu

Pyaka, Peyyaka (U) (re: Pya) animal, deer: buyu

Peulsanka, Peulyanka III (cf Bizyanka) (fish, fish-rack) animal, deer: beyun

Peonka, Pionka (U) III animal, deer: beyun; sky: bua; deer: bewi; musk-deer: bewike

Punadinka, Punadi II (N) (moss: punadi; rain forests: no reindeer=Akunka ♀)

Dokodika IV (cf. Tongolinka, Duhosika, etc) elk-moose: tokhi, tipanga

Tiktamunka, Tiktomunka (U) III (pl: Tiktamu: a rock) hare: tuksan; bird: degil
 Dumisa (re: Akunka) whale: temu; tiger: tasha
 Tumali III whale: temu
 Dunka beaver: tarka
 Tongolinka III (cf Dokodika, Mulinka) beaver: tarka
 D'uankunka (cf Dunka) crow: tuwaki; seal: daungai; salmon: dawa
 Duhosika salmon: dawa; tiger: tas
 Kyppinka small-fish: kunuke
 Khadinka -> Kaundinka?
 Khutunka, Xutunka, Kydyncha (U) I [pl – Tumnin] (cf Ogdonko, Mulinka) fox: kiti
 Kaza V duck: gasa
 Kile (E/ N) III hawk, falcon: kira
 Khulika woodcock: kori; hare: kolmakon
 Kamdziga (U) II small-fish: kambuti
 Kimonka (U) grouse: khimmui; small-fish: kummuke
 Kangunka [pl] (bird, water-bird) water-bird: gasa; musk-deer: khongolo
 Khiosanka cormorant: kuya
 Gail cormorant: kuya
 Kui (A) salmon: khoyo
 Kaundinka, Kaundiga, Khadinka IV [pl] (owl, eagle-owl, horned-owl) owl: garua
 Jakzor, Dzhaksor V chicken: čoko; serpent: zabda
 Dzhaksor (N) II chicken: čoko; otter: žuku; salmon: sugžasa
 Dzhaksor -> Jakzor hare: chagzampa
 Dzaljanka, Dzalyanka, Dzharnincha (N) II ermine: želeki
 Jominka -> Yominka
 Sulaki, Sulyaki (fox) fox: suley, sulaki
 Sulyaindziga (U) I (cf Seochonko) fox: sulaki; elk: sornocho; salmon: sugžasa
 Samandiga, Shamandika, Samadinka (N) I (part of Khutunku; split; went to Sama River)
 Samar, Samagir (N) I elk-moose: sornocho; deer: soŋočo
 Senkiyanka, Senkian, Senklanka I (cf Asinkyanka) rosemary: senki; deer: songočo
 Seochonko, Siuchunka I (pl: Seocho?) wolf: siwi; lynx: chivzoki; white-fish: saw
 Seochonko V wolf: siwi; lynx: chivzoki
 Seundinka, Seundika IV sun: seun
 Lonki (N) lynx: loke
 Moudanka, Moudancha, Mundinka (N) II [pl] tree: mo; otter: mudye
 Mulinka, Mulinkan III (U) (cf Tongolinka) [pl: Muli] snake: miki
 Munincha, Menincha (re: Moudanka) tree: mo
 Nadamisa (re: Akunka) fish, sea: namu; bear: nepukte
 Namunka, Nymunka III (re: Ulanka) [pl: rock] earth: na; sea: namu; whale: temu; bear
 Nanyagunka, Nyanyangu VI (w Asinkanka) goose: nyungnya; duck: naku; wolf: nyingu
 Yominka, Jominka, Yeminka (N) II (tiger; bear) tiger: tasha; raccoon-dog: yandaku
 Ienka (cf Ulanka) (cf. Emin) wolf: nyingu; badger: oyo, yadachi
 Vagla, (Bagla) IV (+Seundika, Dokodika, etc: alliances) hare, rabbit: vagla, kolmakon
 Edisi/ Udisinka (N) wild-goat: uta
 Ogdonko, Okdonka VI (cf Khutunka) fish: okto, aku
 Ekhemunka, Ehemonka V (cf Namunka) [pl: Ekhemu/ Syokum] duck: aunga
 Akunka (N) I (re: Aukanka) [place] (fish, smelt) <biggest 'clan'> fish: aku
 Aukanka, Aukunka II [pl] squirrel: ugguke; gopher: ugguli; bear: orko; bird; cuckoo
 Hodzher, Hojer (N) III (cf Odzhal) badger: ojo; stone: žolo; owl: uksara
 Odzhal, Ojal (N) IV

Asinkyanka, Asinkanka VI [pl] (w Nyannyangunka) deer:usdake, iju
 U'lanka -> Namunka
 Ulanka, U'lanka, Ulyanka, Ilunka III [pl: rock] (N) squirrel: oloki; bear; raven; reindeer
 Eminka, Yeminka, Emin (cf. Yominka) dog: inaki
 Oninka (N) II duck: aunka; musk-deer: anda; dog: inaki
 Ojal -> Odzhal badger: oyo
 Auku -> Aukanka duck: auja
 Ehemonka -> Ekhemunka duck: auja
 (Larkin 1964: 73-76).

Supposedly there were 30+ Oroch 'clans' (Smoliak 1970: 273). This would only count a small part of the 100+ local descent groups found earlier, and less than half of the 60+ 'clans' on record. It should be noted that Russian scholars were quick to assign a 'foreign' origin to 'clans'. Probably it was sufficient for some member to claim being Nanai or Ulchi, for the whole group to be arbitrarily assigned to that nation. Different scholars would discover new clans, showing the complexity of the social categories. Then they would dismiss the groups as foreign, without examining the real issue of local organization; totems were completely overlooked.

Around 1897 the settlement Dzhanke had 'clans' such as Ienka (12 people), Puelinka (12 p.), and Samandiga (6 p.). At the camp Domokha were: Vagla (9 people), Ulyanka (12 p.), etc. These may be seen as remnants of earlier villages with up to 14+ totem clans. Oroch 'clan' names would be adopted as surnames in the Russian period. Around 1965 there were 450 persons with 12 surnames such as, Akunka (19 families), Yeminka (10), Namunka (10), Mulinka (7), Ponedinka (4), Aukanka (3), etc. Some 20 surnames had disappeared by 1970 (Tugolukov 1972).

Conversely, potential totem creatures can be compared to 'clan' names:

fish Ogdonko, Khadinka, Kaundika, Khutunka
 pike, white-fish Kaza, Seochonko
 small-fish Akunka, Kambuti, Kamdziga, Kumuke, Lonki, Nadamisa, Ogdonko
 salmon Duhosika, Duankunka, Khiosanka, Ogdonko, Akunka, Ehemonka
 seal Edisi, Daungai, Ulanka
 whale, killer-whale Dumisa, Tumali, Khulika, Namunka
 snake, worm Mulinka, Emin, Kile, Dzhaksor, Hodzher
 bird Tiktamunka, Khulika
 cuckoo, woodpecker Aukanka, Peulsanka, Akunka
 woodcock, grouse, chicken Kimonka, Dzhaksor, Khulika
 bat Khulika
 crow, raven Duankunka, Khulika, Ulanka
 duck, goose, swan Nanyagunka, Kangunka, Khiosanka, Kui, Tumali, Kaza, Namunka, etc.
 cormorant Kui
 owl Kaundinka, Khulika, Ogdonko, Asinkyanka
 eagle, hawk, falcon Kile, Kaza
 bear Moudanka, Yominka, Ulanka
 wolverine Khadinka, Khutunka, Kaundinka, Lonki
 otter, badger, ermine, sable Munincha, Nadamisa, Dzalyanka, Dzharnincha, Dzhaksor, etc.
 raccoon-dog Ienka, Jakzor
 wolf, myth-dog, dog Seochonko, Oninka, Namunka, Ehemonka
 fox Sulyaindziga, Sulaki, Khadinka, Kaundika, Khutunka

tiger, lynx Yominka, Duhosika, Seundinka, Lonki
 deer, animal Pyä, Pyäka, Peonka, Peundinka, Punadinka, Hodzher, Asinkyanka, Odzhal
 red-deer Pudzya, Bochinka, Bese, Bisyanka
 musk-deer Kaundinka, Kaundiga, Kangunka, Oninka
 elk-moose Senkiyanka, Samandiga, Tumali, Dokodika, Dumisa, Dunka, Asinkyanka, etc.
 wild-goat, boar, pig Udisinka, Namunka
 beaver, marmot, gopher Dunka, Ehemonka, Tiktamunka, Vagla, Ogdonko
 squirrel, chipmunk Ulanka, Lonki, Khutunka, Ogdonko
 hare, rabbit Vagla, Tiktamunka, Tongolinka, Kyppinka, Seundika, Khulika, Dzalyanka,
 tree Moudanka
 sea Namunka
 sun, moon, sky Seundinka
 stone Tiktamunka, Ulanka
 earth Namunka

Underlined ‘clan’ names are those where specific totems have been suggested.

The Oroch social organization was complex and has remained somewhat of a mystery. The word for ‘clan’, xala or khala, has been vaguely rendered as ‘rod’ or ‘kind’ in Russian. A ‘clan’ person was called ‘khala-da’. A ‘clan’ supposedly was bound by ties of kinship. ‘Clan’ names reportedly had a mixed origins, from phenomena such as place names, people’s names, plants, animals etc. Examples include rivers, cliffs, seaweed, duck, tiger, etc. The names are generally not thought to be totemic, but this would rather be a case of hinting at totems otherwise held secret (Ivanov et al. 1964d). That a ‘clan’ name referred to a place need not imply that the ‘clan’ was not totemic.

The ‘clans’ had totemistic ancestry legends. The origin could relate to animals, plants or other phenomena. Examples of totemic origin stories include: seal, whale-sea (teemu), forest-bird, duck, bear, tiger (amba-jeminka), forest-heaven (bua), seaweed, rock, cliff, fire (pudja), and more.

Totems can morph into each other. The sea-spirit (teemu) was identified with the killer-whale, that in turn can be ‘anthropomorphic’ (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 757). The sacred fire (pudya) was seen as a woman. Many animals and beings can appear as humans and vice versa, including seals and whales (ibid.).

The Oroch erected totem poles, or rather collections of carved poles. ‘In specific places’ people ‘set up carved poles with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations, and wooden figures of animals and birds. The poles (tu) were sometimes as high as 8-10 meters’, and often had a bird at the top (Ivanov et al.: 757). Unfortunately no surveys of such poles are available. Some figures include: eagle, bear, tiger, ox, sun, etc. The poles would point to some of the animals and beings that were present in the local totemic universe.

One dubious claim was that each clan had its own territory, which it shared through marriage and cooperation with another clan and immigrants. No doubt this was a bias by Russian scholars, who saw ‘clans’ as corporate units rather than as local descent groups, totem clans. Presumably it was the local community or village that had a territory, shared by all the descent groups or totem clans that it comprised. The scholars would confound local communities, bands and other units by the term ‘clan’. It was thought that ‘clan’ members shared a name associated with a river or place; no doubt this refers to a local community or

band. The ‘clan’ or band members had to provide space for the needy, feed the foodless, and help sick members. ‘Clans’ or bands would have their own celebrations. This could refer either to community celebrations or to feasts given by totem clans (ibid.).

Russian scholars would somewhat reluctantly note that the so-called ‘clans’ and ‘clan groups’ among the Oroch were exogamous. For the most part they married outside the group. The 6 ‘dokha’ were noted as ‘clan’ ‘alliances’ (Larkin 1964: 75). It was claimed that they could have partial or full exogamy. In some ‘clan groups’ there was widow-marriage between groups, as a form of levirate. Such groups had a combined tradition of common origins and the ‘adoption’ of clans. In other ‘clan groups’ there had been a form of ‘clan segmentation’ in which clans maintained exogamy after separating (Larkin 1964: 76). Such practices are hard to make sense of without more detailed information. It would seem that the levirate would not break exogamy rules, since both men married a woman from another group. Russian scholars also liked to point out that in myths exogamy was not practiced; yet as most people are aware myths do not conform to everyday reality.

Certain ‘clans’ could or would exchange women in the old days. Members of such interlocking clans were bound by a reciprocal relationship called ‘sengi’ (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 756). Probably this was a general term for affinal relations. The scholars’ much more decisive views were based on an ideological fiction of ‘group marriage’; while a simpler view would be that unrelated people were free to marry.

Rather than focusing on marriage, it is the position of each totem clan in relation to other local clans that has to be emphasized. These were not related by marriage, but by classificatory and extended kinship based on the distribution of totems. It is this wider distribution and complementarity of totem clans that forms the basis of the local organization, and by extension the wider organization of native society.

Phratries

Until the Revolution there supposedly were 6 exogamous ‘clan groups’ aka ‘phratries’ (dokha) among the Oroch. The ‘clan groups’ were bound together as an alliance ‘by ties of kinship’, i.e., forms of classificatory or extended kinship (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 756). Each ‘clan group’ (dokha) had 2-7+ ‘clans’ (khala).

The 6 ‘dokha’ and their respective ‘khala’: (E = Evenk; N = Nanai; U = Udege)

I	II	III
Khutunka <wolverine>	Yominka <tiger>	Namunka <earth>
Akunka <small-fish>	Aukanka <cuckoo>	Tiktamunka <bird>
Samandiga <elk-moose>	Dzaljanka <otter>	Mulinka <snake>
Senkiyanka <elk-moose>	Moudanka <bear>	Peulsanka <cuckoo>
Seochonko <wolf>	Punadinka <deer>	Ulanka <squirrel>
Samar (N) <elk-moose>	Kamdziga (U) <fish>	Tongolinka <hare>
Sulyaindziga (U) <fox>	Oninka (N) <wolf>	Kile (E) <eagle>
	Dzhaksor (N) <grouse>	Tumali <elk-moose>
		Hodzher (N) <deer>
		Peonka (U) <deer>

IV	V	VI
Vagla <hare>	Seochonko <wolf>	Bizyanka <deer>
Seundinka <sun>	Ehemonka <bear>	Asinkyanka <deer>
Kaundinka <owl>	Kaza <duck>	Nanyagunka <duck>
Dokodika <elk-moose>	Kimonka (U) <grouse>	Ogdonko <fish>
Ojal (N) <deer>	Jakzor (N) <grouse>	

In pointed brackets (< >) some tentative totem identifications are suggested. The intention is to gauge if 'dokha' contain 'clans' with similar totems. Such seems not to be the case. Yet two-three observations may be added. One is that each 'dokha' may contain a significant number of similar totems, e.g., 3 'elk-moose' in I, 4 carnivores in II, 5 herbivores in III, and 3 birds in V. Another observation is that the 'dhokha' together represent a full complement of totems; in this reading: fish or small-fish, snake, bird-cuckoo-grouse-duck, owl-eagle, bear, wolverine-otter, wolf, fox or tiger, deer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, sun, and earth. Please remember that this is a random configuration, based on a perceived comparison, which would be both a weakness and a strength; the claim to 'realism' is weak, but the pervasive distribution of totem clans may be demonstrated.

One qualification is that the 'dokha' do not include all Oroch 'clans'. Among the additional clan names we find Sulond'ika, perhaps related to Sulyaindiga. Other names include Kurrinka (Main), Samagir or Samargy, related to Samandiga and Samar, and more. Groups had a shifting relationship, a kind of segmentation. For instance, Khutunku split up and had a sub-group Samandiga at Sama River. Nyanyangu had branches such as Nyanyagunka and possibly Asinkanka.

Supposedly the 'dokha' alliances were practical and based on cooperation, such as in fishing, hunting or warfare, and also were based on councils or court attendance, such as paying fines or fixing a brideprice (Ivanov et al. 1964d). Beyond this they point back to the former existence of local phratries or totem clans linked by similar totems, such as herbivores.

Moieties

The existence of moieties or village halves among the Oroch is overshadowed by the question of the 'dokha', 'khala' and their significance. That every major settlement or village was divided into sides, 'upper'-'lower', N-S or similar, seems reasonable.

Since native life was broken up at an early date by epidemics and colonization, it is difficult to reconstruct the finer details of local life. Yet it seems certain that communities were complex and had criss-crossing distinctions and ties, here identified as totem clans, phratries and moieties. These finer distinctions and subdivisions together would make up the totemic organization of the local community as a whole.

The village organization

The closer distribution of 'clans' and 'clan groups' can only be examined by considering each family, preferably each individual, and their residence in particular Oroch villages. For instance, in the north some clans were Edisi, Punadinka, Munincha, Mulinkan, Sulaki (fox), Ulanka (Namunka), etc. At Data the 'clans' included Punadinka (61 people), Yominka, Khutunka, Akunka, Mulinka (at Muli-Data), and some other groups (Shternberg 1933: 405-6).

Other totems near Muli-Data may be Dyaka, Dionka, etc. It would take a detailed investigation to figure out how ‘clans’ were distributed in a village, preferably going back 200-300+ years. It was indicated that dying ‘clans’ could be rejuvenated by adopting in-marrying members who then would become ‘clan’ ancestors (op. cit.: 407).

Oroch totems could also be referred to as ‘clan gods’, supposedly patrilineal, each with its clan fire (pud’ya): (an asterisk (*) indicates prevalence): *fish, sturgeon, carp, *killer-whale (teemu), *seal (as human), sea-lion, *bird, *rooster, *cuckoo, *crow, *aquatic-bird, *duck, *eagle-owl or horned-owl, hawk, *bear (totem: ‘tribal’), sable, wolf, *dog, *tiger (totem: ‘moieties’), elk-moose, deer, musk-deer, roe-deer, pig, boar, squirrel, *rabbit, *cliff, stone, *rock, *flint, fire, *water, *sea, *sky (bua), sun, *seaweed, leek, tree, forest, birch, copper, house, etc.

A full or ideal totemic organization would have 12-14+ totem clans or extended families in a village. Various sources indicate some ‘upper’ totem clans such as rabbit, beaver, deer, mouse, frog, and stone; a ‘middle’ group of bear, tiger, or dog, and a ‘lower’ group with crow, duck, owl, fish, salmon, and shark. This is quite uncertain and becomes a first approximation to the local distribution of totem clans. A closer examination will be attempted below. More likely it can be suggested that the ‘lower’ side included aquatic animals: fish, seal, whale. The ‘upper’ side would have land animals: bear, tiger, fox. In such a scenario the birds could be in the ‘middle’, such as owl. This, however, remains uncertain. The local distribution of totem clans involved both a traditional distribution and negotiations.

Another approach is to outline a combination of the totems found in relation to the ‘clan’ names or ‘khala’ and the ‘dokha’ configuration: fish, snake, grouse, eagle, bear, badger, wolf, fox, deer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, sky, earth. Some such configuration, with room for permutations, e.g., owl for eagle or tiger for fox, is considered to have been found in ancient Oroch villages.

With an established totemic system, where people identified themselves with animals and natural beings, the ideology could be extended from the village up to the national level. The bear totem is listed as ‘tribal’, and the tiger totem as related to ‘moieties’, associated with the Yominka clan and the Udege tribe. Hence bear and tiger could represent the two moieties or sides in a village, with bear as first chief and tiger as second chief. A related story is the Korean origin myth, where tiger and bear vied for leadership. The tiger has also been suggested as an ‘ethnic’ totem for the Oroch (Zgusta 2015: 309). Over time both bear and tiger may have served as national emblems for the people.

Social differences and integration

Russian scholars, though confused, thought that the Oroch ‘clan’ system began to disintegrate after 1850 (Ivanov et al. 1964d). At the same time, increased trade led to an emerging social inequality among the natives. The disintegration of the social organization is a crucial issue, that may have started much earlier, due to epidemics, unrest and population loss around 1340-1930. Together with the confused ideas about ‘clans’ among the scholars, this has made a reconstruction of native social life difficult to achieve, and has obscured the issue of totemism, confounded by the scholars’ reluctance to discuss totems.

Politics

The Oroch would have laws aimed at maintaining peace. According to one Russian hangup, the 'clan' or band followed rules of blood vengeance. If a stranger was killed, the whole 'clan' or local group would have to pay compensation, in exceptional cases offer a woman. This would indicate a strong desire to maintain peace within and between communities. Offering a woman in marriage was a form of alliance building. Goods paid as 'fines' included Chinese textiles, iron pots, robes, money, and more (Ivanov et al. 1964d). This must refer to fairly recent times. Maintaining peace probably was a major policy for the nation as a whole and its councils.

A village was represented by a chief (amba). A beautiful political system can be envisaged, in which the people first came together in local councils, where each of the 12+ totem clans were represented by an 'elder', with formal leadership assigned to a local chief, assisted by a second chief. They would have contact with other local chiefs up to the band level, and from there to the tribal or national level, where a confederative chief may have presided. Through councils, courts and political processes there were means to arbitrate conflicts and feuds, settle disagreements and negotiate peace between groups.

There were separate laws for council meetings between 'clans' or bands. When the Russians arrived around 1850, native rules were set aside. In brief, the native political system was broken, and the Oroch became an oppressed minority under Russian rule.

Religion

The oldest forms of Oroch belief are about the spirits or 'masters' of nature (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 757-7). Mention is made of a creator Khadau, sky or heaven ('bua'), taiga, earth, sea and water. Other spirits were fire and various animals such as killer-whales, seals, bears and tigers. In one view, the creator Khadau created the world, animals, people, blacksmithing, social and religious customs. The lord of the sea (teemu) was an orca or killer-whale. Before a sea-hunt garlic was sacrificed to 'teemu'. Whale bones were buried and many taboos applied to hunting killer-whales and the seals it had injured. The god or 'master spirit' of fire was a woman, Pudya, and was worshipped by every family or clan. The master of the forest and sky (bua) was given sacrifices of dogs and plant food. Also the lord of the sea (teemu) received annual sacrifices (op. cit.: 757). One important belief concerned ghosts and the spirits of ancestors in the form of animals and beings. Such ancestral ghosts or spirits included: bear, otter, tiger, elk-moose, etc. (Shternberg 1933: 427).

There was a cycle of annual celebrations in each local community. The 'clan' or rather the local group had two seasonal celebrations with offerings to the gods, including the fire god. Annual ceremonies included 'cults' celebrating animals and beings such as seal, killer-whale, eagle, bear, tiger, fire, etc. Such ceremonies could be based in totem clans, who might sponsor the event for the village as a whole. There could then be 'cult' rituals for every totem represented in the village, down to squirrel and hare. One ritual concerned the seal, which was viewed as a human being, with many taboos associated with seal-hunting, where the meat was ritually eaten and the skull buried. The bear ceremony was widely celebrated, though few descriptions remain. The tiger was particularly worshipped, it was the 'master' (amba) of all the forest animals. Tiger hunting was prohibited. A tiger was killed only as a 'clan' or band retribution for members it had killed. Tiger bones were buried, as in the case of bears. Only members of the tiger clan could eat animals killed by a tiger (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 757).

Bear clan kinfolk were the organizers of the Bear Festival. A bear cub was bought or caught and brought up locally. The bear feast was held in a prescribed manner; clan members prepared the feast; each family contributed supplies; dogs and sacred wood shavings were sacrificed to the dead bear; the bear meat was eaten ceremonially; the bear's skull and bones were buried; and the skull was blackened with soot (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 757).

As local celebrations were suppressed by the Russians, shamans became more important. The shaman cult built on nature beliefs; there were separate shaman shrines where shamans sacrificed pigs, roosters and dogs to their guardian spirits, with connections to Chinese beliefs. The shamans' attire had totemic figures: fish, snake, worm, lizard, frog, hawk, eagle, bear, tiger, bat, etc. Near trees or groves the shamans set up carved poles with human and animal figures, as well as wooden figures of animals and birds. The totem poles (tu) could be 10 m high; at the top was a bird-carving that could be 1 m high. In the sanctuary shamanic rituals were held, such as ensuring hunting and fishing luck or sending the souls of the dead to the hereafter. The shaman also went on ritual journeys through the village (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 757).

Over time Buddhism and Christianity arrived. Orthodox Christian missionaries were rejected by the Oroch, who were forcibly Christianized. Christian rituals were held only when the missionary was present. Otherwise people adhered to their ancient rituals (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 757-8). Under communism native beliefs were suppressed even more.

Culture

Since early historic times there were outside influences in Oroch culture. The clothing reflected the mixed connections of the Oroch. There were Manchu-inspired robes, short Chinese trousers, as well as native clothes of fishskin and leather, leggings, leather shoes, and more. The shoes could be of the moccasin or sole type; the toe piece was often decorated. In winter, men wore a leather apron (bopi) over their robes; a leather collar or poncho called 'elk-head' (miata) was used by the men when hunting in winter, and is often referred to in myths (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 754-5).

The women wore Tungusic breast cloths. Old clothing was cut in front and open in the chest, but covered by a richly decorated breast cloth (nölli). This breast cloth is found today only at weddings (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 755). Unfortunately the scholars omitted describing the breast cloth, that could give hints at totemic affiliations. Clothing might include animal symbolism, apparently also tiger stripes, perhaps thought to protect against tigers (op. cit.: 758-9).

The richest ornamentation was given to grave-clothes (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 758). In the summer, men wore china hats of birch bark, in the winter fur calottes. For protection from snow and mosquitoes people used textile hoods under the hat. Men wore one braid, women two bound with a red cloth string (op. cit.: 755).

Music was produced by a hollowed-out log drum, used during the Bear Feast. Other instruments were Jew's harp, one-stringed fiddles, and flutes (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 758). Art forms included wood and bone carvings, figures on bark and cloth, drawing, embroidery and application, as well as other expressions. Bright colors were preferred. Images could be geometric or figurative. Many figures and carvings were associated with the Bear Feast.

Wooden sculptures (tokcho) were part of the shaman cult, but were also used in children's games and as a tomb monument. Motives included bear, elk-moose, etc.

The folklore included songs, myths and legends. The myths comprised cosmogony and the 'master' spirits in nature, the creator, forest, sea, fire, bear, tiger, and more. Many fairy tales were wonderful and magical, but also had everyday details of hunting and life in general. Animal stories could represent the origin of totem clans (Ivanov et al.: 757). Animals noted included: crow, tiger, etc. Russian scholars emphasized semi-historical accounts of 'clan' or band conflicts or blood vengeance, but would note that stories also mentioned council meetings and peace settlement, without emphasizing this latter part, that peace was a major concern. It is told, among other things, that Oroch once had a written language that they lost.

The naming of children is not well documented. Some male names may be: Tumneini (good understanding), Tsatyu, Lingao, Masi (strong), etc. Names may have a variety of origins, and are not easy to link with totems. Mostly the recorded names seem to be nicknames; people would be cautious about telling their real names to strangers, in particular inquisitive people like the scholars.

Throughout life an Oroch was both personally and socially surrounded by countless taboos and rituals that guided the person's development. There were menstruation and childbirth taboos, in which women were secluded for a period, also found among other peoples (Sternberg 1933: 417). Children were born in a special delivery hut (Turayev 2001: 25). There was a limited practice of infanticide (ibid.).

Gender roles tended to be flexible. In adult life men and women had separate tasks, but with considerable leeway. A gender related division of labor was common in most native tribes. Hunting mainly was performed by men, while women took care of gardening and had charge of the household.

A 'clan' or local community had its own burial place. Burial could take place in various ways, on scaffolding, in a tomb house or underground. The burial ceremony included the belief in an afterlife. People tried to take care of the corpse by wrapping it in cloth and bark, putting it in a coffin or wood covering in a grave or grave house. Many objects and equipment were laid by the grave. The soul of the dead moved on foot to the realm of the dead (Ivanov et al. 1964d: 758).

Summary

Oroch culture was intensively studied between 1880 and 1980 (Loukjantchenko n.d.). At the same time their rights were not respected, and the region's ecology was damaged by an exploitative industry run by 'outsiders' (ibid.). Russian scholars could only note the terrible change that their country's colonization brought to the Oroch. The Revolution brought about collectivization and Russification. Native villages were destroyed, and people were 're-settled' in Russian controlled settlements (ibid.). A fishing collective was created at the village of Uska in 1933, and the place would grow to include most Oroch. Under Russian control fishing, agriculture, animal husbandry, a boarding school, health center, an old people's home, and other institutions appeared (Ivanov et al. 1964d). Compulsory education took place in Russian, with an ideological and cultural indoctrination aimed at turning the natives into peasants, subservient to the Russians. A local Russian-dominated group of officials and colonists appeared, that would spell doom to the Oroch people.

Around 1960 Russian scholars would glorify the Oroch situation: ‘The days of hungry existence are gone forever’ (op. cit.: 759). This would be a meagre comfort, and not even a half-truth, when the Oroch had no control over their lands, resources or even their residence. The particularly cruel treatment that the Oroch face today (2023) may be due to the rich resources and strategic importance of this eastern region, including oil, and the control of the area by Russian ‘oligarchs’, former communist leaders.

It is necessary to look back across the centuries to get a fuller picture of Oroch society and culture. In early historic times the Oroch apparently switched from a totemic to a territorial organization – but not quite. The ‘clans’ were still totemic, though this was never carefully studied. Before 1250 AD a time can be envisioned when the Oroch flourished as a totemic society, firmly in control of their physical and symbolic realm. People were intensely involved with their environment, the landscape and living beings within it, and the wider forces and phenomena in nature, including sustainable ecosystems.

Udege

Aka Udehe, Udegey, Udihe, Udikhe, Udekhe, Udee, Udde, Ude, Tazy, Tatzu, etc.; sometimes confused with the Orochi (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 737).

The Udege or Udehe are the southernmost of the Amur Tungus peoples, reaching from the Amur Valley east towards the Sea of Japan. The territory covers 40,000+ km²; ample for 15,000+ people. An early estimate could be 15,-20,000 people in 100-125 village settlements.

Population estimates include: 1926: 1357 in Russia; 1970: 1469 people; 1980: 1,600-2,400; 1989: 2,011 in Russia.

Some Udege districts based on valley drainages and coastal areas are: I: Khor. II: Samarga. III: Bikin. IV: Iman-Dalnyaya. V: SE Coast. VI: Upper Ussuri. VII: South Coast.

The Udege supposedly were placed in 6 'resettlement areas' around 1940. These bore some resemblance to Indian reservations. The paranoid Russians may have wanted to place the natives out of reach of the Japanese. Udehe resettlement areas and refuge places included: Khungari (N) (with Oroch), Tumnin (with Oroch), Anyuy resttlement area, Khor resettlement area, Samarga resettlement area, Bikin resettlement area, Iman resettlement area, Khungari(?) resettlement area (S), on 'Kumovka' river (Larkin 1957).

Recent locations of Udege settlements, North to South, are near the Anyuy above Bira, on the upper Chor River, on the middle Chor, on the Samarga River, on the upper Bikin River, on the Bikin near Ulunga, west of Gora Yysokaja, and around Tavajza. In the early days, as noted, they would have roughly a hundred settlements or villages throughout the area. By 1980 the settlements had been reduced to 10-14. Both in terms of population and in terms of settlements there was a drop of 80-90%.

People lived in camps, settlements or villages that were often located along a river. Families could move from camp to camp by boat. A historical camp could consist of one or more extended family groups. A recent village could have 2-7 houses for 4-12 simple families. In prehistoric and early historic times a village might hold 140-180+ people.

Ecology

The Udehe lived in a rich and beautiful natural habitat with rivers, coastal areas, forests and mountains that provided a wealth of materials and resources for the people. Since early historic times contests and invasions would be involved with major external people such as Manchu, Chinese, Koreans and Japanese. The main impact would be when the Russians took an interest in the area after 1870 (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 738).

History

The rich Udege land had long been under external pressure, a pressure that grew over time. Under Chinese influence around 1890, the Udehe faced considerable racism from their Chinese visitors, who called them 'trogodites' and 'wild people' (Shirokogoroff 1979: 362). Chinese traders traveled through the Udege area until the year 1900, although the area was annexed by Russia in 1864 (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 737). A significant Chinese colonial

settlement also took place in the area. In this context the natives appeared partly as serfs under the Chinese.

From an early date the Udehe may have been used to seeking refuge inland near the mountains to avoid outside colonizers. Russian peasants were sent as colonists to the Udege area after 1883. Many Udege escaped the colonists by staying as hunter-gatherers in the hinterland. During the Revolution, the Udege enlisted as scouts for Russian guerrillas, described in the novel 'The Last Udegej' by A. Fadeyev (op. cit.: 738). After the Revolution followed forced collectivization and attempts to eradicate native culture (op. cit.: 745).

Economy

The old main occupation was hunting, fishing and gathering (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 738-740). However there may also have been early forms of agriculture, such as pig breeding and growing certain food plants, like tubers. This may have gradually developed from hunting wild boars and caring for edible plants, followed by externally introduced domesticates.

Hunters in general caught musk-deer, deer, elk-moose and bear; of birds they caught duck, grouse, goose, and more. The historic fur prey included sable, raccoon-dogs and more. Elk-moose were caught all year round. Deer were caught in the fall, but also in the summer because of an organ, 'panty', that was sold to the Chinese. Musk-deer were caught with self-shot or lured with bark-whistles; the musk gland was sold to the Chinese. The hunting weapons were bow and arrow (bei), spear and later firearms. People also used game-fences with openings every 200-300 m where camouflaged game pits were placed. In the pits they not only caught deer but also wild boar, wolf and tiger. Tigers were once seen as sacred and only killed in self-defense or when the animal attacked a camp; their organs and fur could be sold to the Chinese (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 738-9).

Fishing was secondary, probably because access was blocked by colonists. The fish sought after included salmon and carp. The fishing equipment was fish spears, torch-light fishing, nettle nets, and more. Fish and meat were dried or smoked for human consumption. Fish was also eaten raw, frozen, boiled and fried (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 739-740).

Seal-hunting was underdeveloped, again most likely because colonists from the outside blocked access to the sea shore. It is thought that in early historical time the hunting of sea mammals was prominent. In the south, some Udege fished seaweeds for the Chinese (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 740).

The gathering part of the economy was quite extensive. Plant foods included berries, nuts, onions, roots, green shoots etc. More specialized activities included the gathering of ginseng for the Chinese trade (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 738-9).

Knowledge of agriculture was most widespread in the south; people cultivated corn, beans, pumpkin, squash, cucumber, potato, onions and garlic, as well as wheat, barley, millet, opium, and other plants. This would set them aside from other Tungus, who were mostly hunter-gatherers. The produce was offered for trade with Chinese merchants or landlords (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 740).

Native crafts included work with leather and fish skin, woodworking, basket and net weaving; the blacksmithing art was also known, pottery and tool manufacture (ibid.). For

transportation, people used carrying straps and baskets. Skis were used in winter. Hollowed-out log boats (ana) and a sleigh (tukhi) pulled by a man and dog was used. Birch bark canoes are known from myths.

People practiced sharing of the hunting booty. A hunter had to share the meat with everyone who lived nearby. Local families provided mutual assistance, they helped the old, sick and people who could not fend for themselves (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 740-1).

The trade with the Chinese included fur, ginseng and horns as medicine and potency remedies. In return people received cloth, rice, tea, and more. The Chinese used credit and liquor to exploit people in the trade. A debt bondage could be turned into a state of serfdom. Entire families could be sold into slavery to service debts to the merchant (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 737-8).

Kinship

Households lived in permanent houses. The old house (dzhugdy) had a ridge-roof with or without a wall. The base frame was two tripods with a beam in between, the sides of which were covered with bark, etc.; in the opening on the short wall hung a strip of bark for the door; plank beds stood along each long wall; in the middle was a lengthwise fire place. Food was preferably cooked on a bonfire outside the house. The winter house (tuo dzho) was larger than the summer house, with thicker posts, two bark layers and more bed space; several families could live in the winter house, which could be 9 m long. For temporary use in travel and hunting a tipi tent (cholo) was used. Among Udehe peasants were longhouses (fanza) with Chinese-inspired heating. Later people acquired Russian type houses (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 741).

Near the house was often a storehouse on a platform (dyaka, dzhali) for dried fish, meat, grain, nets, gear, hunting equipment, and more. The Udehe preserved old communal hospitality rules, treating visitors hospitably (op. cit.: 741-2).

Marriage became an issue in historic times. The Udehe reportedly were monogamous around 1900. Among the Udege were many poor men who never got married, because they could not afford to pay the bride price. The bride price (tori) was generally high, and could most easily be paid by Chinese and rich Nanais; the Chinese paid 400-500 rubles for an Udege woman, or they got her as payment for debts. The deficit of women led to extensive marriage with children; one also had the custom of exchanging or dividing the woman, which reduced the bride price cost. The marriage ceremony was simple; at first the bride price was paid, secondly, food was served. In the South people used the Chinese custom of 'sharing a cup' for the spouses which sealed the marriage. The wedding feast could last for several days, after which the bride's brother carried the bride on his shoulders out of the house and handed her over to the groom (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 743).

Differentiation and social organization

The Udehe word for 'clan' supposedly was 'se' (Smoliak 1970: 269). This may be comparable to 'family'.

Potential Udehe totems include: fish (sugbu, sugžehe, suhja, sukdzya), white-fish (various: nyusa, sau, kali, žožuyo, guese), salmon (dawa, žuiso, žauņa, ažin, cuma), trout (oyo), seal

(xete), whale (kalim), snake (miki, kuliga, wê, žabda), lizard, toad (utya), frog (exi), bird, (tuni, diel), small-bird (cikcigi), cuckoo (kuk), woodpecker (kêxi, kiexi), grouse-woodcock (various: tyiko, sumugi, naku, na'u), crow (tua'i, tuagi), raven (wali), water-bird (gaha), duck (gaha, nyuŷež, kangu, aunga, tauma), goose (nyoŋnya), swan (kûxi), gull (kilai, kilae), owl (ga, oksar), hawk (gexi), eagle (gusi, muyi), bear (žai, siža), wolverine (oŋdo), badger (yandasi), raccoon-dog (nautu, nakutu), marten (kahä), weasel (soluö), ermine-sable (želexi, nuho), otter (žugu), wolf (nyengu), dog (inai, inayi), fox (sula'i), tiger (tasa), lynx (luk), animal (bui, buyi), deer (bes, sigisa), reindeer (oro), roe-deer (gulugese, gilong), wapiti (suželihe), elk-moose (tok), boar-pig (nukte, nakta, nekte), monkey, squirrel, hare-rabbit (tuksa), tree (mô), forest, taiga (bua), alder, cannibal, hearth, fire (ahikta), water (moxo), sea, bog, sky, universe, taiga (bua), thunder, stone (žolo), mountain, earth (nâ, duho), sun (sûn), etc.

Some Udehe 'clans' tentatively compared with totems are: (O = Oroch)

Baggadiga	seal: xete
Badiga	seal: xete
Bese, Bochinka (at River Kumo-Kuznetsova)	animal, deer: beyu; deer: bes
Puza, Pudza, Pudzya (cf. Bese)	deer: bes
Bisyanka	deer: bes
Punadinka	deer: beyun
Peulyanka	animal, deer: buyi; sky: bua
Peonka, Pianka	animal, deer: beyun; forest: bua
Dokhodika	elk-moose: tok
Tiktamunka	hare: tuksa
Dogomunka (pl.: Dogomun)	
Tozya	tiger: tasa; hare: tuksa; bird: diel
Dumudiga	duck: tauma
Dymisa	duck: tauma
Tongolinka	bird: tuni
Taudiga	salmon: dawa; crow: tuai; earth: duho
Deukchinka	grouse: tuagi
Gadyinka, Khadinka (resettled at Anyuy)	seal: xete
Kotenka, Khutunka (pl.: Koten)	seal: xete
Kukchinka (pl: Kukchi) (cf. Oninka)	cuckoo: kuk; swan: kukhi; woodpecker: kexi; hawk
Kaza, Kasa, Kadza	duck: gaza; eagle: gusi
Kile, Kilae (gull)	gull: kilai; white-fish: kali; eagle: gusi; roe-deer: gilong
Khamdanka, Khamdonka (pl.: Khamdy)	whale: kalim
Kamdziga	owl: ga
Kamandiga, Kamdziga (cf. Kanchuga)	duck: kangu
Kimonko	deer: kilong
Kumunka, Kemenka	bear: xomoti
Kangunka	duck: kangu
Kanchuga, Kanchiga (cf. Kamdziga)	duck: kangu
K'ya, Kya, Keye, Kyaka (cf. Kyalundzyuga)	water-bird: gaha; owl: ga
Kyalundzyuga, Kyalundiga (cf. Kya)	water-bird: gaha; gull: kilai; deer: kilong; snake
Gvasinka, Gvasyunka (pl.)	white-fish: guese; marten: kahä
Kaundinka	marten: kahä
Geonka, Geunka, Gianka, KUingke (cf. Kuinka)	duck: kangu, gaha
Kuinka, Khuinka (cf. Geonka)	duck: kangu
Tsoodiga	snake: žabda; small-bird: cikcigi; grouse: tyiko

Dzalyanka weasel: soluö; stone: žolo
 Chunnodiga salmon: cuma
 Tsongadiga salmon: žauņa
 Chzhargonkonko (pl.: Chzhango) white-fish: žožuyo; salmon: žauņa
 Zapdiga fish: suhja, sukdzja
 Sigde, Sigdine fish: sugžehe, sukdzja; otter: žugu; deer: sigisa
 Sulyayidziga, Sulyayndziga fox: sulai; weasel: soluö; sable: žexi; fox: sulai; stone
 Samandiga, Samandinga sun: sîn; grouse: sumugi
 Sundiga sun: sîn
 Senkiyanka water-flea: suank
 Siochonka (O) salmon: žuiso; bear: žai, siža
 Seundinka sun: sîn
 Suanka, Sienka (water-fleas) salmon: žauņa; water-flea: suank; white-fish: saw
 Lyudiga lynx: luk; squirrel: uluk
 Mypdiga eagle: muyi
 Mulinka snake: miki
 Munincha tree: mō
 Moudanka eagle: muyi; tree: mō; water: moxo
 Nadamissa raccoon-dog: nautu; earth: nâ
 Namunka (O) sea: namu; goose: nyongnya; raccoon-dog: nakutu; boar: nukte
 Niudiga goose: nyongnya; white-fish: syusa; grouse: nau; raccoon-dog: nautu; sable
 Nyannyangunka goose: nyongnya; duck: nyuyež; wolf: nyengu
 Yominka (O) wolf: nyengu
 Ienka badger: yandasi; wolf: nyengu
 Idiga, Udiga dog: inayi
 Udanka, Ude, Uddan (cf. Udehe) wolverine: ongdo; salmon: ažin
 Hutanka -> Udanka, Edinka snake: wê
 Edinka, Yedinka salmon: ažin
 Ody (toad, lizard) toad: utya
 Ogdonka fish: okto; owl: oksar
 Vagla, Vagda (star, bear) bear: žai; star
 Ekhemunka, Ekhenke frog: exi
 Ugandiga fish: okto
 Akunka (O) duck: aunga
 Asinkanka (O) salmon: ažin
 Ulyanka raven: wali; reindeer: oro; squirrel: uluk
 Ambanka frog: emenda
 Amulinka, Anulinka duck: aunga
 Emenda (frog) frog: emenda
 Oninka wolverine: oņdo; dog: inai
 Ayanka trout: oya; duck: aunga; fire: ahikta
 etc. (Larkin 1957; Tugolukov 1972).

One scholar simplistically assumed that there only were 18 Udehe ‘clans’ (Smoliak 1970: 273). The number no doubt was several times as many; at least 70 groups are known, scratching at the surface of Udehe social complexity.

Presumably an unlimited number of Udehe totem clans existed in prehistoric times, so the recorded names would be a selection of surviving units of varying types and origins. At the same time the local number of clans would be finite. There are indications that each Udehe

village had a certain number of descent groups in early historic times. It was said that originally there were ‘very few’ Udehe and Oroch clans (Tugolukov 1972). Probably this refers to the number of descent groups or totem clans in each village, anywhere from 3 to 14+. Unfortunately the number is not specified. The scholar thought that the groups later would increase through ‘segmentation’ and the immigration of ‘foreign’ clans (ibid.). Rather this is a question of multiplying the ‘few’ local descent groups by the number of villages; though reduced by depopulation, the cumulative number of ‘clans’ would be substantial.

Some Udehe ‘clan groups’ and locations in resettled areas are given as:

	at: Anyuy	Khor	Samarga	Bikin	Iman	Khungari	(total)
(Kumunka:)							
Kumunka				zX			(X)
Kimonko	15	68					(83)
Kemenka					9		(9)
Kaza			7				(7)
Puza			3				(3)
Bese		X					(X)
Namunka							
(Kyalundzyuga:)							
Kyalundzyuga	46	121		z15	13	9	(204)
(Sulyayidziga-Kukchinka:)							
Sulyayidziga	7	28		z55			(90)
Kuinka				x10			(10)
Kukchinka				x31			(31)
Samandiga			25				(25)
(Amulinka:)							
Amulinka	24					5	(29)
Peonka				y41			(41)
(Kanchuga-Kamdziga:)							
Kamdziga			8			12	(20)
Kanchuga				x97		26	(123)
Geonka				y35			(35)
(K’ya:)							
K’ya				z4	4		(8)
Sigde					3		(3)
Suanka				z23			(23)
(other:)							
Ayanka			4		5		(9)
Edinka (pl: Edinke)							
Ogdonka (near Koppi-Nelma)		X					(X)
(total)	(92)	(217+)	(47)	(311+)	(34)	(52)	(753+)
<no. of new communities>	<1>	<2-3>	<1>	<1>	<1>	<2>	<8-9>
<no of ‘clans’>	(4)	(5)	(5)	(10)	(5)	(4)	<33>

(adapted from Larkin 1957: 38)

There were numerous combinations of 'clans'. Kyalundzyuga supposedly included Ambanka, Gvasinka, Gadyinka, Kotenka and Khamdanka. Or: Kyalundzyuga, Kukchinka, Gvasyunka, Khamdonka, etc. Kimonko included Chzhangonkonko and Dogomunka. Also suggested as: Kimonko, Puza, Peonka, etc. Another suggested groups was: Geonka, Kemenka, etc. Kamdziga, Sulyayidziga, tec. Kya, Kanchuga, Geonka, Kuinka, Suanka, etc. (Smoliak 1975: 139). All such groupings seem to be ad hoc, based on what people had contact with each other.

During the Russian period 'clan' names would be used as surnames. Last names around 1960 included Kanchuga (34 families), Kyalundziga (31), Kimonko (20), Kamandiga (16), Sulyayndziga (15), Pianka (9), Sigde (5), Amulinka (4), etc. (Tugolukov 1972).

Considering the historical changes befalling Udehe society, changes in the social organization are not surprising. In the old days people had exogamous 'clans' (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 742). As elsewhere, the scholars' use of the word 'clan' is unclear. Some clan names are supposed to refer to: fish (sukdzja), whale, bear, tiger, universe-forest (bua), thunder, water, and more.

Each 'clan' supposedly had its own fire, old men took care of the fire implement, and only male 'clan' members could carry fire from the house; the reference may be to a local community rather than a clan group. It was noted that 'clans', most likely local communities, controlled hunting and fishing grounds. When moving to another local area, people had to ask for permission to settle from the 'clans' or community members living there (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 742).

The matter of 'clan groups' or 'alliances' among the Udehe is not clearly known. Such groups, often referred to as 'dokha', were called 'zamula' among the Udehe (Zgusta 2015: 154).

If an outline of a totem organization of an Udehe village was to be attempted, the following totem clans may be suggested: fish or salmon, snake or frog, duck, owl or hawk, bear, otter, wolf, fox, deer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, sky, and sea or earth. As in other cases there would be local variations, such as tiger appearing instead of fox.

There are indications that the tiger was an Udehe tribal totem, while bear was the emblem of the Oroch people. Some scholars would reverse this, associating the bear with the Udehe and the tiger with the Oroch (Zgusta 2015: 112). There is a curious parallel to the Korean case here, the bear and tiger vying to become the nation's emblem. The statement that the bear is 'the supreme ancestor ... of all the Udehe lineages' is a simplification (ibid.). Rather it can be said to be an overarching totem, somewhat like the bear being emblematic of a Russian identity.

It was claimed that Chinese trade and supremacy led to economic oppression and the disintegration of the 'clan' or band organization among the Udege. Russian scholars would label the debt dependence on the Chinese in the 1800s as feudalism and debt slavery. Apparently Udege traders also emerged, who emulated the Chinese practices. The main 'disintegration' would follow Russian colonization (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 737-8, 742-3, 745).

Politics

Local 'clans', or rather communities, controlled the local area. One scholarly hangup stated that 'clans' were obliged to do blood revenge for slain members. This reportedly led to clan feuds as late as the 1800s. Feuds were undertaken according to traditional rules, including not being able to use a firearm in a raid. On enemy territory one could not drink water, hunt or fish. Women and children went free (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 742). All this would indicate that violence generally was avoided.

To underline this, people had council meetings that settled feuds between 'clans' or bands. At the councils the affairs were led by a respected elderly man from a neutral 'clan' or community. Each 'clan' had its spokesperson who participated in settlement negotiations (ibid.). This would point to the existence of early historic tribal councils where chiefs from different villages and bands came together to discuss policies and make decisions.

At the band or tribal councils the proponents had sticks with spear tips at one end and a carved human head (mangi) at the other. The council meeting could determine fines that 'clans' or bands who had violated the peace would pay (ibid.). Under Russian rule 'elected' elders were installed as leaders or hedgemen, who negotiated with or carried out the demands of Russian officials and colonists (op. cit.: 743).

Religion

The Udehe cosmogony saw the earth as alive, a sleeping dragon resting on another dragon swimming in the ocean. This would be analogous to American Indian cosmologies, where the dragon is replaced by a turtle. The sky is the bottom of the ocean in the world above, which lies beneath other worlds again. Underground there are also several worlds (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 743).

The religious notions resembled those of the Oroch and Nanai. There were 'master spirits' (odzyan) in nature. The greatest spirit lord was 'bua', the master of the forest and the universe. The sun supposedly was a woman who was followed and courted by the moon, perhaps a Chinese-derived view. Other spirits were mountains, marshes and water, thunder, fire and hearth, etc. There was a 'cult of animals'. The master spirit of the fish (sukcha-ochani) was given a sacrifice of fat and fishtails, burned on a stone by the water (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 743).

Presumably there was an annual cycle of ceremonies associated with the various cults. In the ancient religion, the tiger was sacred. The tiger cult (kuty-mafa) reportedly was like that of the Oroch. Myths related to the tiger 'may be of totemistic character' (ibid.).

The bear cult was performed in a simple manner. One did not keep bears in cages, or held any celebration of the raised bear. The bear festival was held when a bear was killed. The main point was the ritual eating of the bear's head. The skull was buried whole after the feast, by fixing it on a pole or a branch of a forest tree. The skull was not blackened with soot. Women's dealings with bear meat were restricted by taboos (ibid.).

The many ceremonies held in summer are not well known. The killer whale cult included sacrifices it received at sea (ibid.). All the annual festivals were in some way considered

'totemic'. One way to see this is that the local celebrations gathered all the totem clans in the village in shared ritual activity.

The colonial disruption of native celebrations led to a growth of shamanism as a spiritual outlet. The shaman cult became widespread. Both men, women, and girls could be shamans. Women stood for the shaman ritual that greeted the descending sun. The cult of shamans included healing the sick, hunting and fishing luck, sending dead souls to heaven, etc. There was a remarkable ritual journey (*duni*) that the shaman performed by boat to visit all villages along a river. On the way he was joined by men and women from the camps in their own boats. This ritual included the sacrifice of a pig and the drinking of its blood. All took part in the ceremony and in the shaman-dance (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 743-4). Perhaps this was a revival of community celebrations. Eventually Buddhist temples appeared among the southern Udege. Orthodox missionaries did not arrive until the Revolution, but the Russians from the start would curtail native celebrations (op. cit.: 744).

Culture

The dress used to be as among other Amur groups, partly native, partly Chinese-inspired. Fish skin and leather were gradually replaced with Chinese cotton. For hunting, men wore deerskin jackets tied with three pairs of ribbons in front. People wore Manchu-Mongolian robes fastened on the right side. The women's robes were longer and richer decorated than the men's. On the hems were sewn-on Chinese coins, metal plates and shells. The women wore decorated breast cloths (*leli*) until the Revolution. People usually went bare-headed, sometimes wearing a bark hat or hood. The hunting hat (*bogdo*) had a pendant of sable or squirrel tail. Men and women wore two braids covered with ribbons. The women wore braid-ornaments of beads and pieces of metal (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 741-2).

Art forms included ritual wooden sculptures and figures of animals and humans. Some human sculptures were larger than a man. Clothes were painted and decorated, in particular the shaman costumes, with figures of human and animal spirits, arranged symmetrically. The use of color was said to be strong. Embroidery patterns were geometric figures, spirals, etc. sewn tightly with colored thread. Most songs were simple melodies with choruses, with often repeated words accompanied by throat sounds and tongue clicking (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 744).

The Udege had cosmogonic myths, totemic and animal stories, and other oral literature. Many stories are fantastic, whether searching for a bride or groom, a kidnapped husband or wife, heroic struggles, and more. In heroic tales, the hero often ends up marrying and having children. Myths about tiger and bear can be of a totemistic nature. There also were myths about other animals (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 744). Some animal characters include: Fish, seal, turtle, frog, toad (*utya*), bird, sparrow, blue-jay, crow, loon, gull (*kilae*), duck, heron, eagle, sea-eagle, bear, otter, dog, tiger, monkey, squirrel, etc. Other characters and beings mentioned are: cannibal, tree, alder, grass, fire, sun, etc. (*ibid.*) (Van Deusen 2001: 3ff, 117ff). Myths about bears attributed people's ancestry to relations between a girl and a bear. Similar origin stories may once have existed for all totem clans.

Reportedly the lives of Udege people were surrounded by rituals (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 743-4). Native names are not well known; apparently people soon were equipped with Russian names. One noted male name was that of Dzhansi Kimonko, a modern writer (op. cit.: 747, 749).

Women held a strong position in Udege society, though subjected to hardships and abuse in colonial times. While women did housework, they also took part in hunting, fishing and other activities (Smoliak 1970: 296).

Burial sites could be in a tree, or in a coffin in a grave-house, but the most common method was 'burial in the earth'. Dead toddlers were left in trees or hollowed-out logs. The coffin could be a hollowed-out log painted lengthwise with red and black stripes. Sometimes the log could be given an animal shape. The dead were given pillows, in a woman's case with earrings sewn to the pillow. The tombs may be of Chinese inspiration (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 744).

Summary

After the Revolution, Russian communists went out to track down Udege people in the mountains and instructed them to move to the valleys. Russian-led cooperatives included 'Sikhote-Alin kolkhoznik' at Akzu, Samarga, from 1935; 'Shock-Hunter' at Gvasyugi, Khor River; other collectives were in the Bikin and Anyuy valleys, etc. The southern Udege or 'Tazy' at Mikhaylovka were placed in 'Gorky collective farm'; another collective camp was 'Red Udegey'. Although the Udege resisted, forced collectivization was completed in 1937 (Ivanov et al. 1964f: 745).

By 1955 Udege 'in the villages of Syain, Ulunga, Krasnyj-Pereval on the coast, the villages of Mikhaylovka', Sanchikheza, Akzu, Gvasyugi, Kun and Bira had been forced into 'collective farms' (ibid.). Their assigned industries were hunting, agriculture, fishing, etc. The Udege hunters were famous and were organized into hunting brigades. When the prey disappeared due to over-hunting, people were trained in deep-sea fishing instead by the communists. Agriculture was introduced, and some collectives commercially produced soy beans, collected ginseng, etc. There was a complaint that people kept their decorated robes despite the availability of Russian clothing.

The rich Udege culture awaits revitalization. The reservations set up in the 1940s point back to a time when people lived in large and prosperous local communities. Here a totemic organization would be present in full. Remnants of this culture may still be found in the reserved areas and the adjacent territory, with a wealth of natural life, including tigers.

Orok

Aka: Oroki, from 'oro' or 'oron', 'domesticated reindeer'; Ulta (own name), Ulcha, from 'ula', 'domestic reindeer' (same as Ulchi), Uiruta, Orokho, 'Orochon', Nani (same as Nanai), etc.

The Orok live on the island of Sakhalin, the eastern, inland and central part. The territory would span 20,000 km², with a potential population of 4000+ people.

Population estimates give: 1250 AD: 4000+ people; 1897: 749+ people; 1926: 162+300, total 462-500+; 1970: 400+ people; 1979: officially 450; 1989: officially 190.

In modern times the Orok were separated into North and South bands on Sakhalin. The North band is near Val on the E coast (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 761).

The historic Orok settlements were small semi-nomadic groups with members from 1-2 or a few 'clans' or band units. People were settled on the coast from spring to autumn, and in camps in sheltered places inland in winter. There would also be hunting camps (duku). The summer camp could have 3-10 houses (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 763). On the upside or forest side of the houses stood storehouses on stilts (në). Nearby there could be shaman 'temples' and burial grounds. In Soviet times all settlements were collectivized and relocated in larger camps, such as the collective 'Val' in northern Sakhalin. Some small groups were settled in Russian villages in southern Sakhalin, while a few families nomadized inland (op. cit.: 761).

The historical settlements point back to larger summer villages of 10-30+ houses with storehouses on stilts nearby.

Ecology and history

The Oroks are linguistically related to the Ulchi and Nanai. The language also includes non-Tungusic words. The Orok supposedly were reindeer herders who moved from the continent to Sakhalin before the year 1650. Possibly they came from the Amgun River near the Amur (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 762).

The Sakhalin landscape was a rich mixture of coastal areas, rivers, forests and mountain tundra. The higher ground afforded ample areas for reindeer herding, part of the Orok adaptation.

The Chinese claimed suzerainty on Sakhalin in the 1700s. The Russians claimed Sakhalin in 1852, which was then under Japanese suzerainty. Southern Sakhalin was under Japanese rule from 1905-45. The natives were subjected to forced Japanization and harsh treatment with frequent hunger, diseases and a drastic population decline (op. cit.: 761-2). The Revolution brought new major changes for the native cultures (op. cit.: 766). Somehow the Orok managed to keep out of the way of the colonial oppressors, perhaps by a reliance on nomadism.

Economy

People engaged in fishing and trapping at sea bays and river outlets in summer, hunting and trapping inland in winter. The women were gathering nuts, wild onions, etc., in small work

groups. Orok differed from the Amur Tungus by having domesticated reindeer, these were used for sleigh transport, meat, skins and more. Reindeer were also hunted (Kwon 1998: 115). Nomadism was combined with a seasonal fixed habitation, a kind of transhumance. Permanent settlements were made during fishing on the coast, of salmon and other catch. Hunting seals was done by harpoons, including floating harpoon (dargi) (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 762). On the coast people used boats, often made from hollowed out tree trunks. Hunting land animals was another prime activity. In winter people went hunting on skis with a dog sled, but also on foot or riding reindeer. The reindeer grazed freely in the summer, while people fished. In the early autumn people broke up from the summer camp, gathered the reindeer herd and went hunting and fishing inland. In winter the herds, which were less than 20 animals per household, were kept near the camp (op. cit.: 762-3).

Sharing the hunting catch was known. In ancient times, a hunter had to share the seal meat with all families in the camp (op. cit.: 764).

For exchange people engaged in barter or simple trade with neighboring peoples such as Nivkh and Ainu, as well as with Ulchi, Yakut, Chinese, Japanese and Russians. Goods desired in exchange included: rice, flour, tea, sugar, utensils, cloth, tobacco, etc.; for this the Orok exchanged fur, sealskin, meat and blubber (ibid.).

Kinship

Households shared a summer house (kaura), which was large and rectangular with a pointed roof. Up to 2-3 families could live together, each with its own hearth. In winter and during hunting, single families lived in tipi tents (aundau) covered with bark or fish skin (guyde) (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 763).

Marriage included a bride price (tori), which corresponded to the value of the dowry (mirakhuni). The bride price consisted of reindeer and specified goods. The dowry included reindeer and women's products such as boxes, tent covers, clothing, apron (nolu), shoes (utta), fur jacket, bark and wood household utensils, iron pots, and more. Marriage took place in late winter, since the custom was for the bridal party to arrive by sled. When the bride left home she performed a 'step on the pot' ritual, on pots from the bride price, and one from the dowry; then she had taken the leap from daughter to wife. In some cases the husband had to work for the wife, do bride service; in other cases, the wife was forcibly stolen (op. cit.: 764).

Differentiation and social organization

Totemic clan references include: fish, whale, bird or crane, hawk or eagle, bear, sable, wolf or dog, fox or tiger, deer, reindeer (oril), squirrel, hare, stone (jolo), sky, earth or mountain, etc.

Scholars would claim that the Orok earlier had exogamous patrilineal 'clans'. Whether the units were patrilineal, and what was meant by 'clan', are open questions. So-called 'clan' names included: Getta, Torsha, Bojausa, Sinakhodo, Tueso, Mujotta, Namissa, Sukta, Balita, and more; these included Orok (reindeer) and Oril (domesticated reindeer), also used as names of the whole people. An overview is attempted below:

Balita (tiger)

Boyausa, Bojausa, Bayauseli (wolf) (bear)

Big Boyausa

Small Bayausa
 Dakhi-neni, Dakhineni
 Torsha, Torsya, Torissa (reindeer) (bird: kori)
 Big Torissa
 Small Torissa
 Tueso, Tufese, Tuwese (whale)
 Getta (hawk)
 Sukta, Sukhta, Seuktu, Syuktu (tiger) (reindeer) (fish: sugd)
 Big Seuktu
 Small Seuktu
 Sinakhodo (fox: sulaki)
 Muyotta, Mujotta (owl) (bear) (mountain)
 Namissa, Namisa (fish)
 Nayputi-neni, Nayputuneni
 Varabai-neni, Varabaynenei
 Valetta
 Orok (clan) (reindeer)
 Oril (reindeer)
 Amul'tikanu (from Amur)
 etc.

The totems associated with each 'clan' name are tentative. Some 8 'clans' were reported in 1927, later adjusted to 9; this would only be a part of the local descent groups that must have existed (Ivanov et al. 1964: 764; Smoliak 1970: 274).

Each clan had its 'protective spirit', though these are generally not known. One careful scholar noted the informants' reluctance to talk about 'clans' and 'totems'. It was a secret topic. He though they were reluctant to talk about other 'clans' for fear of raising 'grievances'. 'Every clan had its protector and master called ydzigy'. The protectors or totems included fishes, animals and birds. After noting a few totems, such as 'kori', perhaps a crane or eagle, as well as bear, tiger and reindeer, the informant clammed up. The conversation was 'interrupted', and 'later regardless of coming back to' the 'subject' of totems, 'no such possibitiy occurred' in spite of years of contact (Pilsudski 1999: vol. 2).

So-called 'clan' associations or 'phratries' (dokha) were known, linking 'clan' units spread over a wide territory. These were also known as 'clan' unions, and would consist of a mixture of 'clans'.

One tentative complement of local clans is as follows:

whale + fish
 eagle + raven
 reindeer + hare
 bear + tiger or fox
 tiger (chief)

Some 8-9 of these groups might be represented in recent times, such as whale, fish, eagle, crane or raven, reindeer, hare, bear, and tiger or fox, with the tiger as a chief's clans. Other prospective totems could be deer, sable and marmot or mouse. How totemism played out on the ground is hard to envision, as people were reticent on the subject.

Politics and religion

Political leadership among the Oroks is poorly known. One note was that the leadership of camps or communities was particularly actuated through the bear festivals that attracted guests from neighboring villages (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 764).

Unlike politics, scholars showed some interest in Oroks religion (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 765). Supposedly, the oldest beliefs are about the 'masters' of nature and animal cults. The cosmogony includes an original creator and culture-hero (khadau), who created the sun, moon, milky way, earth, mountains, rivers, humans, bears, and animals. Khadau destroyed two superfluous suns in the sky. Possibly colonial influences are involved in such views, the other 'suns' being Christ and Buddha. The creator instituted religious rituals. The cosmos was divided into spirit worlds such as the underground, the this-sided with forests and water, and the heavens. Each world had its 'master spirit', to which people could sacrifice. To the sea spirit (teum) there were sacrifices in spring and autumn, it was 'fed' with fishskin gel (mosi) in seal-shaped bowls where only men were allowed to participate. Animals such as seals and killer whales were surrounded with religious beliefs. Catching seals and eating their meat had a ritual character, such as eating from peculiar bowls (ibid.).

The annual cycle of ceremonies would be lost in modern times. In the fall there may have been a hunting ritual. In winter, a bear festival was celebrated. As in other parts of North Asia the bear was surrounded with special rituals. When the bear was to be sacrificed in a bear festival, relatives and friends were invited. Kinfolk built a large common tent for all the participants in the festival and prepared an open area where the bear would be shot. The 'clan' or community members prepared food for the guests of other clans. In connection with the feast they had a reindeer race. The slain bear was handed over to the 'clan's' elders, who stood as the organizer of the feast (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 764-5). The bear was a sacred animal that was raised in cages near the houses; in the corners of the cage people put a small spruce tree decorated with shavings; when moving camp, the bear was tied to the sled and taken along (ibid.).

In spring there might be a festival centered on catching seals and fishing (ibid.). Similarly in summer catching salmon and other activities might be focused on. Much of this is little known.

The nature beliefs were supplemented by a shaman cult, that grew prominent in modern times. The shaman appealed to ancient beliefs and gave it a personal form through spirit travel and trances. The shaman had his own gods and auxiliary spirits (op. cit.: 765). Enforced Orthodox Christianity began in the 1800s (ibid.). Next came the Communist control and persecution of shamans and other religious beliefs.

Culture

The native dress was replaced with Russian clothing in the 1900s. The old clothing included a Tungus breast piece under the jacket. Earlier people wore jackets, kilts and leggings of sealskin (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 763).

Oroks art resembles that of Amur people, with geometric and figurative images. Myths include views on the creator and cultural hero Khadau, and how the cosmic order and rituals were instituted. Legends are found about the emigration to Sakhalin and the encounter with the

natives of the island, such as the Ainu and a mythical people called 'Tondzi'. They tell of hunger, the Getta 'clan's' or band's trek to the east coast of the island, how Boyausa people died from rotten whale meat, how wild reindeer were tamed on the island, and more (op. cit.: 765). Animals, humans and beings could transform into each other. Wild reindeer were seen as a transformation of an 'anthropomorphic bear' (Kwon 1998: 116).

Life courses were accompanied by extensive rituals. People's names are not well known. Male names include: Gergulu, etc. Female names noted are: Napka, Yektengu, etc.

People used to be buried in plank coffins on scaffolding two feet above the ground in the mountains or tundras; toddlers were buried in a log. The dead rode to the other world in a reindeer sleigh, they brought spears, saddle, etc. into the coffin (Ivanov et al. 1964e: 765).

Summary

The Oroks suffered great abuse during the Russian and Japanese colonial struggles over Sakhalin. In the collective 'Val' lived not only Oroks, but also Evenk, Nivkh and the Russians as rulers. The center of the collective was a village with Russian houses surrounded by garden plots. There was a health center, club and shop. The collective controlled several thousand reindeer herded by shepherd brigades. In the summer, the shepherds lived in huts near the village settlement. The collective's work shop made boots, gloves and fur jackets for sale. The collective also engaged in fishing and sealing. So-called 'women's brigades' picked wild onions and nuts. In addition, there was animal husbandry, horse breeding, and more, all under Russian control. The children were sent away to 7-year boarding school in the Russian regional center. There was an intense pressure of Russification and assimilation (Ivanov et al. 1964: 766).

In spite of this the Orok would retain their Tungus identity. Removing people from their local origins was not as easy as the Russian administrators imagined. People's background and belonging reach far back in the area. Part of that background is totemism, today almost forgotten and neglected. Yet totemism provided a link to the territory that no other ideology could provide. Perhaps this was one reason why Russian scholars and others would be loath to acknowledge totemism as a part of people's lives, even when aware of its existence. And conversely, the Orok and other natives would be careful to conceal the interplay between their natural surroundings and their social organization. Only by hindsight is it possible to point back to a time when people's relations with nature were crucial to their organization into a meaningful and lasting way of life. This way of life is still to be found, but it is hidden under the debris of colonialism and centuries of external oppression.

Southern Tungusic peoples

These peoples include groups such as:

Birar aka Birarchen. Associated groups were Manegri, Kibi, Orochon, etc. Their territory was W of the Nanai.

Solon were S of Birar.

Manchu was a distantly related major society. Aka: Bogdo, Jûchen, Juchen, Dyucher, Sushen, Sibö, etc. Their population estimates include: ca. 1920: 12,500,000; 1980: 4,145,000+, 3,000,000 speakers; etc. The Manchu would conquer China in 1644 and became prominent in trade and politics. Manchu groupings include Dunga, Apkai-khan ('ruler'), etc. The **Dahur** aka Daur, partly Tungus, has been noted under the Mongol peoples.

Mention can be made of **Korea** and the Koreans, linguistically related to the Tungus, and known for some totemic aspects of their origin and history. In one totemic origin myth the tiger and bear wanted to become human, but only the bear succeeded, and became the ancestor of the Korean nation. In other versions this might be the tiger; both are popular totem creatures.

There are considerable cultural differences between the above peoples, but since they are closely connected geographically they will here be presented under one heading.

General background

The southern Tungusic peoples, such as Birar and Manchu, have a long historical development and somehow fall outside the range of North Asian societies. Their historical links reach far, into China, Korea, Mongolia and Russia.

In the context of this book only one aspect of their social life is considered, that of vestiges of totemism. While scholars may claim there is no relation, an attempt will be made here to show that e.g., Manchu 'clans' are indeed related to the totemic realm of other Tungusic peoples, and hence of interest in this connection.

One scholar noted that in spite of different gender practices or 'regulations', a Wi 'does not occupy a position subordinate to' her Hu among Tungusic peoples (Shirokogoroff 1935: 101). Scholarly bias generally would obscure gender relations in these societies.

The Manchu word for clan, 'khala' or 'xala', is found in other Tungusic tribes, with varying signification. The clan was 'exogamic'; later the exogamic unit included groups called 'aiman', 'gargan' and 'mokun', indicating an expanded range of marriage restrictions. One scholar attributed this to the Manchu having 'written records' that would document various forms of exogamy, each provided with its own designation (Shirokogoroff 1935: 99). He poignantly added that without exogamy 'the existence of the clan is impossible' (op. cit.: 100). This might be phrased the other way around, that totemic clans are closely associated with exogamy; people with the same totem are not allowed to marry.

Differentiation

That the origin myth of Korea involves totems is significant. Korean culture brings us beyond the pale of North Asia, and into the context of East Asian nature-based beliefs, which would be a separate complex area of study. Suffice it to say that a totemic past once existed in areas adjacent to the north and across Eurasia.

Manchu-Jurchen potential totems include: fish (nima^akha, nimaha, liwahhah, nimangku), pike (khoru), snake (meihe, umieihe, wuhmiehah, meihei), lizard (yeksergen), dragon (muduri), turtle (aihoma, 'ayüma), frog (erxe), spider (helmehen), louse (cige), bird (gasha, *kaskha), egg (umgan), feather (tonggo, funggaha, tohkuo), sparrow (cecike, čiličihei, šihčihhei), titmouse (simatun), swallow (cibirgan, šihpiehhung), woodpecker (kurexu), pigeon (kekuhe), grouse (fiyelen), chicken (coko, tihuo), crow (qaraki, *tork), raven (gahha, hahhah, *ka'ka), cormorant (qarasu), duck (niyehe, miehhei, *niyaka, luxu), goose (niongniyaha, nenniehhah, nunniehhah, *niyaknniyaka), heron (kilaxun, suwan, suan), swan (garu, gawrun, *karwen), crane (korcan, hahrhwen), owl (hoshako, humše, molto, *hoks), hawk (gahun, gakhun, giaxun), falcon (giyahon, kiahunwen), eagle (giyahvn, *kirsu), bear (lefu, lehfu, nari), badger (dorgon), raccoon-dog (elbihe), mustelid (imseke, manggisu), otter (algin, hahliwuh), ferret (silixi, soloxi), sable (lungu), ermine (seke, sehkoh), wolf (jarhon, čahluwuh), dog (indahon, intahhon, yintahhung), fox (dobihi, tolipihi, luka), tiger (tasha, tahsiah), panther (yarga, yalah), wild-cat (malaxi), cat (ninuri, kesike), animal (jaka, gurgu, ulxa), deer (buho, puhku, puxv, iren, urgešen), roe-deer (sirga), musk-deer (foño, *ponkl), elk-moose (toxo, nárxuča), horn (uihe), horse (morin, mulin, ajirgan), cow (ihan, weihan), sheep (honin), goat (niman), wild-boar (dorgori, nuxen, kitari), pig (ulgiyan, wuhliyen), monkey (monio), mouse (singgeri, šênkoh), beaver (meteri-torkon, meteholin-torkuan), squirrel (ulxu, soison), hare (golmahon, kulmahon, kulumahai), tree (moo, moh), cedar (isi, yihših-moh), pine (holdon, huoto-moh), elm (hailan, hailah), forest (bujan, čahpuh), white (šanyan, sankya), red (*pulkya), fire (tua, tohwei), water (muke, múh), rain (aga, 'ahâh), cloud (tugi, tuhkih), thunder (akjan, 'atien), sky (abka, 'apuhha), earth (na, náh), stone (wehe, wuehe, wohhei), mountain (alin, 'ayilin), wind (edun, uehtuwen), sun (šun, inenggi, yihnengkih), etc.

Tungusic 'clan' names have been noted in diverse groups, such as a Birar 'clan' (kâla) called Malakul, etc. Complete listings of clans have not been found for these groups.

Here particular attention will be paid to the various forms of Manchu 'clan' names and their potential totemic associations (this list is only partial):

deer (buho, puhku, puxv, iren, urgešen),	Bagiri, Baksang, Bogulot, <u>Pogiya</u> ,
forest (bujan, čahpuh),	Baica, Basun,
bear (bolto),	Barda, Bolot,
red (*pulkya),	Baigiya, Boorikit, Borgi, Pugiya,
musk-deer (foño, *ponkl),	Borgigin, Pogiya,
feather (funggaha, tohkuo),	Biangiya,
grouse (fiyelen),	Bayingeri,
fox (dobihi, tolipihi, luka),	Dalaminan, Dolohog, Long, <u>Solongus</u> , Sulara,
elk-moose (toxo, nárxuča),	Dogin, Donggo, Tegi, Tang,
cloud (tugi, tuhkih),	Taogiya, Tegi,
tiger (tasha, tahsiah),	Daicit, <u>Taicu</u> , Taisinara, Tsanggiya,
crow (*tork),	Dalok,
wild-boar (dorgori, nuxen, kitari),	Donggor, Turge,
badger (dorgon),	Darkun, <u>Dorgun</u> , Tarhunut,
feather (tonggo, funggaha, tohkuo),	Dong, Tanggu,
chicken (tihuo),	Duwargiya,
fire (tua, tohwei),	Du, Duan, Duyar,

wild-boar (kitari),
raven (gahha, hahhah, *ka'ka),
hawk (gahun, gakhun, giaxun),
pigeon (kekuhe),
bird (gasha, *kaskha),
cat (kesike),
pike (khoru),
crow (qaraki, *tork),
animal (gurgu, ulxa),
woodpecker (kurexu),
heron (kilaxun, suwan, suan),
crane (korcan, hahrhwen),
cormorant (qarasu),
hare (golmahon, kulmahon, kulumahai),
eagle (giyahvn, *kirsas),
swan (garu, gawrun, *karwen),
falcon (giyahon, kiahunwen),
eagle (giyahvn, *kirsas),

forest (čahpuh),
louse (cige),
animal (jaka, gurgu, ulxa),
chicken (coko, tihuo),
sparrow (cecike, čiličihei, šihčihhei),
wolf (jarhon, čahluwuh),

swallow (cibirgan, šihpiehhung),
ermine (seke, sehkoh),
roe-deer (sirga),
ferret (silixi, soloxi),
titmouse (simatun), re: woodpecker
sun (šun, inenggi, yihnengkih), etc.
mouse (singgeri, šênkoh),
white (šanyan, sankya),
squirrel (soison),
heron (suwan, suan),

bear (lefu, lehf, nari),
fox (dobih, tolipih, luka),
duck (luxu),
sable (lungu),

dragon (muduri),
beaver (meteri-torkon, meteholin-torkuan),
water (muke, múh),
owl (molto, *hoks),
wild-cat (malaxi),

Git, Kete,
Kagelr, Gurhas,
Keykere,
Keykere,
Garja, Kacut, Kaksiri,
Kesiketeng,
Gorolo,
Guwalgiya,
Girgi, Gurhas,
Girgi, Gurhas, Kuilong,
Kuilong,
Garja, Gurhas,
Garja, Gurhas,
Gilaminemat, Guwalgiya, Kuilong,
Gurhas,
Garja, Gorolo,
Giagiya, Keyilkelei, Keykere,
Gilet,

Jangmu, Caomut,
Cigiya,
Jaku, Jok, Caogiya,
Jok, Caogiya,
Joceng, Tiangiya,
Jalar, Jurgitemok, Jergi, Jurgen, Tarhunut,

Siboocan,
Sikte, Sikteri,
Silergi, Sirgiya, Sirha,
Silergi, Sirgiya
Semukiri, Simolie,
Sun,
Sing, Sunggiya,
Sanggiya,
Soceri,
Sue,

Laibu, Laimo, Lu,
Logiya, Loca,
Logiya, Lo, Lu, Liyu, Loyo,
Lengburcin, Liang,

Mudaci,
Mukderi, Dorgun, Turge,
Mu, Mugiya,
Molci, Malalr,
Malakur, Margit,

horse (morin, mulin, aǰirgan),
monkey (monio),
mustelid (manggisu),
snake (meihe, umieihe, wuhmiehah),
tree (moo, moh),

wild-boar (nuxen, kitari),
elk-moose (ńarχuča),
bear (nari),
fish (nimaⁿkha, nimaha, liwahhah)
goat (niman),
cat (ninuri, kesike),
duck (niyehe, miehhei, *niyaka, luxu),
wolf (niun)
goose (niongniyaha, *niyaknniyaka),
earth (na, náh),

lizard (yeksergen),
cedar (isi, yihših-moh),
panther (yarga, yalah),

wind (edun, uehtuwen),
pig (ulgiyan, wuhliyen),
horn (uihe),
stone (wehe, wuehe, wohhei),
cow (ihan, weihan),

sky (abka, 'apuhha),
rain (aga, 'ahâh),
owl (hoshako, humše, molto, *hoks),
thunder (akjan, 'atien),
horse (aǰirgan),
raccoon-dog (elbihe),
pine (holdon, huoto-moh),
squirrel (ulxu, soison),
frog (erxe),
animal (ulxa),
deer (urgešen),
otter (algin, hahliwuh),
spider (helmehen),
deer (iren, urgešen),
mountain (alin, 'ayilin),
dog (indahon, intahhon, yintahhung),
egg (umgan),
owl (humše, molto, *hoks),
mustelid (imseke, manggisu),
sheep (honin),

Mordin, More, Muhelin,
Moneher, Monggo,
Mongguri,
Mei, Meiheri, Meigiya, Muya, Muyan, Mija,
Mo,

Nahata, Nijuhun, Nonggile,
Narai, Nanggiya
Nara, Narai, Nalgiya, Nedi, Nere, Nila,
Nimaha, Nimaca, Nimaci, Nimanggi,
Nimanggi,
Ninggeri,
Niohe, Niohule, Niohere,
Ninggeri, Ni,
Ningguta, Niowanggiyan, Nioyan, Niolun,
Nahata, Nayi,

Yekejong,
Isu,
Yagiya, Ya,

Wendu, Wentun,
Uligin, Yegulut,
Wei,
Wei, Weigut,
Wen, Wei, Weilalr,

Amuharnu, Aangang,
Aha, Akjan, Angiya,
Asuke, Huoshuote,
Akjan,
Acigecalr,
Albaki, Arabiancian, Arbentcang,
Altanemok, Ardan, Arute,
Uligin, Ulhanga, Ulie, Ulinga,
Erik, Irgen, Arakcou, Arakta,
Uligin,
Urgucen,
Alai, Irgen, Uligin,
Amuharnu,
Ilan, Irgen,
Ilan, Ayan,
Inde,
Umu,
Molci, Amuru,
Imu,
Unin,

sun (inenggi, yihnengkih), etc.	Angiya,
elm (hailan, hailah),	Alai,
turtle (aihoma, 'ayüma),	Aiyos, Yemu,
cow (ihan, weihan),	Wen,

Some potential or likely totem associations in this list are: Nimaha (fish), Meiheri (snake), Semukiri (woodpecker), Keykere (hawk), Laibu (bear), Dorgun (badger), Solongus (fox), Taicu (tiger), Pogiya (deer), Gilaminemat (hare), Sun (sun), and Nahata (earth). A few more potential or substitute totem designations could be: Niowanggiyan (goose), Gilet (eagle), Silergi (ferret, weasel), Jurgen, Dzharkon (wolf), Malakur (cat), Jaku, Dzhako, Uligin (animal), and Ulinga (squirrel).

This shortened list of 'clan' names has been included because they resemble 'clan' designations among other Tungusic peoples. It is here assumed that all Tungusic peoples had totem clans around 500 AD, and had related words for totemic elements such as animals and natural phenomena.

It is striking that Manchu 'clan' or family names are usually not compared to other Tungusic 'clan' names, even though there is a prehistoric relation. In one view, 'Manchu clan names have no reliable parallels with Northern Tungus clan names' (Shirokogoroff 1979: 134). In this work the view is opposite, there are many similarities between Manchu and other Tungusic terms for social units. Probably the presumed lack of 'parallels' is connected to the sheer number of Manchu 'clan' names, 500+. By contrast, 'clan' names among smaller Tungusic tribes are often numbered from 8 to 40+. Yet it can be assumed that most tribes in prehistoric times would have hundreds of local totem clans. In this sense the plethora of Manchu groups reflects earlier conditions across the region.

The Birar had some pivotal views bearing on totemism. They said 'that the wolf, the dog, the sable' and raccoon-dog have 'the same origin' as 'one clan', 'umun kala'. This corresponds to a phratry organization, in which similar animal totems are viewed as 'brothers' (Shirokogoroff 1935: 72). Various phratries, such as meat-eaters, plant-eaters, birds and fishes can be posited.

In its totemic era Manchu society would be characterized by hundreds of local communities that each had a complement of 10-14+ totem clans. This would refer back to an unknown period predating 500 AD. Reconstructing a local totem system among the Manchu would then be a challenging work based on any and all extant sources about local descent group membership. A tentative selection of emblems in a Manchu totemic organization could be: fish, snake, goose, hawk, bear, ferret or ermine, fox, tiger or wild-cat, deer, musk-deer, squirrel, hare, sky, and tree or earth. Most of these totemic references have been underlined in the list above.

Some further notes on the organization of the Manchu and related peoples

The Manchu provide a case of an ancient totemic society proceeding to a level of state formation. This may seem like a wide leap from the smaller Tungusic societies. Yet the claim in this book has been that people with a totemic ideology are capable to organize into great tribal confederacies and alliances. Only history has not allowed these organizations to flourish, as epidemics and colonial invaders made it impossible to join in a shared polity.

The Birar have an extensive cosmological mythology. Their star lore included stars that were the 'roots of a tree'. Nearby was a space representing 'small and big elks'. 'On the heavenly lake' was a 'swan' that 'fell down to the earth'. The Milky Way is a 'road' or 'river' connecting the sky to the earth (Shirokogoroff 1935: 43). That totems are identified with stars are beliefs also found among American Indians. According to Shawnee mythology the Milky Way is a 'white river' on which spirits travel.

As noted the Birar had totemic ideas about animals. They also placed humans in this universe: 'man is recognized to be an animal' closer to 'the wild mammals' than to 'birds'; this of course would not exclude birds and other beings as totems (Shirokogoroff 1935: 72-73). The non-reflective scholar thought this meant that Tungusic people have a scientific view of 'evolution', rather than seeing that they lived in close contact with the natural environment. In general it can be said that the southern Tungusic mythologies point back to a time when society was totemically organized.

Nivkh

Aka: Gilyak, Giliaki, Gilyami, Gilemi, Jilemi, Nivx, Nivkhi; own name: Nivkhgu aka *Ñihvñ* ('man'), etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 767; Zgusta 2015).

Territory: 30,000+ km². Here would be room for 15,000+ people. Areal names include the lower Amur estuary or 'Liman', the nearby 'continent' aka Lower Amur-Okhotsk coastal region, the Tatar Strait, and most of Sakhalin Island aka 'Niman' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 767).

Population: 1650: 20,000 people – perhaps overestimated; 1890: 5,000+; 1897: 4649+; 1926: 2376 Amur region, 1700+ Russian Sakhalin, 111 Japanese Sakhalin; total: 4187+; 1959: 4,000+; 3,-3,500 speakers; 1980: ca. 5000, 1000+ speakers; 1989: 4673, 1079 speakers; 2002: 5,800+, 300-500 speakers; 2010: 198+ speakers; etc.

The Nivkh had many named 'clans', that in Russian usage applied to anything from descent groups to settlements and bands. The focus here is on totemic or totem clans, with totems derived from a fish, bird, animal or other being. People supposedly practiced slavery, which is unlikely and mainly served as a Russian justification for oppression.

Nivkh society and groups are difficult to outline. Below are some approximate Nivkh village areas: (fam/s = family/s; hh = household/s; p = people; R = Russian/s; 1897, 2002, etc. = years occupied) (in square brackets <>: 'clan' names)

N or Mainland district:

N of Amur ('left bank'):

1: Shantar; Big Shantar island. 2: Lyutsun. 3: Uykön; 4: Tugur; 5: Gipak; 6: Syran, Elso. 7: Itkan, Tropinko, Uttuk. 8: Kul/ Kul' (1900: 42+ men, 100-200 p; 1931) (1950) <Tfonung, Qajun, Tnaunug, Tiyr-tarms-ping, Megwafing, Kezong>, Anus, Usalzin, Blyuska, Buktak. 9: Uklekit, Dovokso. 10: Krasnoperka, Dzhapi. 11: Oselsa, Sandya, Mukhtelya. 12: Dzhoto, Litke. 13: Tyvlino (1957), Kulchi, Orel. 14: Kolchonko, Kol' (1700, 1920; 1928: 48 hh, 183 p, +24 R hh, + 77 R p, total: 72 hh, 260 p) (cf. 21, other), Nikol'sk/ Kol'-Nicol'skoe (1957: 'S. Lazo', with Russians). 14B: Mago (2002: 56 p). Vaida (1957). Sakarovka/ Sakharovka (2002: 10 p). Innokent'evka/ Innokentyevka (2002: 129 p). Iska (cf. 16). 15: Zumnik. 16: Iska/ Iski (1848, 1854, 1920; 1925: 12+ fams; 1928: 15+ fams; 12 hh, 49 p, +3 R hh, +8 R p, total: 15 hh, 57 p), Petrovskaia-Spit, Naydenish, Vlasevo/ Vlas'ev/ Vlasyevo (1920; 1957: 'Lenin', with Russians; 2000), Schastya/ S'chast'e (1920), Vera, Udd, Ayeri/ Avny/ Avry aka Udd Island (1920; 1925: 13+ fams; 1928: 13 hh, 45 p), Komel (2002: 11 p). 17: Langr/ Langr Island (cf. 27) (1700; 1910: 71+ fams; 1925: 46+ fams; 1928: 46 hh, 189+ p; 1930). Baidukovo (1957, 2000). Nygay/ Nygai. Makarovka (1957: 'Red Beacon', with Russians; 19+ hh; 2002: 22 p) <7-9+ 'clans'>. Puir (1899, 1925: 26+ fams; 1928: 27+ fams; 26+ hh, 107+ p; 1957: 'Communard' kolkhoz, 36+ hh; 2002: 77 p) <4-5-7-9+ 'clans': Targong, Lezgran, Tfabing, Lampring, Ngayramian>. Gnilaya, Kumlaya, Tlyanget, Ozerpakh (1957), Detakh. 17B: Chadbakh/ Charbakh (1899: 12+ fams.; 1920; 1925; 1928: 40+ fams; 32+ hh, 79+ p; 1930; 1957: '20th Party Congress'). Oremif (2002: 54 p). Vakker/ Varki. Subbotino. Astrakhanovka (1959: kolkhoz – from Puir and Liman). Chnyrrakh (2002: 21 p). Nikolayevsk/ Nikolaevsk (1957, 2002: 407 p).

S of Amur ('right bank'):

17C: (unknown). 18: Konstantinovka (2002: 35 p). Vospri. Kani-Vyselki (1928: 8 hh, 43 p). Pronge (1700). Nale. Ngyzri (1928: 1 hh, 4 p). Karito. Kraspakh (1928: 1 hh, 5 p). Nachbach (1920; 1928: 11 hh, 42 p, +8 R hh, +24 R p, total: 19 hh, 66 p). 19: Progobe (1899, 1920;

1928: 5 hh, 14 p). Rozhdestvenskoye. N Pronge/ Nizhneye-Pronge (1928: 14 hh, 47 p, + 3 R hh, +10 R p, total: 17 hh, 57 p; 1957, 2002: 82 p). Alekseyevka. Kuklia (1928: 8 hh, 45 p). Aleyevka (1920, 2000, 2002: 49 p). Aleyevka-Kuklia (1957: ‘Surf’-‘New Life’, with Russians). Nadzino (1920; 1928: 4 hh, 12 p), Tomeri, Sabakh (1928, 1957), Liman-Khuzi (1957: ‘Pushkin’, with Russians), Khuzi/ Khuze (1899, 1920, 1925: 19+ fams; 1928: 19 hh, 66 p, +6 hh, 23 p, total: 25+ fams, 89+ p; 1931), Dzhaore (1928, 1957), Mys-My/ My (1899, 1920; 1925: 9+ fams; 1928: 9 hh, 44 p, +7 R hh, + 18 R p, total 16+ fams, 62+ p; 1931), Big Uarki/ Uarki-Mys-Mu (1957: ‘Green Grove’), Uarki/ Uarke (1920; 1928: 17 hh, 75 p). 20B: Motnya, Tymi. Chome/ Chomi (1850, 1857, 1920; 1928: 17 hh, 68 p). Chakunsh (1928: 3 hh, 12 p). 20: Khan-Tokovo (1928: 8 hh, 24 p). Krasovka/ Krasovkoe (1920; 1928: 6 hh, 16 p, +7 R hh, +18 R p; 1957: 32+ hh). Krasovka-Polovinka (1957: ‘Red Border Guard’). Chertov. Yevkrem/ Evkrem (1928: 1 hh, 4 p; 1950). Lazarev (1897, 1957, 2002: 117 p).

E or Sakhalin district:

21: Kolendy aka Kondy, Koibgervo, Ngyd, Matnyr, Nilvo. 22: Pomr/ Pomyt, Moskalvo (2002: 44), Krasovka/ Nekrasovka (2002: 572 p) <8+ ‘clans’>. 23: Baykal. 24: Viskvo, Rybnoe (2002: 56 p). 25: Tamlyavo/ Tamlavo, Ngylvo, Rybnovsk. 26: Bolsherechenk. 27: Valuevo, Langr/ Langry (1897), Izanivo, Chinsoy/ Chingay/ Chingai (1897). 28: Tausmen, Pyrki (1897). 29: U Val. 30: Pogibi (1897). 31: Maloya-Dagi, U Askasay. 32: N Tyk, Ytyk, Upagan, Uandi. 33: U Viakhtakan. 34: Tyk, S Tyk, Viakhtu (1897) (2002: 26 p). 35: U Viakhtu, Bubnovko. 36: Viakhtu, Tangi, cf. Khoe. 37: Khov/ Khoe, Mgachi, cf. Tangi. 37B: Arkay/ Arkovo, Dun, cf. Aleksandrovsk. 38: Aleksandrovsk-Sakhalinsky (2002: 29 p), Ust-Agnevo, Palevo/ Pilavo. 39: Okha (2002: 299 p), Khankes, Urkdt. 40: (unknown). 41: Tungor, Neftegorsk. 42: Piltun or Pil’tun (1897), Kekrvo/ Kakervo. 43: (unknown). 44: Kharkorvo, cf. Chaybo/ Chayvo. 45: Chayvo/ Chaybo/ Chaivo/ Chai-vo, Val (2002: 19 p), Ladvo. 46: Goryachie-Klyuchi, Nyyskiy, Tygmych/ Tyrmyts. 47: Nogliki (2002: 647 p), Nyyvo/ Nuyvo/ Nyivo, Vachi. 48: Nysh, Yrkyr, Chkharvo. 49: Slavo, Ado-Tymovo, Pilenga, Chir-Unid/ Chir-Unvd (1950: collective-farm resettlement) (2002: 200 p), Uskovo. 50: Tymovo, Tymovskoye (1897). 51: Yasnoye, Rykovskoe. 52: Tayozhnoya, Kokubazuyeva. 53: Nabil, Milkovo, Orkunbi, Tagry. 54: Lungvo, Lunskiy-Zaliye, Ushakh, Nappi, Ngambvo. 55: Chamrvo, Zastolonyy, Sifon.

Not placed or in new locations:

On Sakhalin:

Poronaysk, Taran (1950) (2002: 116 p). Trambaus (2002: 45 p). Katangli (2002: 17 p). Khez. Kol aka Kol’ (cf. Kolendy) (1897: large) <8+ ‘clans’: Tyvlifing, Mekhrefing, Nankhaifing, etc.>. Rybobaza-2 (2002: 11 p). Lupolovo (2002: 21 p). Liman. Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (2002: 98 p). Venskoye (2002: 14 p).

On mainland:

Pad (1950). Bogorodskoye (2002: 77 p). Beloglinak (2002: 30 p). Bulava (2002: 30 p). Takhta (2002: 118 p). Tyr (cf. Tugur) (2002: 89 p). Tneyvakh (2002: 33 p). Khabarovsk (2002: 131 p). Kuklia (1899). Krasnoye (2002: 60 p). Kalma (2002: 85 p). Chlya (2002: 20 p). Susanino (2002: 62 p). Solontsy (2002: 18 p). Mariinsk (1895-1905). Mongovershinny (2002: 73 p). Nizhnyaya-Gavan (2002: 40 p). Nianivo. Ukhta (2002: 45 p). Oktyabrsky (2002: 11 p). Voskresenkoye (2002: 36 p).

This somewhat comprehensive list is included here to show the extent of known Nivkh settlements, and to get an overview of the often confusing references to people and places. People referred to as ‘Gilyak’ would appear in a variety of places. For instance, people on Tym River were referred to as ‘black Gilyak’ ca. 1900. In 1884 some Nivkh supposedly were

near Chumikan on Uda River W of the Okhotsk Sea (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 767). It goes without saying that tracing the Nivkh occupation over the last centuries depends on lengthy future research.

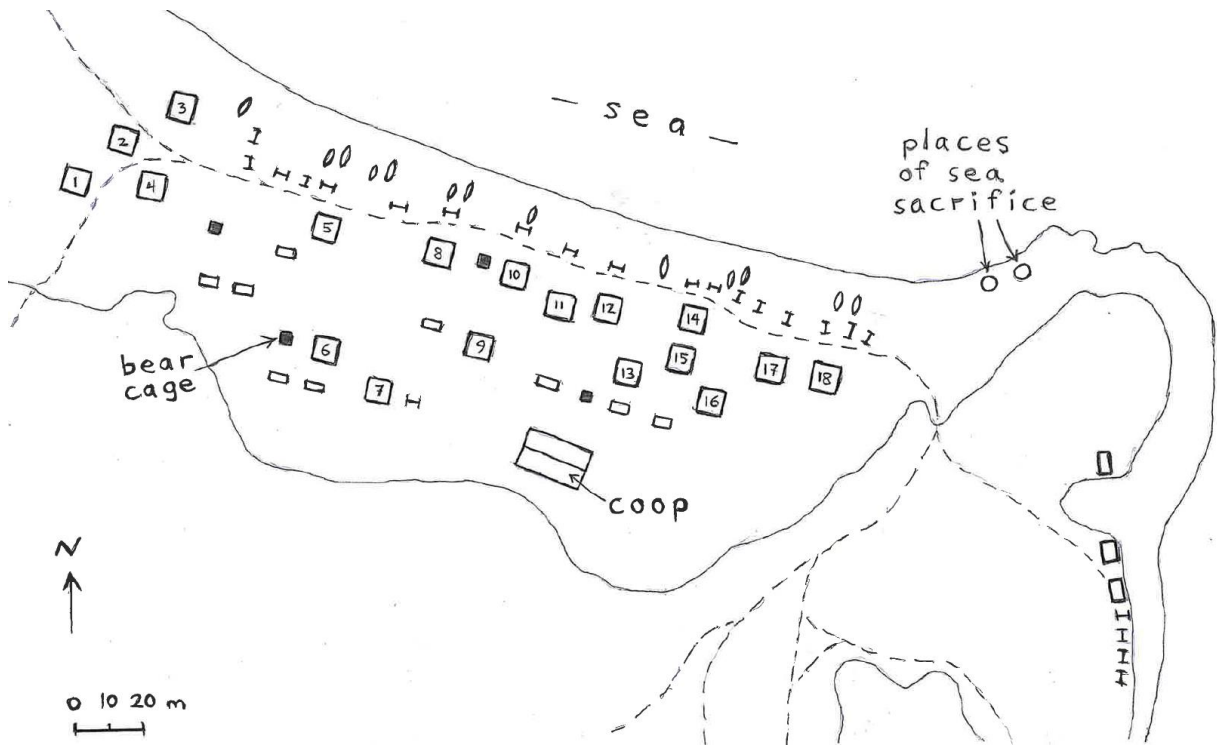
In former times Nivkh villages generally were large, with up to 20+ houses (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 772). One settlement, Langr Island, had 71+ families in 4 summer fishing camps in 1910 (Smoliak 1974b: 105). The largest mainland village in 1928 had 260 inhabitants (op. cit.: 112). Nivkh settlements were permanent and lasted a long time, 'even centuries' (Smoliak 1974b: 103). Only after the Russian colonization had villages 'ceased to exist' (op. cit.: 101, 103).

Around 1650 people 'lived in large villages' consisting of permanent, 'wooden winter houses, flanked by barns, racks for hanging fish', bear cages, mooring for boats etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 768). A village could have 300+ people and a local territory of 600+ km². This would become less apparent in modern times, when state colonization of the area forced people to resettle, often in random and suppressive fashion. Villages or settlement could then vary greatly in size, the larger ones being settled both by natives and by colonizers of different ethnic backgrounds.

Nivkh houses were said to be large, and could hold 2+ families. Supposedly there were 'many instances' of 2+ Brs living with one Wi (Shternberg 1999: 61). This could simply mean that married and unmarried Brs shared the same house, also known from other northern societies where resources are scattered.

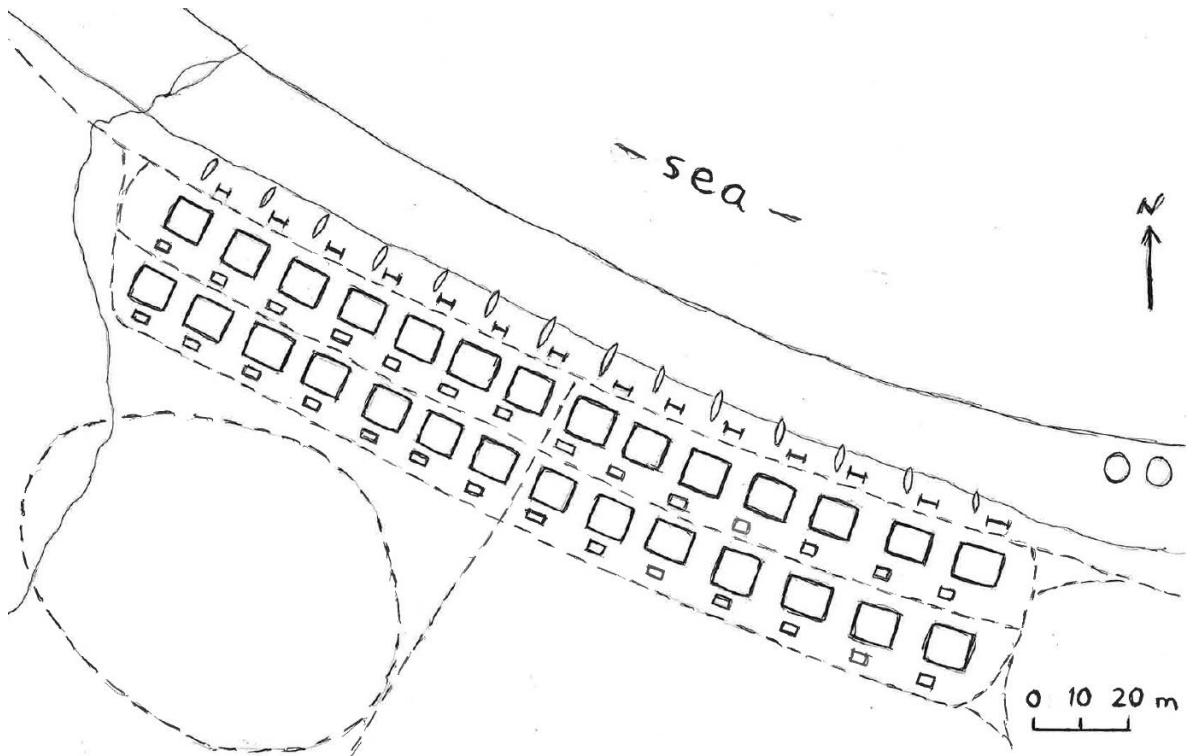
In addition to dwelling houses there were storage sheds 'built on piles', fish drying racks, storage platforms and dog shelters (Black 1973: 7). Boats lined the beach. The village had one or more 'ritual barns' (lezang) housing bear festival paraphernalia. There was a place for the 'ritual placement of dolphin heads' (ibid.).

Village houses were arranged in rows near a shore (Smoliak 1974b: 159-160). 'The settlement plan was linear. Lineage affiliation dictated the order of the dwellings in any given settlement' (Black 1973: 7). This comes very close to describing the 'order' of totemic clan, but such a detailed analysis is not found. In large villages 'a second line of dwellings' stood 'farther from the shore (ibid.). The village was divided into an upper and lower side, specified as 'up coast' and 'down coast'. Houses 'up coast' were spoken of as the 'actual', 'main' or 'senior' clans, while those 'down coast' were 'allied' or 'junior' clans. While such terms may refer to later historical times, they may hint at a first chief residing in the 'up coast' half and the second chief 'down coast' (Sternberg 1999). By contrast there are claims that 'newcomers' built 'upstream' from 'the founder' or leader (Black 1973: 7).

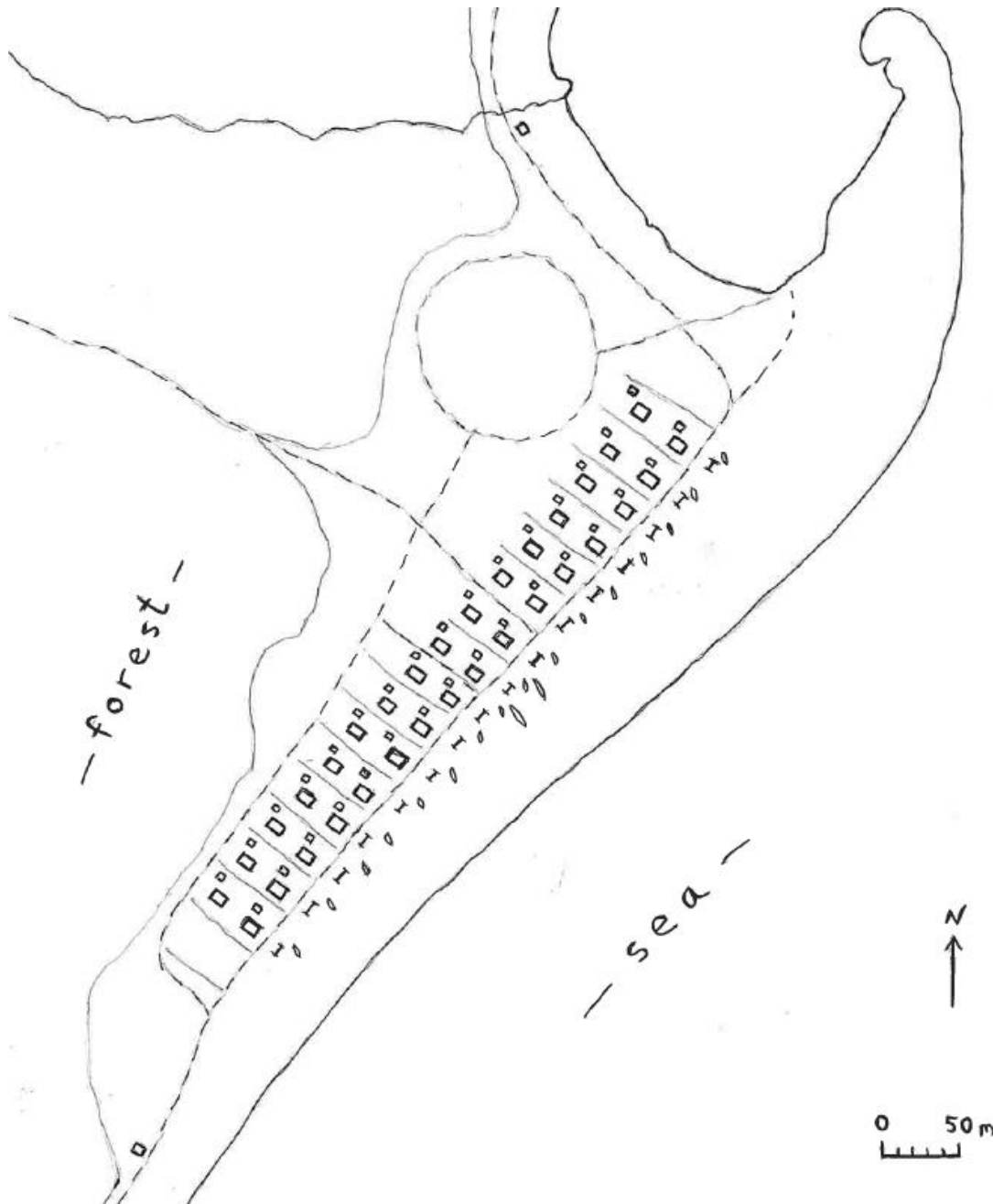


Puir ca. 1930 (adapted from Black 1973: 10)

At Puir village ca. 1930 some 12-14 descent groups are indicated. Based on the scale it can be noted that the houses are not as large as scholars would claim, with 80-90 m² floor space, adequate for 4-8+ people. Some 7 fishing structures are indicated near the village, perhaps corresponding to pairs of operating 'clans'. The 3 fishing houses to the E may indicate a phratry structure. Houses 1-5 and 9 may be Lezgran; house 6 may be Tfabing; houses 7-8 may be Lumrping; and houses 11-18 Targong.



Hypothetical early historic Puir layout



Tentative reconstructed village near Nygay

Each village had a 'domain or territory', perhaps containing 300-600+ km²; this area included 'fishing and hunting sites' (Black 1973: 7).

Ecology

The Nivkh land spans from temperate and arctic coasts to inland forests and taiga. Winters are severe, while summers are fairly wet. Rivers, lakes and coasts form central parts of the human environment, and fishing is a main source of protein. Other sustenance is gained from hunting and gathering (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 769-770). More detailed descriptions of the landscape can be found, perhaps due to the special position of the Nivkh in Russian ethnography (Smoliak 1974b: 99-102).

History

Russian scholars posited the Nivkh as the original inhabitants of the Lower Amur-Sakhalin region (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 768). People lived in ‘dugouts’ or pit houses (ibid.). The Nivkh had contact with China since before 1100 AD (Black 1973: 5).

The Nivkh population must have been drastically reduced by epidemics around 1300-1900. People knew that the pandemics were introduced by outsiders. It was said that ‘smallpox’ came from ‘blood spilled in the foreigners’ wars’, perhaps referring to invading traders, soldiers and colonizers (Black 1973: 53).

Contact with the Japanese was established by 1830 (Black 1973: 5). Extended kin relations were established; the Chinese were addressed as ‘ancestor’ (ytk-utgu) and the Japanese as ‘ancestress’ (ytk-ymgu) (ibid.). This may have said something about perceived power relations with the outsiders; and the prevalence of kin references in social relations.

Contact with the Russians would start around 1650 (Black 1973: 5). This early contact was militant but transient. ‘Massive Russian penetration of the Nivkh area began in 1850’; ominously they set up a military post at Nikolayevsk (ibid.).

By 1854 the Nivkh population had been badly reduced. The surviving villages reportedly were small and concentrated in a few areas such as the Amur estuary and lower Tym valley, generally counting 2-5 houses and 10-80+ people (Black 1973: 6-7). It was said than one house could hold 20+ residents, even as many as 50, probably exaggerated (ibid.)

In answer to the historic depopulation there was a frequent ‘fusion’ of remnant villages and ‘adoption’ of residents from outside, also from other ethnic groups (Black 1973: 83). This was a development shared by most tribes in the Amur-Sakhalin region and beyond. Russian officials and scholars tried to conduct Nivkh censuses in 1891, 1893 and 1894, the official aim being to control the population, a sinister goal (Shternberg 1908).

Severe communist policies were implemented towards the Nivkh after 1925. They were to be forced to become ‘communist’. This included displacements, resettlement and ‘socialization’ in so-called ‘Culture Bases’ after 1925, places where natives were placed under Russian control, similar to concentration camps (Shternberg 1999: li).

One tragedy occurred around 1947-1955 when the Nivkh on the mainland were forcibly settled in ‘kolkhozy’ or collective camps. Their 20+ villages were reduced 9, and in 1959 to 8; the people lost all control of their land, Russians taking control (Smoliak 1974b: 113). People who were used to living in stable and peaceful communities, after only 20 years of Soviet rule existed at the whim of Russian officials; not only their way of life but their very existence was threatened. Fortunately individual Nivkh families managed to escape collectivization, eking a living by working for Russians or in ‘fish factories’ (ibid.). A little more lenient Russians leaders would appear after 1960, so people managed to survive somehow.

Today (2023) the Nivkh are as threatened as ever. Their livelihoods and residence are in no ways secure. Russian bandits and ‘nomenclatura’ control the resources such as salmon roe and forestry sales. People still rely on their ability to persist, which they have done for 10,000 years in their homeland.

Economy

People subsisted from fishing, hunting and gathering. The Nivkh were said to have a 'salmon economy' (Shternberg 1999: xxxv). The economy of course had other aspects and was complex, but catching and storing salmon played a major part in many people's livelihood. An island such as Sakhalin offered rich opportunities for hunting, fishing and gathering. The island was well forested, and rivers and lakes offered fishing opportunities in addition to the sea resources.

'Fish was the staple of life', 'regulated by the seasonal run' of 'salmon and sturgeon' (Black 1973: 17). The main species were 'Siberian salmon' or taimen and 'humpback salmon' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 769). Other fish caught included trout, cod, pike, sturgeon, etc. Fishing 'was carried out throughout the year' (Black 1973: 17). Techniques included fish lines, nets, weirs, fish traps, gaffs, etc. Fish traps, small nets and 'large seines' were used 'in large scale cooperative fishing' involving 3-10+ men (ibid.). The substantial catches of '4000-5000 fish' would feed the whole village (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 769).

Sea mammal hunting was mainly for seals, but also sea-lions, small-whales, white-whales and other animals were caught (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 769-770; Black 1973: 19). Boats for sea hunting were large, and crews may have been moiety based.

Hunting land animals provided protein, skins, furs, bone and sinews. The main hunting season was in fall-winter (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 770; Black 1973: 24). Bears were hunted in fall and late winter, along with fur animals such as otter, marten, sable, fox, lynx, squirrel, hare, etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 770). Large herbivores, deer, reindeer, musk-deer and elk-moose would be hunted throughout the year. Birds might be hunted in summer and at other times. One indication of a food surplus was that each extended family or totem clan kept as many as 30-40 dogs, feeding them on fish, fat etc. (op. cit.: 772).

There may have been phratry-based hunting territories, 'agnatically' or collaterally linked men with customary 'hunting rights' in 'designated portions' of the village territory (Black 1973: 24). Preparatory visits to the hunting area were made after mid-October. Around the middle of November 'the long winter hunt' set in, lasting up until March (ibid.). Most animals were hunted, deer, elk-moose, bear, wolf, lynx etc. (op. cit.: 25). Hares were hunted for ritual purposes; parts of its body could be used to ward off evil, same as in Europe, but in a totemic sense (ibid.).

Gathering included green shoots, roots, berries, nuts, etc. The gathering of plant materials was important, such as gathering nettles and hemp to make fish seines, nets and fabric; nettle leaves could also be used as food (Black 1973: 17, 29, 39). Reportedly the Nivkh had adopted simple agriculture by 1850, including potatoes (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 770).

Boats provided good means of transport, and people were engaged in trade and barter with other villages and with the Chinese to the S (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 770, 772). Other transport was provided by sleds and skis (op. cit.: 772). The great 'mobility' of the Nivkh was noted, and people traveled far to trade and visit (Smoliak 1974b: 102). People picked up crafts such as blacksmithing, and had a varied range of production and goods for trade and consumption (op. cit.: 770).

Kinship

The Nivkh had the dubious honor of becoming exemplars of communist ideological fiction, in the form of ‘group marriage’. This was based on a scholarly bias carried over to the Russian state, fantasizing that ‘primitive’ people shared everything, including wives (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775, 778). Needless to say this was false, but it had unforeseen consequences, one being that the Nivkh were seen as original communists and hence were provided some protection in Soviet times. The downside was that the Russian views were biased and wrong, so in the end there was little protection for the people who tried to live their normal lives.

Nivkh houses were almost square, ca. 9-10 m x 10-11+ m. Pit houses would have a dugout area measuring <6-7 x 7-8 m in the center (Black 1973: 8; Ivanov et al. 1964c: 772-3). Special summer houses ‘often built on piles’ were said to be up to 12-15 m long; it included a storage area. Usually the dwelling and storage house would stand apart (Black 1973: 16). The average Niman or Insular Nivkh household size in 1897 was 6.2-6.7. One extended family groups counted 22 members. Among the Amur or Mainland Nivkh there were many extended families in 1892. Tebakh village at that time had 4 families with 16, 17, 18 and 24 members; the 2+ remaining families were smaller. Vaida village had families with 16, 16, 18, 19 and 22 members. Partly this may be old decimated settlements that had regrouped. It was noted that Nivkh families later tended to be smaller (Smoliak 1970: 293).

One problem with semi-subterranean houses was that they would occasionally fill with water, especially during rainy weather. In such cases people might reside in the storehouses raised on platform, or build an additional house on a platform, until the dugout area dried up. Presumably this was not a general problem, as people could find dry areas to build on.

Nivkh food was specialized and nourishing, consisting of fish, meat and vegetable produce. The ‘staple’ was fish, usually dried (yukola). Favored foods included ‘mos’ – mixed fishskin, seal-fat, berries, rice etc. – and ‘talkk’ – raw fish with wild-garlic (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 770-1). Rice and tea was obtained from China; later the Russians would bring vodka, with devastating effects (op. cit.: 771-2, 782; Black 1973: 39).

As should be obvious the Nivkh did not practice ‘group marriage’, though extramarital sex, prostitution and ritual license might occur (Sternberg 1999: xlv). There were ‘numerous marriage prohibitions’ and rules of exogamy. A man was not allowed to marry his MoBrDa (angrei), which confused the scholar, since he thought this was a model for marriage and so called it a ‘nudum jus’, a right without substance (Sternberg 1999: 54). The point is that ‘angrei’ is a classificatory term, while marriage to known relatives was generally prohibited. A vague parallel would be the English practice of calling people ‘honey’, same as for a spouse, without this meaning that Englishmen practice ‘group marriage’. Marriage restrictions extended to second cousins. In some cases second cousins might marry, which could be a modern development (Sternberg 1999: 89). One view was that boys were married to distant relations on the Mo’s side, and girls on the Fa’s side, though this need not have been practiced with any regularity (Black 1973: 63). Perhaps a marriage with a MoBrSoDa was accepted, but with local exogamy most spouses would be unrelated or distantly related.

The marriage by women ‘always accompanied’ the ‘settlement of strangers in an established village’ (Black 1972: 1246). ‘Lineages are connected by asymmetrical marriage alliances (pandf) linking each lineage with at least two wife-giving (akhmalk) and two wife-taking (ymgi) lineages’ (Zgusta 2015: 75). The number of connubial ‘lineages’ actually would be

much higher, and would involve 3-5+ villages. 'Wife givers' were considered to be superior to 'wife takers', hinting at matriliney (Black 1973: 76, 78). Bride service 'occurred occasionally' or regularly; 'wife takers' would provide 'assistance' or 'labor' for 'wife givers' (ibid.).

Claims have been made of marriage exchange. Supposedly there were groups of 'wife-givers' (akhmalk – FaLa) and 'wife-takers' (ymgi – SoLa) involved in a system of marriage exchange or 'alliance' (pandf) (Black 1973: 78-79; Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775). Yet this could simply be an indication of in-laws on the Wi's and Hu's side.

One particular and significant observation was that 'clan' members found spouses in many other clans outside their home community. In one pointed statement it was claimed that men 'took their wives' from one 'clan' while their sisters married into a different, 'a third clan' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775). The 'Khyyyegnung clan took its women from the Kegnang, the Kegnang from the Tykfing, and the latter from the Khyyyegnung' (ibid.). In this scenario women would 'circulate' between 'clans', which perhaps were former depleted villages; but the gist of the matter is that people would find spouses from other communities in the region, and the spouses belonged to different totem clans, e.g., wolf and hawk.

As a concomitant, sister exchange was not allowed among the Nivkh. Women from one clan should avoid their parents' clans and marry into a third clan 'whose female heads were sisters of my clan's male ancestor', that is, distantly related (Tugolukov 1972). There is a strong hint of matriliney in this statement. 'The levirate was widely practiced', a yoBr marrying an oBr's widow (Black 1973: 80).

One supposed 'remnant' of matrilocality was the custom of sending shares of food to sons- or brothers-in-law (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775). Presumably Nivkh marriages could be matrilocal, patrilocal and neolocal, with a fairly even mix. As in other cases, detailed local surveys would be needed to show marriage locations. This would be secondary in relation to descent rules and practices.

Kinship terms were classificatory. Scholars had a much too limiting view of kinship, associating the kinship terminology directly with individual relationships, rather than considering the different levels and systems of social relations. It was assumed that 'true agnates' born in 'other clans' were the offspring of a MoSi (Sternberg 1999: 16). Yet agnatic kinship, men seen as 'brothers', could be a symbolic relation (ibid.). The term for a 'parallel cousin' (tuvng) can be translated as 'sibling', leading to misunderstandings such as 'group marriage', without seeing that Mo and MoSi belong to the same family, and the system can be extended in turn to their 'parallel siblings' in wider parameters of kin (ibid.). That a FaSi could be grouped with an 'older parallel cousin' caused confusion, since scholars failed to clearly distinguish personal relations from the kinship terminology (ibid.).

Kin terms included: atak (GrFa); ytyk (Fa); ymk (Mo), tuvng (sibling; FaBr, Br, Si); ola (Ch), etc. Presumably kin terms were poorly elicited and often misunderstood. The biased scholars focused on male terms, as if they determined relationships (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 778).

The statement that 'all sisters of my mother' are 'wives' of my 'fathers' can be read as a case of 'group marriage', but basically shows that Fa and Mo are paired terms (Shternberg 1999: 20). A MoBr had a protective role vis-à-vis his SiSo (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775).

One scholar thought that the Nivkh ‘classificatory system does not recognize relationship by affinity’, again confusing relations and terminology (Shternberg 1999: 20). There were words for Hu and Wi, as well as distinctive terms such as ‘if’ and ‘ankh’ that were separate from classificatory terms, ‘pu’ and ‘angrei’ (ibid.). That the term for SoLa, ‘imgi’, is the same as ‘nephew’, is turned into a close relationship by marriage, rather than seeing that SoLa is a sensitive relation while ‘imgi’ as ‘nephew’ is a basic and collateral kin term (Shternberg 1999: 21).

Differentiation

Potential Nivkh totems are: fish (čö), small-fish, herring, cod, bullhead (larq), flatfish (loq), pike (ius), carp, sturgeon (tuki, parq), giant-sturgeon, whitefish (wayr), salmon (layi, hiwco, weckco, wel, deŋi), chum-salmon, humpback-salmon, trout (n’aly), shark, seal (vaad), small-seal (kegnan), harbor-seal, sea-lion (dung, duŋ), whale (lugi, luyi; pord; kalm), white-whale, grampus, dolphin (bomi), turtle, snake (kilæŋæ, kilgiern), frog (rel-ng, ral-ŋ), crocodile, mosquito (n’emy), bird (puŋæ, c^hoŋ, teerkn), hen (p^hieq), cock (ærfieq), grouse (hang), dove, pigeon, tomtit, sparrow (zaq), lark (t’ynd), cuckoo (pyk, pik), woodpecker (olr), raven (ves, wez), crow (veskar), gull (ger), loon or diver (ugn), water-bird (iu), duck (iu), goose (ŋjoni; qælæŋæ), swan (kixkix), crane (loraj), owl (ajka), hawk (ŋaji), eagle (cham-ng, c^hæmŋ), sea-eagle, bear (chkyf, c^hxif, kwotr, qotr, q’otr, q^hotr), badger (tork), marten, ermine, sable (lumr, oyrov), otter (pyŋk), wolf (ligs, liys, liysk), dog (kan, qanŋ, qæn, qæŋŋ, kkan, ankh), fox (kek, k^hieq), tiger (at), lynx (tlæyi), panther, animal (ŋæ), deer (tlanji, cholji), reindeer (c(o)lanji, tum), musk-deer (meq), elk-moose (t^hoŋŋæ), horse (mur), cow (yyæ), sheep (çon), pig (olgon, olyon), beaver, muskrat, rat (n’ayr), mouse (muxtuk), squirrel (læqr), hare (xuyk, hiik), house (tyv, ryv, dav), axe (duy, ke), boat (mu), tree (tyigr, pal), fir (ŋarŋi), larch, birch, forest (pæl, pal), grass, flower, red (pexie), fire (tuyr, tuyur, tukr, tut) (cf. bird), water (c^hæŋ), sea (tayr, tol), river, earth (mif, myf), mountain (pæl; c^hir), hill (cf bear), stone (pakh), flint, sky (tly, tli), wind (lag, lay), thunder (liy, lii), moon, sun (k^hieŋ), etc.

The Nivkh word for ‘clan’ was ‘khal’, ‘kk’khal’ or ‘khaln’. The word apparently also meant kin (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775). There is another term or set of terms that may indicate a totem clan, variously spelled peng, ping, fing, ving, vonn, ung etc. Another ending that may have a totemic relevance is -rang, -ran, -lan, lun, -nang, etc.

A Nivkh clan was said to have ‘one (common) akhmalk or imgi, one fire, one mountain man, one bear, one devil, one tkhusind (ransom, or clan penalty), and one sin’ (Shternberg 1999: 154). This could partly refer to a totem clan, but most apparently it refers to former villages that the Russians called ‘clans’. The one element missing in this awkward list is the person’s totem, that would be kept secret; the scholar would not be told the totem, nor would s/he think to ask about it.

Nivkh ‘clan’ names include:

Petakhping	pord (whale), pyk (cuckoo)
Byksefing, Bazkfing, Bonkeving (aka: Roman)	pyk (cuckoo), pexie (red), pakh (stone)
Pyrifing	pæl (forest, mountain)
Plufvonn, Plyfvonn, Plyyfvong	pæl (forest)
Pildaung	pæl (forest)
Pyrkifing	pord (whale)
Palkhping, Palakhpin	park (sturgeon), pal (tree)

Pilakegnang pieq (hen)
 Perkhvong pieq (hen)
 Pilavong, Pilavon pæl (mountain)
 Bonkefing -> Byksefing bomi (dolphin), puinge (bird)
 Pnyagan puinge (bird), pyeŋk (otter)
 Tapkal (Negidal) tuki (sturgeon)
 Tfabing pord (whale)
 Tfonung, Tfaenung pord (whale)
 Tykfing, Tykfin (bay: Tyk) tʷiyɾ (tree), tuki (sturgeon), tokngæ (elk-moose)
 Takhta-fing tuki (sturgeon)
 Dekal, Dekhal tuki (sturgeon), tyigr (tree)
 Tygmychfing dung (sea-lion), duy (axe), tuyɾ (fire)
 Tiyɾ-tarms-ping tʷiyɾ (tree)
 Tskharung tʷiyɾ (tree)
 Tolf tol (sea)
 Trabing tly (sky)
 Torofing tly (sky)
 Targong, Tarquong, Tarkhong, Targon (noisy) tangni (bear), terkn (bird), tork (badger)
 Tlarlun, Tyvlinin terkn (bird), tlaŋi (deer)
 Tarms -> Tiyɾ tork (badger)
 Tarvon tork (badger), tleyi (lynx)
 Tumifing (cf. Ayumka) tum (reindeer)
 Tamlivong (cf. Pilavon) tum (reindeer)
 Tangi tangni (bear), deŋi (salmon)
 Tnaunung tangni (bear), dung (sea-lion)
 Tvaŋing, Tvanbŋing, Tvabing, Dua-Tvanbŋing tyv (house)
 Tyvli-fing, Tyvli-pin, Tyvli-ping tyv (house)
 Tevrknayrsh (cf. Chavrkrvonn) teerkn (bird), tayr (sea)
 Tyvlinin -> Tlarlun tyv (house)
 Tovnung, Tovnyn tynd (lark)
 Tvaning tyv (house)
 Tyvnynkal tʷynd (lark), tyv (house)
 Khutyfikh, Khutevikh kʰotr (bear)
 Khutyrang kʰotr (bear)
 Kedaung kʰotr (bear), xuyk (hare)
 Kekrvong kixkix (swan), kʰekʰ (fox), xuyk (hare)
 Kegnan, Kegnan kʰekʰ (fox), kegnan (small-seal)
 Matr-Kegnan kegnan (small-seal)
 Pila-Kegnan kegnan (small-seal)
 Khodzher kʰotr (bear)
 Khez-ping kixkix (swan)
 Kezong, Kezon, Koznankhal xuyk (hare)
 Koznankal xuyk (hare)
 Krshyusning ger (gull)
 Kalma-fing kalm (whale)
 Khirlyong, Khiryong, Khirlong, Khirgyong kilenge, kilgiern (snake), ger (gull), (goose)
 Khunnivong, Kenabun qanŋ (dog)
 Keykhnung, Kheikhnyng, Khyyknyn, Khyykhnyng (cf. Kegnan) kʰekʰ (fox), xuyk (hare)
 Kheyegnun, Khyjegnung, Khyyegnung xuyk (hare), khieng (sun)
 Khuyuznyn, Khyyuznyn kwotr (bear), yyæ (cow)

Kevong khojn (sheep), khieng (sun)
 Kavyung, Qajung, Khaviun, Koyvong khieng (sun)
 Chfynung chkyf (bear)
 Chfaun chamng (eagle), chkyf (bear)
 Chetvin chekh (water)
 Chkharibin chkyf (bear), chekh (water)
 Chozm (cf. Choran) chamng (eagle)
 Choril' chor (bird), čo (fish)
 Chorang, Choran (branch: Yygvon) čo (fish), cholŋi (deer), colaŋi (reindeer), (bird)
 Chirivong chir (mountain), chor (bird)
 Chombing, Chomiping, Choming (river: Chomi) cham (eagle)
 Cheyvung, Cheivun, Chyyvun khieng (sun)
 Chavrċ'rvonn, Chavrċrvonn, Chavrċ'ru teerkn (bird)
 Sagul zaq (tomtit, sparrow)
 Sakvonn, Sakvong zaq (tomtit, sparrow)
 Snarnung chamng (eagle)
 Rshannifing ralng (frog), rfieq (cosk)
 Lezngran, Lezngrang, Lezgran, Leingran lezng (bear), liys (wolf), (lynx), (squirrel)
 Lyubunkal liys (wolf)
 Lyumrping, Liumrping, Lumrping, Lampring lumr (sable), lyyi (whale), loraj (crane)
 Ruyvi, Ruyfin lyyi (whale), tleyi (lynx), kiy (thunder)
 Lavng lyyi (whale), loq (flatfish), larq (bullhead-fish), layi (salmon), (deer), (squirrel)
 Mybing, Mybin (river: My) mu (boat), myf (earth)
 Matkenang, Mat'tan muxtuk (mouse)
 Mekhre-fing, Megrifing, Megwafing, Meg'avon meq (musk-deer)
 Maskvonn, Masklavong mur (horse)
 Negafing n'ayr (rat)
 Ngagramleng, Ngaramlan, Nayralam ŋarŋi (fir)
 Noglan, Noolang (smelly) n'aly (trout), (badger)
 Ngayramina, Ngaramian nyangnya (goose), ŋaji (hawk), n'ayr (rat)
 Nili n'aly (trout)
 Nankhai-fing ŋæ (animal)
 Ninly n'aly (trout)
 Niakhafing ŋaji (hawk)
 Nayralam -> Ngagramleng n'ayr (rat)
 Nyonlak (cf. Kegan) nyanya (goose)
 Nuyvonn, Nyyvonn, Nyyvokh iu (duck)
 Yegvonn, Jegvon, Yygvon iu (duck)
 Yenkin (cf Ygnyn) ius (duck)
 Itogo at (tiger)
 Udan vaad (seal), at (tiger)
 Egbon, Egvong ugn (loon)
 Akkal wayr (whitefish)
 Akrvong wayr (whitefish), oyrov (sable)
 Ygnyn, Ugnun, Yugvon, Yg'nyng, Yg'nung ugn (loon), iu (duck)
 Egvong -> Egbon weckco (salmon)
 Vazpingu ves (raven), ius (pike), hiwco (salmon)
 Vyskvonn, Uskvong, Viskvong, Vaskhfing, Ulbann kileng (snake), ves (raven), (crow)
 Ulbann -> Vyskvonn wel (salmon), erfieq (cock)
 Yrkyrshpin olr (woodpecker), xuyk (hare)

Argon, Argong olr (woodpecker), olgon (pig)
 Urmykvonn -> Urtukvonn
 Veron veskar (crow), olr (woodpecker)
 Urtukvonn, Urmukvonn, Urmykvonn at (tiger)
 Arkayfin ajka (owl)
 Amngkhal, Amngkal hang (grouse), angk (dog)
 Ayumka -> Tumifing ajka (owl), hiwco (salmon), iu (duck)
 etc. (Smoliak 1975: 82).

This comparison is partial at best, since several Nivkh terms and words are lacking. The ‘clans’ named above are taken from various sources. More than 67 Nivkh ‘clans’ are known, but an extensive list is not provided by the sources (Smoliak 1970: 270). The scholars were eager to claim that ‘clans’ were not totemic, rather than researching the topic in detail. Even if a ‘clan’ was named after an animal, this was said to be because of its ‘regional occurrence’, and not totemism (ibid.). Needless to say, totem animals and beings will have such a dispersed ‘occurrence’; the scholars simply avoid the topic.

Potential totems compared with clan names (underlined names show strong similarity):

fish (čo) – Choril, Choran
 sturgeon (tuki) – Tykfing
 whitefish (wayr) – Akrvong
 trout (n’aly) – Noglan
 salmon (layi, wel) – Lavng, Ulbann, Veron
 seal (vaad) – Udan
 sea-lion (dung) – Tyvnynkal
 whale (pord, kalm, lyyi) – Pildaung, Kalmafing, Ruyvi
 snake (kilgierng) – Khirlyong
 bird (puinge, terkn, chor) – Bonkefing, Tarquong, Tevrknayshr, Choril
 sparrow (sak) – Sakvong
 woodpecker (olr) – Veron
 cuckoo (pyk) – Pyksefing
 grouse (hang) – Amngkal
 raven (ves) – Vazpingu, Veron
 crow (veskar) – Vyskvonn
 loon (ugn) – Ugnun, Egvon
 duck (iu) – Yygvon
 goose (nyanya) – Nyonlak
 owl (ajka) – Ayumka, Arkajfin
 hawk (ngaji) – Ngayramina
 eagle (cham) – Chombing
 bear (chkyf, khotr, lezng) – Chkharibin, Khutyrang, Khutyfikh, Khodzher, Lezngran
 badger (tork) – Tarkhong
 otter (pyəŋk) – Pnyagan
 sable (lumr) – Lumrping
 wolf (liys) – Lyubunkal
 dog (qann) – Khunnivong
 fox (khekh) – Kegnang, Kekrvong
 tiger (at) – Udan, Urtukvonn
 deer (tlangi) – Tlarlun
 reindeer (tum, cholangi) – Tumifing, Chorang

musk-deer (meq) – Magavon
elk-moose (thoknge) – Tygmychfing
beaver (maks) – Maskvonn
rat (n'ayr) – Ngayramina
squirrel (lekwr) – Leingran, Lavng
hare (khuyk) – Khyykhnung
fir (ngarngi) – Ngagramleng
house (tyv) – Tyvlifing
water (chekh) – Chkharibin
sea (tol) – Tolf
thunder (kiy) – Khyyuznan
sun (khieng) – Khyyegnung, Qajung
mountain (chir) – Chirivong
earth (myf) – Mubing

As in other cases the comparisons and correspondences are tentative; yet there is a strong indication that Nivkh 'clan' names were totemic. Among the Nivkh there is the tantalizing possibility that a few animals may have been named from clans, e.g., Chombing may have given rise to the word 'cham' for 'eagle', based on its totem. Whether this was so would depend on an etymological investigation.

As noted there is a curious argument that 'clans' are named from places and so cannot be totemic (Smoliak 1970: 270). Yet the one does not exclude the other. In totemic societies it is common to shield the nature of the totem. Hence a reference to a place will be a convenient way to avoid stating the totem directly. In a kind of reverse view, 'hawks' and 'doves' in politics are not totems, but a way of redirecting harsher terms such as 'war fiend' and 'bleeding-heart liberal'. What makes it extra hard to work out totemic relations in the Amur-Sakhalin region is the general depopulation and colonial subjection of the natives, so that social units ranging from families to villages and bands were reduced and had to reorganize in new settlements, where totemic distinctions and former residence complicated matters of belonging and social organization. The underlying structure, as it were, became obscure.

People considered themselves to descend from animals and other beings. The scholars awkwardly tried to explain this in 'symbolic terms'. 'Copulation with supernatural beings is believed to take place while the woman is asleep'; 'wet dreams' meet 'mother Mary' (Black 1973: 54). Yet totemism is a social reality; it is based on the interconnection between totem clans in a village. If the neighbor is a bear and you are a dog, no 'supernatural desires' are needed (ibid.). The scholars' misplaced squeamishness prevented them from investigating totemic relations; rather going to the somehow less objectionable topic of divine sex. This threatens to derail the topic of social organization completely. That people belong to their own groups with distinct emblems is ordinary.

Totems are universal in character, which scholars found hard to understand. One investigator discovered 'persons dispersed throughout Sakhalin and the Amur region who traced their descent to a single lineage' (Black 1973: 83). He attributed this to 'segmentation', while in a totemic universe totems such as bear, wolf and deer will be everywhere, and hence 'dispersed' in every village, tribe and beyond, on a global scale.

Each 'clan' would have an origin story. One clan traced its descent 'to a human-snake marriage'. In the ambiguous story a Hu finds his Wi in bed with a man, kills him, and the man

turns into a dead snake; the Hu killed his Wi also, but later she is found 'living with the snakes' together with her children, ancestors of the Ulbann or Vyskvonn 'clan' (Zgusta 2015: 312). This was not a typical clan story, since the woman was already married, and she was eliminated from the village to live with the snakes. Usually a story would go the other way, that a girl married a snake and came to the village with her children to live. Somehow the 'clan' story was mixed with later accounts of social tension, murder, and expulsion, perhaps a reflection on the difficult historical situation of the Nivkh. In another story a swan girl is noted.

One fascinating story is about a woman in a village who asks her Brs to look after her So while hunting. They abandon him, and he is helped by a marten to find game and eventually married the marten, returning to the village where his MoBrs ask forgiveness. In a continuation of the story he becomes a rich man and 'married a number of Chinese wives', showing that stories developed over time, perhaps in response to a weakening of totemic ties (Black 1972: 1246-7). Some 'pseudo' clan stories include the sable clan hunting sables, and the mosquito clan being near a swamp (Smoliak 1974a: 213). Such modern 'modifications' of clan stories are found also in North America.

In programmatic and biased fashion scholars wrote that: 'The Nivkhi clan was patriarchal' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775). This was followed by an equally programmatic hint at 'a few relics of the more ancient matriarchal order' (ibid.). Of course social evolution never occurred, patriline and matriline are found in similar societies. An indication of matriliney is provided from the village of Chomi, where a recently arrived family became wife-takers to local lineages, whereby women would be allowed to stay in the village (Zolotarev 1933: 56). The wife-taker became a 'debtor' to the resident lineages (op. cit.: 57).

The totemic ideology must have been strong. If a house was abandoned, which happened during periods of historic depopulation, 'it could be entered only by' clan relatives; people from 'unrelated lineages were forbidden entry'. The position of each totem clan was fixed and could not be occupied by others. As late as 1956 abandoned store houses 'full' of equipment were left untouched, because the 'lineage mates' were gone (Black 1973: 16).

'Clans', both totemic and modern combinations, would be surrounded by taboos relating to their totems or emblems and other features. Members of the Vyskvonn had a snake as their ancestor and were not allowed to kill snakes (Zgusta 2015: 312).

The 'clan' 'Chavrk'rvonn' had the following heads after 1890: Florun, Lertzain, Obrej, Pitka, Plargin and Ririrn. The 'clan' 'Urtukvonn' had the following heads arranged by seniority after 1890: Net, Pukhtanka, Parkuzin, Kitchik and Otkh. Old Man Net was the Fa of Parkuzin, Khudnyan, Khakin and Doverin (Shternberg 1999). Sadly the totemic significance of names is not known.

'The Nivkhi clan was a group of kinsmen along the male line, bound by strictly observed rules of clan exogamy' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775). This seemingly clear statement has to be modified in several ways. The 'male line' would be a matter of observation; descent could be through women as well as men. The one pertinent observation is that of 'exogamy': members of a totem clan, or any and all 'clans' sharing a totem, e.g., wolf, were not allowed to marry. Most likely this extended to a phratry as well; a group of clans with similar totems, such as wolf, fox and lynx, would be exogamous.

In a curious exposition one scholar tried to outline Nivkh marriages between 'clans' (Smoliak 1970: 281-287). The source material were lists of marriages in 41 Nivkh 'clans' around 1930. There are 1600+ potential combinations of spouses from different 'clans'! Trying to find a marriage 'system' in such a wide and short-term material is next to impossible, even more so when considering that marriages are made on a local, not a 'clan', basis. The scholar tries to relate some 434 couples to a supposed wife exchange between 'clans'. That none exists becomes evident from a perusal of the material. The 'clans' obtain marriage partners from numerous other clans; e.g., Lezngran had partners from 18 other 'clans', and Kegnang from 20 other 'clans', almost half of the total number. The reason why the number of spousal 'clans' is not greater, seems to be the short time period; the 434 marriages only amount to ¼ of the potential number of 'clan' combinations. If any idea of marriage patterns was to be had, this would depend on recording all marriages in each local community back 100+ years in time before 1930.

Phratries

There are indications that Nivkh villages had phratries or phratry-like subdivisions. Unfortunately the term 'phratry' is not used very clearly in the sources. Russian scholars would use the term 'phratry' as a synonym for 'village'; kind of like saying that a city is a group of families (Shternberg 1999: 84). In this work a phratry is seen as a generally 3-partite grouping spanning the 2 moieties or sides of a village, so that a phratry mainly consists of 6+ totem clans. The number of clans may vary, and the number of phratries may range from 2 to 4+. Based on the distribution of fishing territories, the local community Kul seems to have had 3 phratries, represented by the 'clans' Tnanunung-Tiyrtarmsping-Tfenung, Megrafing, and Qavjung-Kezong. Tfenung-Kezong might represent a 4th or 'chiefly' phratry, with Tfenung placed favorably at the mouth of rivers, and both clans being small (Black 1973: 11). In one version Tfaenung were 'the first settlers', e.g., people claiming a 'first' status, indicating chieftaincy (ibid.).

It can be claimed that each Nivkh village consisted of roughly 3-4 phratries or groups of totem clans, where pairs of phratry clans would be distributed on opposite side of the village as complements to each other, e.g., deer on one side and elk-moose on the other, both part of the same phratry. One scholar divided Nivkh people into 'moieties' based on an intricate system of intermarrying clans that he imagined existed (Sternberg 1999). He invented a system of 4 'clans' where each 'clan' was divided into two moiety-like sides, and where each side was exogamous but allowed to marry on the other side, with indications of preferred marriage partners (ibid.). One inspiration for this model could be a village on Salhalin's W coast that the scholar visited and photographed (Grant 1995: 51). The village seems to have 4 large houses besides storehouses and smaller houses. These may actually represent 3-4 clans, with one better house on the N perhaps representing a chief's clan and residence. Another inspiration could be Australian totemism and marriage 'sections', that would have little bearing on the Sakhalin situation, but may have appealed to the scholar as a system. In modern times the number of phratries, to the extent they were extant, could range from 1-2 to 5+; this was due to depopulation and the rearrangement of clan groups in new combined villages.

Phratries could be active in organizing fishing teams, also in Soviet times. In 1927 there were 'artels' or teams in different villages counting 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 20, 24, 42, etc. people, with an average of 16-17 members. The largest, two teams with 42 members each, may have been

moiety or even village based, while smaller groups could be phratry based (Smoliak 1974b: 110).

Moieties

All indications are that Nivkh villages consisted of 2 sides or moieties. One was directed to the sky or sea, the other to the earth or mountains (Black 1973: 54). The first was associated with the 'Master of the Waters', the second with the 'Master of the Mountains' or 'Forest'. The sea moiety would be associated with a whale, killer-whale or dolphin, the earth moiety with a bear or tiger (*ibid.*). The precise totems could vary between villages. It is suggested that the sea moiety had the second chief and the earth moiety the first chief; the moiety totem would then be aligned with the chief totem, with room for expansion. Moieties could further be distinguished as 'upper' and 'lower', based on their position along a river or coast; it might be assumed that the sea moiety was 'lower', though this is conjecture.

An argument is made for the historical existence of 2 exogamous moieties in each village. The moieties in turn would find marriage partners in another village, so that people from moiety A in village I could marry people from moiety B in village II, and those from moiety A in village II could marry others from moiety B in village I (Sternberg 1999: 86). The actual connubium would be bigger, involving 4+ villages, with marriage alliances (pandf) extending even beyond this area, such as across northern Sakhalin.

Apparently each moiety had a sacred spot for sea worship, and may each have had a large boat (*mu*) for sea hunting and transportation (Black 1973: 10, 21). A large boat was manned by 5-14+ people; it supposedly could hold up to 40+ people (*op. cit.*: 21). Based on gathering practices, the Kul settlement may have had 2 moieties, one in the W headed by the Tnaunung 'clan', and one in the E headed by Qavjung (Black 1973: 11). In general the moieties would occupy the 2 sides of each village, each with its leader, a first and second chief.

Village makeup

'A Nivkhi village was inhabited by members of various clans' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775). The biased scholars saw this as a decline, that 'clans' were no longer 'entities', while in actuality villages had always consisted of a number of juxtaposed, equal and complementary descent groups, here called totem clans (*ibid.*; Smoliak 1974b: 104). Historical villages have been recorded with up to 9 clans, though much reduced. Generally only 4-5 clans would survive in a village, the rest dwindling away. Examples are: Kol: 4+, up to 8 clans. Puir: 4-5, up to 7-9 clans. Krasovka 8 clans. Makarovka 7-9 clans. A reduced village, such as Khez in 1910, might have 7-8 extended families, potentially representing 2 moieties with 3+3 clans, and a chief's family in the middle (Black 1973: 11).

Nivkh 'clans' were found 'in different places' or villages, and could 'adopt' people 'of other clans and tribes' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 777). This would reflect the historical situation in which villages were decimated, so people from other groups would be taken in and adopted to bolster the local population. A descent group might also split up in order to supplement the population in another village, in which case they received a part of the clan's fire-making flint (*ibid.*). Villages would strive to maintain a full complement of totem clans, either by adopting new members or by sending one or more young people to fill the ranks of another settlement.

One scholar suggested a totemic universe for the Nivkh, that can be compared to a village layout (Kuroda 1976: 55). Though the order is not certain, totems noted include: fish, killer-whale, bird, bear, dog, squirrel, red, black, tree, fire, white-water, sea, sky, earth, clay, etc. 'White water' is here interpreted as a fish, and 'spotted' as a chipmunk or lynx. The scholar identifies 'mountain' with bear, the 'mountain man' (op. cit.: 54-55). The suggestions are interesting, because they resemble the confused efforts of American ethnologists to make sense of Siouan totemism.

Yet the situation would be more complex. Each village would have its own complement of totemic clans. Some of these include: whale, marten, etc. Paired and complementary totems would be derived from categories such as: Aquatic and near-aquatic animals: fish, salmon, whale, killer-whale, seal, etc. Birds: bird, grouse, gull, hawk, eagle, etc. Bears and mustelids: bear, weasel, etc. Canines and felines: wolf, dog, fox, lynx etc. Large herbivores: deer, reindeer, roe-deer, musk-deer, elk-moose, etc. Hares and rodents: beaver, mouse, squirrel, hare, etc. Other beings and phenomena: water, sea, sky mountain, earth, etc. From these 6-7 categories a local totemic organization could be made up of 12-14 totem clans divided into complementary pairs in each village half, e.g., salmon on one side, whale on the other, grouse on one side, hawk on the other, and so on. Based on all available information, such as 'clan' names, the following distribution of totem clans can be suggested in an early historic Nivkh village: fish, bird, bear, wolf, deer, squirrel, earth; sea, whale, hawk, sable, fox, elk-moose, and hare. This would represent a basic totemic organization.

Interestingly scholars saw trade relations with China as a reason for 'the disintegration of the clan order among the Nivkh' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 778). There may be some reason in this; Chinese traders and officials may not have encouraged matrilineal or totem clans. Also the Japanese and Ainu – themselves matrilineal – were blamed for the social reduction. By chance this took the Russians out of the equation: 'long before Russian colonization, the Nivkhi began to be divided into rich and poor' (ibid.). Yet the Russians, or the scholars themselves, were 'patriarchal' and averse to matrilineal and totems. It was their task to eliminate the native way of life (op. cit.: 782-4).

The totemic nomenclature would be extended beyond the local organization of totem clans. 'The Nivkh are often considered to be descendants of the larch tree', while the Oroks are birch and the Ainu fir (Black 1973: 51). This would be a national totem, similar to the national trees of modern states; Russians, Swedes and Norwegians share their national tree, birch, with the Oroks.

Politics

The political life of the Nivkh nation is not well known. Nivkh leadership seems to include a first and second chief in each village. The leadership was described as 'egalitarian'; the chief was the first among equals, governing on principles such as 'lineage solidarity and respect for age' (Black 1973: 83). Maintaining unity, peace and some degree of agreement was essential. Law and order were based on communal decisions (ibid.). There were inter-village councils settling conflicts by neutral arbitrators (khlay-nivkh) (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 777-8).

Interestingly it is claimed that the Nivkh 'had no chiefs' (Black 1973: 83). This is in spite of the fact that they had terms for 'first' resident, 'founder' and 'owner' of the village territory – in other words, a chief (op. cit.: 7, 17, 19, 75). Presumably they also had terms for 'second' residents or chiefs and war leaders or assistant chiefs (op. cit.: 28). 'The First Settlers' were

‘the first to make the offering at the seasonal rituals to the Master of the Waters’ in each village, presumably followed by the second leader. These ‘First Settlers’ decided the ‘arrangement of dwellings’ and the distribution of fishing areas, giving them ‘the most advantageous position economically’, a typical leadership feature (op. cit.: 75). A chief would need special access to resources to perform his or her community role.

This being said, it seems clear that the leadership structure was broken down in historic times, as remnants of decimated villages sought together for strength, and outside influences, Manchu, Japanese and Russian, exerted dominance and instituted their own leaders or ‘elders’, who were set in a difficult situation of resistance and external control. The ‘Manchus’ established ‘clan elders’ and village leaders, again indicating that chieftaincy was known (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 778).

Totem clan leaders or ‘elders’ and chiefs together formed a representative group at village councils. The political system seems to have been well established. Extensive laws and rules helped maintain local and regional peace and order. Nivkh villages operated with mechanisms of ostracism and expulsion. Members who did not fit in were expelled, often with dire consequences for the expulsee. Such restrictions on local residence were common in totemic societies, and would include infanticide. For various reasons, such as a ‘grave transgression’, individuals could lose their ‘rights of citizenship in their original group’ (Black 1973: 75). Scholars did not see the full implications of this, and viewed it as individual punishments. Yet a village would have to restrict the number of people exploiting its territory in order to maintain sustainability and food supplies.

Religion

The main deities were the sun, moon, sky, earth and sea, in addition to creator spirits (taikhangd), such as the ‘Old Woman’ (Black 1973: 7, 47f). Other deities and ‘master’ spirits (yz) would include fire, thunderbird, wind, mountain, forest, trees, stars and more (Black 1973: 8, 47f; Ivanov et al. 1964c: 778-9). The fire ‘master’ was an old woman (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 780). Venerated animals include: seal, whale or killer-whale, bear, etc. Fetishes included parts of hares or rabbits (Black 1973: 62).

The Nivkh had a bear festival similar to that of neighboring peoples. It was held in fall, winter or late winter, January-March. In one case the bear feast was held on March 15. The arranging clan’s son-in-law was a sponsor. A clan would empty its bear cage to hold the feast. A bow and arrow was used to dispatch the bear. One who was the clan’s father-in-law received the bear’s meat and fat. Games associated with the bear festival included dog races (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 770, 772, 779; Black 1973: 90).

There would also be a killer-whale or whale festival; and presumably celebrations for each totem clan as well (Black 1973: 86-87). ‘The cult connected with the ‘masters’ of nature was of pronounced clan character’ (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 779). Unfortunately this seemingly clear statement may refer to other elements than ‘clans’, such as the village as a whole, subunits such as moieties or phratries, or even a regional band.

Mention is made of ‘lineage rituals’, with no details (Black 1973: 50). It can be assumed that each totem clans would have rituals relating to its totem, perhaps performed in summer when people were gathered. Each totem clan in turn could hold its ritual inviting other totem

representatives to its feast. Such rituals are rarely noted, but would include totems such as: killer-whale, bird or lark, eagle, bear, etc.

Games included wrestling or 'duels', sometimes used to settle disputes. On such occasions dogs were sacrificed (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 778). As noted there also were dog races, so they were both contestants and food. Presumably there were a series of games and contests carried out at different times of the year, sometimes in connection with annual ceremonies.

Native beliefs survived in the form of shamanism. Shamans were particularly engaged with healing and spiritual guidance, assisted by 'helping spirits' (kekhn). Yet shamanism was not prominent among the Nivkh, perhaps because people managed to hang on to some local celebrations and beliefs (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 780).

Culture

Nivkh culture was complex. Material goods were made from wood, bone, stone, as well as metals after 0 AD. The Nivkh were moving into the iron age, as they would fully after 1000-1600 AD. 'Fire was made with flint and tinder' (Black 1973: 17). 'All Nivkh' carried fire making 'pouches attached to their belt'. Anciently a fire drill was also used. There was a custom to 'feed the fire' with herbs or tobacco, similar to American Indian practices (ibid.). As noted, people had a specialized cuisine. Music included log percussion by women during the bear festival. There also was a one-string fiddle (t'yngryng) and jew's harp (kkangga) (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 781).

Clothing was made of animal and fish skins (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 768, 774). Men wore pants (varsh) and conical hats (khifkhakk) (op. cit.: 774). 'Each Nivkh woman hoped to own a lynx hat', with the ears on top (Black 1973: 29, 32). People wore their hair in braids (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 775). Unfortunately the decoration on clothing is not known in detail. Motifs might include: fish, bird or grouse, eagle, tiger, lynx, flower, etc.

Of special interest here is the representation of animals and other beings in art and stories. Decorative arts included carvings, embroidery, appliqué etc. (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 780). The main colors were black, white, red and blue (ibid.). Figures on clothing included: fish, snake, monster-serpent, dragon, bird, rooster, falcon, bear, tiger, etc. Objects would be decorated, such as boats being 'ornamented', though clear examples are missing (Black 1973: 21). For some reason scholars would avoid the subject of natural symbolism. 'There is no satisfactory study of Nivkh art available (op. cit.: 42). Mostly this may be due to scholarly biases, such as diffusionism and racism (ibid.). Hence all sources on figurative expressions are limited.

One word for a wooden 'idol' was 'mej'. Each family would have a guardian spirit, yet what it was and how it was represented is rarely indicated (op. cit.: 9-13). 'Each dwelling had a spirit' representing 'unity in multiplicity' (op. cit. 9). Unfortunately the 'multiplicity' presumably totemic, is not specified. The guardian 'spirits were regarded as ancestral' and 'associated conceptually with the ancestors' (ibid.). Again no specification or examples are provided. Suggested chiefly totems could be earth and sea or sky. Other likely totem spirits were: fish, pike, salmon, bird, bear, deer, hare, etc. 'Images representing the' guardian spirits 'were carved by the Nivkh and kept on a special shelf' and 'dressed in symbolic clothing'; examples are absent (op. cit.: 13-16). Strongly suggestive of totemism were 4 house beams, 'male and female' (op. cit.: 8). Clan or family symbolic places included the house entrance or threshold, fire place, fire flint, seats of honor at the back, and more (op. cit.: 7-14). Carved

symbols would be found in houses; logs could be ‘decoratively carved’, but no examples are given (op. cit.: 12). Two house poles had ‘carvings’ or ‘emblems’, again without specification (ibid.). Ritual objects included images of the sun, moon, and wood shavings (tsakh) similar to the Ainu ‘inau’ (ibid.). Carvings included representations of: bird, eagle, bear, etc. Decorations in general would include: fish, snake, monster-serpent, reptile, lizard, dragon, turtle, toad, bird, woodcock, rooster, duck, eagle, bear, wolf, dog, deer, tree, water, sun, etc. Information about such depictions has to be extracted from numerous reluctant sources, and are far from complete (Black 1973: 41-43, 44). The main source is photos of Nivkh ornaments, allowing direct recognition.

Verbal arts included poetry, songs, tales, proverbs and myths (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 780). Animal stories provide potential totemic information (Black 1973: 45). Unfortunately scholars favored human protagonists, so the animal protagonists are poorly known. This turns the native perspective upside down, where nature is everpresent. There was a story of three suns. In one myth people descended from trees, Nivkh from the larch and the Oroch from the birch (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 780). In an animal council about ‘survival’ each species decided how many children it would have; when a woman was asked ‘she was so bashful’ that it was decided she could only have one child at a time (Black 1973: 54). The main concern of the council was to ensure sustainability, that each animal, including humans, would have no more children than its ‘mode of life would sustain’; this was long before the modern concept was coined, and the scholars in their biased minds simply saw this as a matter of modesty (ibid.). One scholar modestly wondered if ‘infanticide’ was involved, indicating that decency is more important than natural survival (ibid.). That the Nivkh saw this another way was ignored; they were native environmentalists.

Animal characters included: fish, frog, bird, raven, swan, eagle, bear, mouse, rat, tree, larch, etc. (Van Deusen 2001: 58f). In one story a girl is transformed into a swan, while her Fa turns into a larch tree (Black 1973: 50). There were several stories of ‘bear people’, associated with the mountain spirit, such as women wanted to be the ‘bride’ of this spirit (op. cit.: 53). Animals found in stories, taken from mixed sources, include: fish, whale, bird, dove, cuckoo, raven, crow, loon or diver, swan, eagle, bear, deer, squirrel, hare, etc.

Childbirth was a critical moment in a person’s life. At birth ‘the child’s soul is sent to enter the mother’s womb’ (Black 1973: 51). Both mother and child have to be protected at this moment. The Nivkh reportedly had menstruation huts (lanraf); ‘flimsy huts used for childbirth’ and for menstruating women (op. cit.: 16, 58). Presumably they were placed in proximity to the village, near the women’s latrine (op. cit.: 58). ‘Infanticide apparently was frequent’ (op. cit.: 60). This was supposed to involve ‘illegitimate children’, but was a form of population control (ibid.).

In true totemic fashion Nivkh people ‘were reluctant to divulge their real names’ (urlan-kha), ‘as such knowledge could be dangerous in the possession of an ill-intentioned person’ (Black 1973: 61). It would be like revealing once identity details and personal relations. Instead people would use nicknames or ‘jesting’ names (lerund kha) (ibid.). Unfortunately this meant that the scholars, already biased, ignored Nivkh names.

Some names in a Plyfvonn family ca. 1900 were: 1) Prikhtun – oBr – sg – 27; 2) Kurk – yBr – ma – 23; 3) Gaulin – yBr – 15; 4) Pulytkh – So oBrFa – sg – 10 (Mo: Nulky·tk); 5) Penguk – oWi of Kurk – 21; 6) Chfarguk – yWi of Kurk – 12; 7) Mo of Prikhtuna, Kurka and Gaulina (Kreynovich 1929: 278). Some other male names include: Pyk, Pukhtanka, Psetkin, Parkuzin,

Plargin, Pnargun, Tangi, Doverin, Khudyan, Kenren, Chamuk (eagle), Mokley (e.g., Mikhail), Nyugun, Elzik, Omun, etc. Among female names known are: Sanvik, etc. Most women would adopt Russian names, like Olga (Smoliak 1974b: 175).

Nivkh childlife was rewarding. In a simplified statement, 'children were taught at an early age to assume their proper sex roles' (Black 1973: 62). Yet childlife was free, with plenty of toys, games and things to explore and learn. 'Children were greatly indulged' (ibid.). The happiness of native childhoods is worth remembering. 'The Nivkh had no puberty rights' (op. cit.: 63). This may be a recent development following depopulation.

As noted, scholars would relate totemism to 'supernatural' copulation, where no such connection is necessary. What seems more relevant is that there were strong restrictions on marriage and 'incest'. In a somewhat biased statement, 'incest' was 'a deadly sin' leading to 'suicide' (Black 1973: 55). It would be more pertinent to know which totem clans could or could not marry; all that is stated is that a 'taboo violation in some cases may be defined as lineage-specific' (ibid.). Without knowing the totemic or 'clan' structure such statements are meaningless.

Some notes would be made on a supposed division of labor between genders. Men hunted while women 'sewed'. Such statements are not at all clear and presumably biased; an example is that men collected 'firewood', yet this might equally be performed by women (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 770).

Disposal 'of the body was by cremation' (Black 1973: 17). The burned remains were buried 'in the earth' (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 780). At the cremation dogs were sacrificed, their meat cooked 'in large cauldrons and eaten on the spot' (ibid.). The dead were buried 'by members of their clan'; again, 'clan' may refer to the village or some other units (ibid.). A few days later there was a 'sendoff of the soul'; more dogs were killed; a hut (raf) with a figurine representing the deceased was erected (ibid.). Grave houses were decorated with totemic and animal figures, including: bird, grouse, cuckoo, cormorant, bear, dog, leopard, tree, mountain, etc. Grave posts included bird figures, 'Birds of Violence', including loon (Black 1973: 41). The Nivkh, as most people, had a composite view of the 'land of the dead' (mly-vo). Those who had a violent death were said to go to Tlo in the sky.

Summary

Unfortunately much Nivkh ethnography was misused, such as biased claims of 'primitive communism' and 'communal group marriage', that never existed (Shternberg 1999: xxxvii). Flourishing villages with many 'clans' or descent groups were described as in 'decay', basically an excuse for the Russian destruction of this once heroized people (Smoliak 1974b: 104). Communists would critique humanist scholars who objected to Marxist ideas or who defended native peoples. This in turn led to abusive policies, such as a drive in 1933 to liquidate 'patriarchal clans' among the Nivkh (Shternberg 1999: xxxvii). People were relocated by force, had their lands and livelihood taken away, and were subjected to harsh destructive forces by Russian colonizers from 1890 until today (Ivanov et al. 1964c: 781-787). Among other things a Nivkh alphabet was developed in 1880, but later abolished by the Russians (op. cit.: 781).

At the same time the Nivkh would always remain a mythical people in Russia, of cultural, historical and ideological fame. These were the noble natives who Marxist scholars would

extol as a proof of the supposed primacy of communist ideology. That people did not conform to the biased ideology that had been prescribed for them was a hitch, but did not prevent their continued valorization in ethnographic textbooks. The Nivkh remain an exemplar of premodern social developments, though sorely tried. A more nuanced and fuller presentation of Nivkh society is a possibility that may contribute to a better understanding of social life, both native and modern. Their totemic traditions place them firmly in the realm of North Asian cultures.

Field research in North Asia

In the following some brief research trips in North Asia will be presented. My main experience with the North was working at Finnmark University College 1993-2006, where I was a lecturer in cultural studies and tourism. As noted, Finnmark is here considered to be closely related to North Asia, in terms of ecology, history and culture. I had the privilege of giving courses in Sami culture for several years. As with most northern cultures Sami life is community based, as expressed by the ancient concept of 'siida', meaning settlement or village. This was followed by a close attachment to nature, also noted for other northern peoples. During my northern residence I had the privilege of visiting Northern Russia, Finland and Estonia. For North Asia proper my visits are more limited, with field trips to the Lower Amur region in 2000 and 2003, and a journey to Hokkaidô in 1993, as well as visits to an Ainu Culture Center in Tokyo. Below is an attempt to recapitulate some of my experiences. Please note that some names and words are spelled tentatively as they sounded.



Travels in the Lower Amur – Maritime region 2000 (red) and 2003 (blue)

Fieldtrip to the Lower Amur in 2000

Basically the information here takes the form of a ‘travelogue’, since the relevant bits cannot be singled out easily, and the format is alluring. Still I have tried to maintain a focus on totemism whenever this topic was actualized. The stay in Russia would span August 8-25.

In July 2000 I (Leif Selstad – LS) went to Japan to join Dr. Richard Zgusta (RZ) on a research trip among the small Tungusic and Nivkh tribes in the Russian Far East, on the Lower Amur and Pacific coast. One goal was to investigate totemism, clanship, kinship systems, and ethnic relations. We could not get a Russian guide, but RZ spoke Russian and would take that role.

The trip started in Osaka, Japan, on July 18, 2000. Over the next days preparations were carried out. Through a Japanese travel agent we obtained tourist visas, which was new at the time. Earlier visas had to be obtained from Moscow. Yet our Japanese visas would not impress the Russian authorities, as we would discover during the trip.

On August 8, 2000, a Tuesday, RZ and I flew from Osaka to Vladivostok, where we stayed at Hotel ‘Vladivostok’. We had to share a room, with some snoring as a result. The taxi driver ripped us off to and from the airport, charging \$40. The next day we flew to Khabarovsk on a small Jakovlev jet, delayed 4 hours for repairs, arriving at 5 PM. Here we paid the taxi in rubles, which was much cheaper, R140 (\$5); \$1 = R29. The taxi drivers were ‘patriots’, saying they loved Russia and criticizing the other peoples living here, Chinese, Koreans, Tatars, Chechens, and others. After some negotiation we got a room at Hotel ‘Tsentralnaya’, downtown Khabarovsk. It was filled with Chinese and Korean businessmen, who are welcomed by Russian authorities because they start companies and bring money. RZ commented that Korean lumber companies force Nanai villagers to leave, cutting down the forests. The natives’ land rights are not protected.

In Khabarovsk we walked to the Amur River. The city seemed to be thriving, with outdoor cafés and bustling parks. At the river modern passenger boats go to China regularly. Russians go to China to shop, and Chinese go to the Russian side to trade. The first Tungusic person we saw was an alcoholic woman on a bench.

August 10 was spent exploring Khabarovsk and buying train tickets. We noticed many Western cars, that the Russians import cheap from Japan. We stayed up in order to catch a train for Komsomolsk at 2:26 AM. Our companions on the train were four Russians, all friendly. One man told us that there are Nanai people in Komsomolsk, but that they hide their identity as much as possible, for instance by taking common Russian names, like Ivanov. On Friday, August 11, we arrived in Komsomolsk at 6:43 AM, where we checked into Hotel ‘Voskhod’, ‘Daybreak’. After two hours of sleep we were awoken brutally by two policemen, who asked for ‘passport’ and claimed that Komsomolsk was a closed military city, and gave us R170 ‘shtraf’ (fine). They scoffed at our Japanese visas, saying they had no value unless issued in Moscow. While the episode was quite dramatic, we later learned that the policemen were looking for cash, and R170 corresponded to two bottles of vodka, which served as a kind of ‘currency’ in the region.

In Komsomolsk are several museums, and one of them, a Museum of Local Regional Culture, had a Nanai section, but the museum was ‘closed for repairs’. There was an art museum with an exhibition by a Nanai artist called Rappan, who used traditional designs. That native culture is moving into the local museums was striking, since earlier the exhibits were reserved

for Russian-socialist displays. The new museum exhibits were partly a confirmation, even a re-invigoration of native culture, but also a form of control in which the culture is 'museumized'. There also is a hope that the rich native displays will bring tourists and income. After some more adventures, such as being scammed by a money changer outside a bank, we went to the Amur boat terminal or 'River Station' and got a ticket for Bulava.

On Saturday, August 12, RZ and I were on a boat on the Amur around 8 AM. The boat, 'Meteor', was of the hydrofoil type. The boarding was chaotic, most people had not bought tickets in advance, and we had time to check our surroundings. Most passengers were ethnic Russians. One old woman and some young people were Nanai or Tungusic.

The boat travel was surreal. Soon after leaving Komsomolsk we were surrounded by nature; forests reaching down to the river and hardly a house or a road to be seen. At one time a bear could be seen on the bank; nobody reacted. But the ethnic scenery has dramatically changed since 1910. Most of the villages below Komsomolsk appear to be Russian. One girl told us that 'Strawberry Village' is inhabited by Russians – but earlier perhaps by Nanai.

We arrived in Bulava around 4:10 PM, one hour late on the 'Meteor' boat. On the way we stopped at Tsimmermanovka and a Nanai village, Mariinskoye, next to a Russian village called Mariinskiy Reyd. Most villages, including Tsimmermanovka and Bulava, would have a Nanai or Tungusic section.

We talked to a Nanai man on the boat, and it turned out that he was getting off at the same stop as us, Bulava. We asked him if he knew of anybody with a car in Bulava who could take us to Lake Kizi, where native people lived. He said we should just look around and ask people, adding that lack of gasoline was a problem. He claimed he wasn't sure if anybody was waiting for him with a car. He was going to his home village, De-Kastri. As it turned out some relatives with a 4WD Toyota rover were waiting for him, and he hurriedly took off. We later found out that he would be going by a place we wanted to visit, Lake Kizi, and felt a little peeved that he did not offer us to ride along; but he obviously had other things on his mind. Yet we also learned that the road to Kizi was not passable at the moment, so taking us there would be a hazard.

As it turned out we had other challenges than transport to face: An 'officialesque' Russian woman stopped us as we were leaving the barge that served as a quay. She asked us our business, and when told we were tourists she didn't believe us. RZ later pointed out that Russians do not see people travelling on their own as tourists; there would have to be a group or an organized tour as with the Intourist travel bureau. What didn't strike us at the time, was that she probably had prior notice of our arrival and was sent to investigate. Her impulse was to prevent us from going on shore. At first she said there was no 'gastinitsa' (hotel), but later admitted there was one. RZ said we wanted to visit our Japanese friend, Ôtsuka, who was supposed to be in Bulava, but she said she knew of no Japanese. However, she knew Smolyak and Taksami and other Russian ethnographers; she said a Russian ethnographer and a 'foreigner' was coming on the 7 PM boat, we might talk to them. Otherwise we'd have to leave or sleep on the landing barge waiting for next day's boat. She told us to wait on the landing barge while she fetched the authorities.

One part of the resentment of Russian officials, experienced at various points during the trip, appeared to be a reluctance that the conditions of the natives or indigenous groups and their

treatment by the Russians would become apparent. Generally there was a view that travelers' impressions should be controlled and limited.

So this was the third place we stayed on the Amur and the second place that we faced police detention. RZ ominously joked that we would end up in a Siberian prison (gulag). On the planks leading from the landing barge to the shore some boys were jumping into the water; most of them appeared to be native, Ulchi, rendering some idyll to the situation.

After a while an official, the local mayor or village secretary, came on to the barge; he looked native, but said he was Korean, named Kim. He turned out to be friendly, he had been abroad, to Tokyo and other places, and he knew what a tourist was. He said we could stay at the *gastinitsa*. He was originally from Sakhalin, and now lived in Bulava, married to an Ulcha woman. He said the population in Bulava is 60% Russian, 30% Ulchi, 10% Nanai, a few Gilyak and 1 Korean (himself); there also turned out to be a few Negidal. Kim was energetic and friendly and talked while he drove us in his Japanese 4WD to the *gastinitsa*. He noted an upcoming Orthodox procession, a new event; symbolically re-establishing Russian dominion through the church. Kim was an atheist; but there's an assembly house for Presbyterian Koreans at their lumber enclosure nearby. The Korean lumber company had been given complete lumber rights to the forest in the area. Kim said he wanted to keep a distance to the lumber lords. Among other topics he also noted the ongoing salmon season and that the 'Meteor' boat is not stopping on the way up, for fear of salmon roe smugglers, a popular activity to get cash or vodka for barter.

Bulava is an important Tungusic village, though dominated by Russians, as is the case in many native villages. The village is divided into two parts, Russian and Tungusic, as is the case in other places as well. As will be noted, the S part, 'Old Bulava', is the Ulchi-Nanai section, while the N part, 'New Bulava', is a Russian settlement. The Nanai man on the boat pronounced it Bulavá, while the Russians on the boat said Búlava. Maybe this is a Nanai-Ulchi name, Pulawá. Mayor Kim told us that the young Ulchi, in their 30s, talk Ulchi with their parents, who are in their 50s or older, but speak Russian among themselves.

Bulava's population appears to be <2000. It is part of Ulchskogo Rayon. RZ noted that the Ulcha were among the first groups to get clan-based territorial rights, leading up to current conflicts about lumber, fishing and land, which are unresolved and challenging issues.

The *gastinitsa* turned out to be a small, green house, Russian style, where we were shown to a 5-bed room on the N side. A young Russian named Andrej occupied one bed; he worked for the Korean lumber company for R3000 a month, \$103. Amenities in the room included table, TV, fridge, but no running water. There was a wash basin by the door, but no water. The toilet was an outhouse loo behind the house, with a men's and women's shed, one hole in the plank floor each, that smelled unbearably in the heat. We recorded this as a sort of cultural backlog in Russia. RZ noted that the TV in our room has a remote control, while the toilet was a hole in the ground. The woman managing the *gastinitsa* had a computer in her office; while we paid R120 (\$4) each for 1 night.

Some 100 m from the *gastinitsa* was a magazine selling beer, candy, vodka and other necessities – but no bread, just dry goods and some meat & cheese. We bought a beer and walked with Andrej to the shore of the Amur. Andrej was smart, but frustrated with his situation; he wanted to go to Khabarovsk, his home town. He pointed to the two local lumber yards, one Russian to the N and one Korean to the S, a few hundred meters separate on the

shore. To export lumber they move the timber on trucks from the Russian yard to the Korean yard, though all the workers are Russian.

The lumber yard boss was a Russian man, burly and balding, in his late 40s, who also operated the *gastinitsa* and basically ‘runs things’. He claimed to be a member of the Duma in Moscow, and appeared to be what the Russians call an ‘*oligark*’ aka ‘*nomenklatura*’; RZ compared them to gangsters.

Andrej explained the lumber industry by placing four pebbles in a row on the sand: to the N, the Russian logging company hauls the timber, next the Russian ‘export’ company brings it on trucks, next the Korean ‘import’ company puts it on barges for shipment, and finally the receiving company in Korea or elsewhere processes the wood. Flipping away the pebble from the Russian ‘export’ company, Andrej added, ‘sometimes we don’t have this’. The implication was that it is difficult for Russians to get an export license, so they have to hand the timber over to the Koreans in Russia. Andrej spoke reasonable English; he said he learned it by himself, and also spent 1 ½ months in Seattle as an exchange student. This made him contemplate his lost chances. He also claimed that a Japanese company offered him \$300 a month, and that he studied Japanese. Andrej had a girlfriend in Khabarovsk, but also had a local Ulchi lover, who apparently did not count as such.

Since salmon fishing is a mainstay in the area, as noted by Kim, Andrej and others, some notes will be added here. In August the salmon run is in full swing. Keta and trout-salmon go up the Amur to spawn, so everybody is fishing in small boats with outboard engines and nets. The ‘Meteor’ refuses to stop going up, ostensibly to not disturb the fish season, but also to prevent or limit the smuggling of roe, ‘*ikra*’. People wait on the landing barge with fish they want to take to Komsomolsk or Khabarovsk to sell, and the boat company tries to prevent this, partly because of no room and partly because it’s illegal.

Later in the day we stopped by the village hall and the police office; the officers listened with some amusement to our story about being tourists and the trouble we had in being believed. They gave us a 3-day permit to stay, on condition we kept our whereabouts known. Food was another problem; all we could find was some soup and bread at the *gastinitsa*.

At 7 PM RZ and I walked to the landing barge to meet the ethnographers from St. Petersburg. It turned out they were already on the barge, not coming but leaving on the 7:15 boat. They were a married couple, Alexandr Mikhailovich Pevnov from the Altaic Language Department at St. Petersburg’s Russian Academy of Science, and his wife Marina Khassan aka Khasanova or Khassanovna, a folklorist from Kunst Kamera in St. Petersburg. They had come on an early boat from Nikolaevsk today, and spent 2 hours with an old Negidal woman who told them some Negidal words, e.g., *khandu-bele*, ‘Chinese barley’ or ‘rice’. They elicited names of edible grasses, foods, numerals, etc. They told us there were few good informants left; the informants they had in 1995 had passed away. Pevnov, an old-style linguist in an old-fashioned suit, had been studying the Negidal language for 20 years, but also other Tungusic languages, Ulchi and Nanai. His wife was collecting stories and tales, but also ethnography. RZ said we wanted to study clans and *dokha*, and Pevnov said that’s difficult, people have forgotten. They no longer remember to what clan they belong, or what totems mean; the old social structure is gone. Pevnov said a lot more, but RZ found little time to translate. Among other things, Pevnov told him where they would go and that they would interview informants there tomorrow, hesitantly inviting us to join them.

Pevnov and his Wi said they sometimes pay their informants, sometimes not. The informants never ask for money but say 'thank you' if they get paid, not showing appreciation in any other way. Pevnov explained this is because many old people have a hard time, with hardly any income of their own, and any small contribution helps, but they don't want to show their poverty by asking for money. This time the Pevnovs only brought candy for the informant. Something seemed off about this research situation; it seemed like intellectual 'scavenging', collecting the remains of native cultures while giving little in return. Yet the scholars were powerless in the face of the present minority situation.

After the couple left, we decided to follow them tomorrow to their destination, Bogorodskoye or Bogorodskoe, and ask them to introduce us to some informants; from there we could visit other villages. Sadly we would not use our 3-day permission to stay in Bulava.

At the landing barge at 7 PM we saw two native men land in a small boat. It seems the natives take part in the fishing, while others work for the Russians at the lumber yard and elsewhere. There was a paper mill and institutional buildings in the Russian section. In the house yards were stacks of firewood. People would hide any signs of wealth. Scarcely any of the small boats on the beach had outboard engines attached; people probably bring them when they need them.

We watched an impressive Siberian sunset on the Amur. There is a great quiet in the town, big space, cattle and dogs roaming the streets. Young men rode around on motorcycles. There were only few cars, Russian and Japanese, besides 1-2 small buses that also served as school buses (painted yellow). Prominent on the road were the lumber trucks, shabbily loaded so that fallen-off logs littered the shore. All this was in the Russian part of town. Many Russian men walked bare-chested, which RZ found obnoxious, while the women were prettily dressed; a marked gender dichotomy.

The next day, August 13, a Sunday, we got up late and decided to look for the native, Tungusic part of Bulava, even though our time was limited by an impending boat ride. Unfortunately both our cameras had dead batteries; only RZ had a polaroid camera with a few frames. At first we only saw Russian houses in the fenced yards. A Russian man on a motorcycle with a side wagon – what RZ called a 'Hitler bike' – tracked us while driving up and down the parallel village streets. Driving mopeds and motorbikes was a pastime for young men, the Russians wearing helmets, while native young men did not. Near the port or landing barge the village narrowed, so that at the port only 1-2 roads remained.

This was how we (belatedly) discovered 'Old Bulava'. Some 100 m S of the port more houses appeared, first a few, and then expanding into a separate village further S. Suddenly we were seeing only Ulchi-Nanai faces. Only then did we fully realize that Bulava is sharply divided into two ethnic sections – Ulchi-Nanai and Russian, 'Old Bulava' and 'New Bulava'. A few Ulchi live on the Russian side, and a few Russians, such as some old women and mixed Ulchi-Russian couples, lived on the native side, mostly near the port. But the division was clear. Apparently an increasing ethnic dichotomization had taken place since Soviet times, with two ethnic villages separated by a hill and road at the port. Soon we began to see what looked like Ulchi or non-Russian style houses. There was a 'dugout' near the shore, a house with Ulchi carvings, and some native-looking structures. Some of the Ulchi boats farther from the port had outboards attached. On the Ulchi or S side there were 10-14 boats on the shore.

An old man who looked Russian, with reddish hair, called to us, or summoned us, from a house-yard next to one house with carvings. He turned out to be an alcoholic woodcarver, his fingers all gone except for the last bone; he wanted some beer, and told us that the house with carvings was the local Ulchi museum, and that he made the carvings. His life story was tragic; we later learned that he was 'half Russian and half Ulchi'. In Soviet times he had a career; he said he studied music in Petersburg, but later on things got tough. He started drinking, and now his fingers are gone while he continues to carve wood as best he can. He said he would carve ornaments as well as window-sills, oars, etc. Farther on we saw a bare birch trunk that looked like it had a bird carving on top – a traditional Ulchi village post. This became a sudden starting point in our research. We hurried back to the gastinitsa, grabbed our bags, and returned, when RZ agreed to spend some of his polaroids on the 'dugout' house, the carved museum and the bird post.



Part of S Bulava (Bing Maps)

What we had not paid attention to was that the young Ulchi men on scooters were watching us. They drove up and down the upper shore road, scrutinizing us as they drove past. Especially one young man, older than the rest, in immaculate white shirt, vest, black pants, and with a slick 'playboy' hairstyle, aged 23-25, turned and looked at us every time he drove past. On the Russian side, cows and dogs roamed the streets, but on the Ulchi side there were chickens and goats as well. RZ said we should take the lower road by the port so as not to raise suspicion, but changed his mind and we headed straight for the museum. First we looked at the birch bird post, and RZ disappointedly said there was no bird on top. Before that, two young Ulchi men accosted us and asked 'What are you selling', 'What are you buying'. RZ both times replied 'nothing', so they asked: 'What are you doing?' He said, 'Nothing. We are tourists'. Later we learned that selling kaviar, oruga or ikra, e.g., trout or salmon roe, is considered an easy way for young native men to make cash for booze, or to buy drugs. People make their own hashish from Amur hemp.

At the museum we pulled out the polaroid and took two pictures of the building; the film was old, so only one photo had a reasonable quality. Suddenly four young Ulchi, aged 17-19, came walking towards us; a short youth in immaculate white shirt, sunglasses and fashionable 'Mongol' haircut (short in the neck, long on top, hair-lock in front) said we should pay them R150 (\$5) for the photos. RZ told him we were just on the way to the boat; to me, in a low voice, he added 'don't give him money, otherwise we have to pay all of them R150'. The young 'boss', which he called himself, said there was no boat, and we would have to stop and talk to them. Since our boat was leaving in 20 minutes, we headed for the boat by the lower road. The four young men took a shortcut, the 'boss' sat on the hill above the shore while the

other three went down and tried to intercept us. They walked alongside RZ and me saying we should give them money, we must stop and go back to talk to the 'boss'. RZ said we had to catch the boat, and told me to keep going. Finally the boss deigned getting off the hill and onto the road, aggressively demanding we give him R150; now he said he had to pay a debt to someone and needed the money. RZ insisted we had to go to the boat, it was leaving; the 'boss' again claimed there was no boat, but less convincing. The men fell three steps behind, hesitated, and then gave up the chase. We made it to the landing barge safely, and were somewhat relieved to see two Russian soldiers there. RZ had feared the youths would cut open our backpacks to get stuff, something he had experienced elsewhere. To me (LS) they seemed like young 'punks', bored young teenagers, but with knives they could have been dangerous. They were probably not proper criminals, their attempt at forcing money from us seemed half-hearted; my guess was that the 'boss' actually went to school somewhere and was home on vacation.

There also was an ethnic dimension in this attempted attack, as if they were trying to get back at the Russians or Caucasians for making things difficult for them. At least this could be a part of the tension in an ethnically divided village. The Russians ran the lumber industry, the shops and the ports; while the Ulchi were out with boats and nets along with the Russians to catch some fish in the salmon run. This being said, it has to be added that we occasionally saw Russian and native youths together, and Russian kids came to the Ulchi side to swim and play.

At this point we had our first meeting with an Ulchi researcher. On the landing barge a young native woman spoke to us in English. She looked apprehensive, and sounded happy to see we were foreigners, not Russians. Her name was Irina Rosugbu. This was a fortuitous encounter; she saw we were flustered and talked to us. It turned out that she had been to Norway as a student. Irina was born in a settlement on Amgun River, but since age 3, around 1975, she has been living in Nikolaevsk, where her father worked for Tass. (RZ commented: 'So he's a Communist'). She had been in Bulava collecting dolls (girls' play dolls) for her Master or Magistrate degree at St. Petersburg University. She was travelling with her 'sister'; actually her FaSiDa. I asked her what she would call her in Ulchi, she said 'Umm' (perhaps a nickname), then 'niece', and then said, 'well I guess it's sister'. She invited us to call on her when we got to Nikolaevsk. She also said it would be better for us to go back by plane from Nikolaevsk to Khabarovsk, than to go by boat as RZ wanted.

RZ and me got off in Bogorodskoe, capital in the Ulchi Rayon or 'Ulchi Republic', and went straight to the local gastinitsa and luckily got a room. We called on Prof. Aleksandr Mikhailovich Pevnov and his wife, Marina Mansurovna Khasanova. She is a pure Tatar; her Fa's & Mo's relatives perished in Stalin's gulags or ethnic cleansings. We talked with them late into the night, and they agreed to take us to the Ulcha Museum in Bogorodskoe and introduce us to some informants; more particularly, two Ulcha women, the Curator aged 60 and Informant B aged 53.

The Pevnovs told us many things, such as this being the capital of the 'Ulcha Republic', there being ca. 4000 Ulcha, and the Russians having 'Russified' the name as Ulchy using a Russian plural. Unfortunately the context for this conversation, held mostly in Russian, together with time and other factors, prevented me from taking many notes; the observations by the Pevnovs will show up in some other parts of what follows. What should be mentioned here is that Pevnov expressed a sense of urgency, also of a kind of late opportunity, in that now it was possible to visit native settlements fairly freely, but time was running out when it came to

interviewing informants and recording native languages and traditions. Seconded by his wife he would describe the existence of language loss between the generations. People over 50 (born before 1950) still speak the native languages; but younger people are losing the ability. He was somewhat possessive about this urgent or salvage research, with support from his Wi, since he had been doing field research for a long time, often using his own means. But at the same time he welcomed our interest and took a kind of fatherly stance to us as younger scholars, which we only partly reciprocated.

Monday, August 14, was a quiet day, but cloudy. RZ and I decided to visit the Bogorodskoe Museum of Ulchi culture to learn a little about the native people here, taking the role of tourists. The display of native house models was very nice, also the traditional coats displayed on the wall. These tenuous notes were written immediately after RZ and I got a stern summons by the police; it felt safe to write harmless, touristy notes. The police came to ask for us, handing the receptionist a complicated form we had to fill in, while we were at the Ulcha Museum. Hence I became slightly paranoid, writing innocent things, such as 'Quiet day'. The notes would become fuller as the day progressed.

It was after we visited Bogorodskoe's Ulcha Museum in the morning that we got a summons from the police, with a red form in 'officialsque' Russian to fill out: 'leave to where', etc., that raised some paranoia. The local 'café' at a magazine or shop was closed, so we ate what we had. In the afternoon we listened to the Pevnovs working with two informants on language and embroidery patterns. The Pevnovs kindly arranged for us to meet the two informants the next day, saying they paid informants R25-30-50 (\$1-2) or so, but sometimes had no money to pay.

It was informative to look at Pevnov sitting at a table in the entry hall of the Museum, the old female informant opposite, asking the names of various plants and remedies, meticulously writing them down in his notebook, now and then asking a clarifying question and comparing with other words he had noted. This really was 'old school' research, pen, paper and numerous notebooks. I do not now (2023) recollect if he had a tape-recorder (in 2000), but pen and notebook was his main tool, neatly writing each term and alongside its translation in Russian. He mostly wrote native words in a Latin-based phonemic alphabet, and the Russian Cyrillic word to its right; but sometimes he used the Cyrillic alphabet for both native and Russian words. His bag was stuffed with notebooks. At the same time it was frustrating and a little demeaning not to be able to communicate with the informants. RZ found it difficult to translate the specialized vocabulary, such as plant names.

This day, the 14th, we met two informants. A: The Curator, Valentina Aleksejevna Sidorova, age 60-61, grew up with traditional parents; her mother was 'illiterate, sat at home embroidering', and envied her Da who had opportunities. Sidorova went to school, travelled to foreign countries, and has been doing a radio program in Ulchi for 20-30 years. At first when we talked to her she was a little confused; she thought we wanted to elicit basic vocabulary items such as Pevnov. Only after some clarifications did we turn the session into talk on kinship and clans. Though the other informant caught on at once: B: Natalia, ca. 53, was a pretty smart woman, who agreed to tell us about 'dokha'; she telephoned an older informant in the village of Ukhta across the river to get information for us. Both women made a good impression.



A part of Ukhta (Bing Maps)

That informant B simply called a woman in another village to ask about difficult matters was significant. The social network was important for the older women, they had friends they met, and relations and contacts in different villages, who provided backup if there was something they needed. Such a network among older women would be worth a study in itself, but I had no chance to go into the topic more closely.

RZ had difficulty translating all the women said. The gist of this information was that the Ulcha had clans that were totemic, in the sense that each clan was associated with an animal that served as an emblem of the clan; sometimes even explicitly so, when the clan animal was embroidered on wedding aprons. The notes here are amplified with Nanai information received later. The clan animals included: tiger, bear, deer, woodcock, eagle, salmon and some others. It was not clear if the clan followed a man's or woman's family; one view was that clan totems followed a woman's family, such as with the tradition of wedding dresses; a husband would then belong to another totem, but whether he had an emblem of his own, such as an embroidered coat or hat, was not clear.

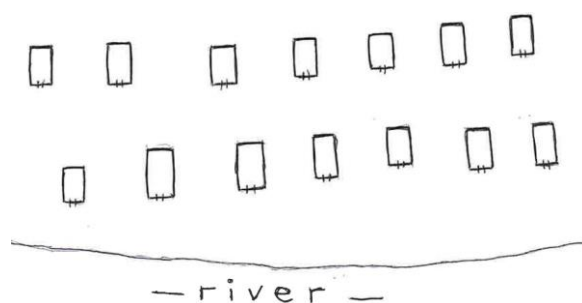
This issue of clans and totemic emblems is both difficult and obscure; the women were hesitant in their answers. One online source would provide some supplementary details on Ulchi 'clans': 'Strengthening of mutual relations of community members was ... promoted by alliances (dokha) contracted between families belonging to different clans and ethnic groups. Mutual aid was the main principle of communal life: a community always helped its members to survive and accepted resettlers ... [after] a disaster; in this way the ... law of hospitality was observed... Clans... played an important role in contracting exogamic marriages... Ulcha folklore [included] totemic [stories].' (<https://luonnonkansat.livejournal.com/30790.html>).

And on the Nanai: 'Surviving pieces of Nanai clans merged into unions (dokha) including people, not just of different clans but even of different ethnicities. The dokha ('having become related') relations implied exogamy ... and obligations towards widows and orphans'; Nanai totems included bear and tiger (<https://luonnonkansat.livejournal.com/31423.html>).

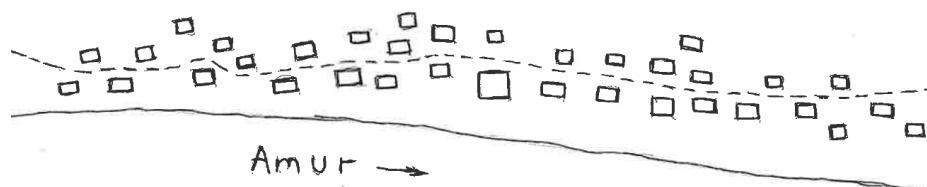
The most interesting illustration of totemic clanship were the wedding dresses or aprons that brides wore at weddings, and which symbolized her family and belonging; this would include both Ulchi and Nanai information. The dress was not simply embroidered with a totem animal, if indeed a totem, but with a cosmic or world illustration: a tree, its roots in water, surrounded by fish, next the ground with plants and flowers, birds in its branches and reaching to the sky. The symbolism was complex; it entailed a holistic view of nature. As can be expected, views on totemism involve complex thoughts that are difficult to reproduce in modern settings. The older informant (Curator) even was dubious that totemism existed; but the different animals adjoining the tree on the apron, each animal an emblem of that bride's family, strongly suggest a totemic practice. The practice need not have been matrilineal; it could be patrilineal, in which case mothers and daughters would have different apron emblems. What is fascinating is that this aspect of Tungusic culture has not been made known; there must have been hundreds of wedding aprons that could illustrate clanship and family emblems. The existence of these aprons has not yet been scholarly disseminated.

From my (LS) field notes: Bagarodskoye Museum (Ulcha Museum). Aug. 14, 10:40 AM - 12:15 PM. RZ and I were first given a tour of the museum, competently guided by the Curator: We met the Curator at the door, who took us in and then showed us around. The Pevnovs were present or showed up soon after. The Curator explained about the Museum: From having been a socialist museum displaying Russian industry, most of the displays now were of Ulcha culture: old photos, models, artefacts etc.

Among the displayed photos were one or more of Kalma aka Kal'ma village, taken during a bear festival, 1910, possibly held in winter. The photo indicated 14 houses in 2 parallel rows of 7 houses each along and facing the river. This would reflect an ancient settlement pattern; whether the photo showed all the houses in the village is not clear.



Kalma 1910

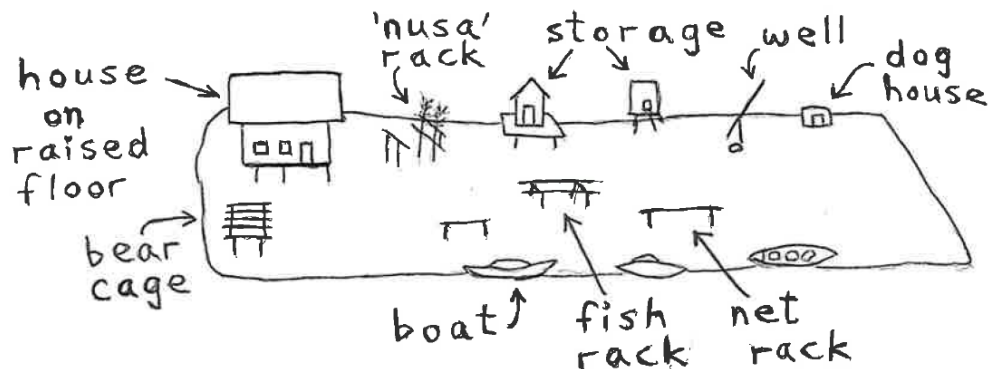


Kolcham

A picture of Kolcham, perhaps a predecessor to today's Ukhta, showed a much larger village with 30+ houses; perhaps a result of collectivization or resettlement.

The Curator continued showing us around in comprehensive fashion: We came to a model of a house and its surroundings, supposed to represent the layout of a house ground in an Ulcha village ca. 1900. The Curator explained that what we saw was what was usually a part of a

family residence in a traditional village, such as storage houses, drying racks and one or more boats by the river. I made a drawing of the model (a 'model of a model'):



Model of house and surroundings at Bogorodskoe Museum

The 'nusa' rack or fence is a ritual fixture near the house; 'nusa' is an Ainu term. The Curator spoke of this as a men's log with wood shavings; called 'yēsamsá' in Ulchi. The storage structures were called 'ambarr'. The rest should be self-explanatory. It should be added that house yards were not always organized like this. There might be just one storage house and one net rack; the model is a retrospective reconstruction.

Nearby in the museum there was a birch pole with a stuffed diving duck on top, supposed to be a part of the old village layout. There also was an owl sculpture or carving, referred to as a shaman's tutelary spirit.



There was a loop made from Salix or some pliable branch, with a carving at one end, possibly a bird's head. The Curator explained that when a child is born, they put the child through this loop, by instruction of a shaman, every month, especially when sick. This was to ensure that the child grew up healthy and became fully grown, in time becoming an ancestor itself. The ancestors were represented by carved figures with human heads.

Next the curator showed us a shaman's drum on display; a round hand-drum, skin-covered and worn, similar to Sami drums, but with the decorations barely visible: tree, deer, river, human or spirit, etc.

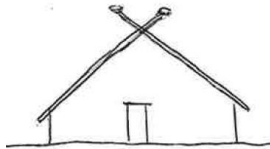


We were shown paired dolls, 'buseven', that served as shamans' fetishes. Two dolls were coupled as one by a string or attachment. These may relate to native beliefs that twins are powerful. Among other things they protect against venereal disease, she added somewhat bashfully. Next we were shown a wooden object called 'mâsi'; this was a house-protecting spirit or charm. Another object, a tree trunk called 'malī' was a pillar for tying bears as well as a house post. There may have been a central house post; this related to RZ's interest in dwelling space and its organization (Zgusta 1992). Yet another charm or fetish was named 'kaldyami', a guardian of children's soul or spirit in the house. When a child is sick, they pray to this charm. Whether any of these objects had a totemic significance is not clear.

We were interested in clans and villages, and asked the Curator where she was from: She's from the left bank of Amur; she added that there is a social distinction between the left and

right (this) bank of the flood, such as different native dialects. This was her simple explanation; probably the distinction was more complex, that the two banks represented some perceived social contrasts in terms of organization and membership.

At this point the Curator introduced herself formally: Valentina Aleksejevna Sidorova; of the Hodyer or Hodzher ‘clan’. She returned to the model of a village house and its surroundings, saying it was supposed to reflect conditions before 1950 in local villages. The Curator began talking about different villages: Natives live in Ukhta on the left bank of the Amur, 3 km away; also natives live at Dudyi or Dudi; here at Bogorodskoe, at Bulava and Mariinskii Reid. She indicated different conditions in the villages, some were native run, while others were dominated by Russians.



One picture showed a house with decorated beams, perhaps bird figures.

From this point on, after the tour of the museum, we had two informants; both elderly Ulchi women. Due to the multilingual situation, the notes fail to distinguish them clearly, though the Curator had the word most of the time. In addition we had the company of the Pevnovs, who took over one or both informants after a while.

The main topic was kinship and clanship, our central research interests. The Curator started by noting that, like Russians, people in Ukhta live in ‘one big family’; apparently she meant that one family occupies a dwelling, that may be a nuclear or extended family. The ideal or traditional situation appeared to be one big house for the whole family; now there seems to be more like 2-3 houses in a cluster, for grandparents and married children; but back then they all lived in the same house – which may or may not be the case. A house could have 2 adult people and 2-3 children. In Ukhta there could be 6-7 children in the same house; e.g., larger families. The grandparents lived in the same house as married children and grandchildren; or rather, in 2-3 houses. The Curator amplified that: The grandparents lived with a son (probably an imagined ideal), but when he married he built a separated house for him and his wife, and she had him put up a fence between the houses. This would then be a domestic cluster with separate dwellings for grandparents and married offspring; which could be both a traditional and historic development. The Curator may actually have been talking about her own grandparents (in-law) as an example at this point.

Here the Curator became personal: She or her acquaintances would occasionally visit relatives. Her relatives live in Komsomolsk, and come here every year. The Curator complained that the family connection is slowly disappearing. This was partly because of the economy. The ‘Meteor’ is getting expensive, there are no flights from local airports or landing strips any more. People still travel; in some ways this is easier in winter, because in winter they travel by bus or truck on the (frozen) Amur River, but the price is still expensive. She noted a sad example: People would visit for a funeral, but lots can’t make it for lack of money. One implication was that funerals were an important occasion for people to show up, but attendance now was declining.

As for the planned Russian festival she said that native people don’t go, also for a lack of money and transport, yet one implication could be that Orthodox festivals were controlled by Russians, while native rituals were sidelined or lost. The Curator contrasted this with the

Soviet era, that in spite of repression they allowed some interethnic cohesion. Under Soviet rule people would visit each other on New Year, both natives and Russians.

Now people are either rich or poor. With some bitterness she added: The poor are Ulchi, the rich are Chinese who came recently. There are two shops owned by the Chinese here, also at De-Kastri, a chain of shops; an organized business. Some Russian enterprises also are found, but the natives are left out. Some 5000 people live in Bogorodskoye; but the two main stores or magazines are owned by the Chinese. One Chinese family owns most of the stores in all the villages around here.

The fall of the Soviet Union led to lawlessness: Privatization meant that people were stealing machines etc.; the cannery was state-owned and the Russians 'privatized' it. That is, they helped themselves to the facilities and equipment, and took over the business. The Soviet bosses took it; also known as mafia, oligarchs or 'nomenklatura'; such as officials, cadres, police and secret service members (KGB). This was a story and a development RZ and I would meet in almost every place we came to in the Russian Far East; told with more or less bitterness and resignation.

Still the Ulcha maintain some occasions to meet, and rituals remain important, especially life rituals: People make an effort to meet during funerals, weddings; these are occasions to take care of tradition. Apparently funerals are the more traditional occasions, while weddings are more general and popular social occasions; but also weddings have their traditional elements, such as the embroidered wedding dresses or aprons that women may or may not wear. Old people are interested in this: they tell everybody how to do it, e.g., how to arrange weddings and make the dresses, but young people seem to have no interest.

Another serious Ulcha concern was that the language is disappearing. The Curator estimated that 10% talk Ulchi; she said that the language loss was because of former Soviet policies and Russification. The young people were sent to boarding school; the only official language or language in general use was Russian; while the minority languages were limited to local use. When asked about the 10% who speak Ulchi, she said that basically people above the age of 50 know the language; which was seconded by Informant B.

The Curator refused to be (fully) pessimistic; she was a determined woman. She said there was talk about a resurrection or revival of the language. The language is spoken on the radio, and disseminated by cassette. Here she was referring to Ulcha radio programs, carried on since Soviet times; with herself as a case, because she runs the native programs.

She mentioned the suppression of languages. The Government didn't encourage people to speak their native (Ulchi) language; if they had been rewarded they would still speak it.

LS asked: What about the schools? She hesitated: Now it's the same everywhere, i.e., no teaching. There are some Nanai textbooks; here at the Museum they made a new syllabary and use the Synyik [Orest P. Sunik] vocabulary. Implicitly she hinted at a problem in language transmission: a lack of practical and standardized writing forms and text materials.

LS had a follow-up question: What about the Nanai-Ulchi collections? Again she hesitated: There are library collections; i.e., Soviet propaganda stuff and some school primers, plus some ethnography. She noted her own work in trying to promote or keep the language: She will speak on the radio; about political parties, books and stories. Her reference to political

parties apparently meant that she tried to get politicians to look favorably at the Ulcha language and culture; this may also have reflected her old Party background.

She explained: In 1973 she was asked to speak once a week in Ulchi on the radio, to explain Party politics; e.g., the Communist Party. She would talk about Khrushchev, Czech novels read in Ulcha etc. The program was popular (it was the only one). ‘What happens next week’, people would ask her; showing that they listened to her program. She had kept up talking on the radio ever since, partly in Ulchi, probably with some breaks and gaps in recent years, and perhaps more in Russian recently.

Somewhat proudly she noted that she still talks on the radio: Now she has not much to talk about, politics is depressing, so she mainly reads Ulcha fairy tales (either in Russian or Ulchi). She gets no response; she thought mainly old people listen to hear the native stories spoken.

She added her other (main) activities: She takes care of the Museum and is a librarian; she inspects the libraries in the region. The pay was good in Soviet times (3 R hourly pay). Now it is all work and no pay, it’s like volunteer work, though it’s her job; the pay is not enough even for bread.

She commented on the language, and perhaps also on the culture: It’s a hope that it doesn’t disappear completely; there are 1-2 young people who are interested and who are keeping the language alive on their own, with help from elders such as her. (We later saw one of the idealists briefly, a woman in her 30s).

RZ would supplement these notes later, such as some personal comments that he did not want to translate while she talked: She said she had two sons, one is unemployed and drinks vodka, the other is employed (‘typograf’) but receives no salary; the good son. The bad one comes to beg for money to buy food and cigarettes, but she catches him in a drunken stupor so he had money for vodka but not for food. She also helps her good son, it seemed. School teachers now get paid, a few years ago they weren’t.

LS asked about tourism, such as at Sikachi Alyan. She said there used to be lots of tourists in the Soviet Era, Russian, Yakut, Georgian, etc. There would be four boats a day, and there’d be some tourists on each. They would come on shore, visit the Museum, and she would show them the material culture, such as costumes and artefacts. More recently there have been less tourists; but some begin to appear. She has seen Americans, some who came here; specifically last year, a few times. But the tourism program disappeared; i.e., the tours stopped; apparently the ‘tourists’ were US fundamentalist missionaries. There also were Chinese, Japanese (Ōtsuka-san – a colleague of RZ), who came on their own boats, rental boats. Recently many Japanese came here; Ōtsuka comes every year; the Japanese see the old traditions as a point of regional interest; for instance, Japanese archaeologists come to excavate, they compare the Ainu in Japan and native people here. They generally see a connection between this region and Japan; e.g., their research interests are coupled with nationalism.

Here we finally could (briefly) go back to the topic of kinship and clanship. RZ asked if some particular clans trace ancestry to the Ainu? She answered that it is not a ‘clan’, but more like a group of people tracing Ainu descent. She gave examples (at RZ’s prompting) such as Kuizali, Duvan and others, who in part claim Ainu ancestry. RZ noted that Ōtsuka has been trying to locate Ainu clans, of which there are 3 according to Smoliak. The Curator responded to the last name: She knows Anna Vasilyevich [Vasil'evna] Smoliak who got data at Ukhta

across the river. Smoliak now is 75. She's known her since she was a 'girl', i.e., a graduate student of 22 ca. 53 years ago. (Our informant was now about 60).

The Curator wanted to talk about Ulchi culture in general. She said the Ulchi were hunters; but now the hunters are very old, and few. There was one old traditional hunter and trapper in the village; she asked him to 'teach kids'; he said: 'no, if I don't get paid'. His sons drink vodka. His clan is Hodyer, Deduska.

This provided one angle to talk about clanship, Ulchi family names: She casually mentioned names such as Siderov, Lebedev (swan), Tarakan, Shadyka, Bobyk etc. This led on to 'clan' names among the Ulchi: Damkan or Donkan, Odyer or Hodzher, etc. Here she again turned to more general observations, about people adopting Russian names, family ties weakening, and so on. The Ulchi still have their old clan names, they refuse to be baptized, e.g., given Russian names. Yet they have adopted Russian names to get on in the dominant society.

To get more specific information we tried asking about her ancestors: She first mentioned her FaFa who was a Hodyer. Next, her Mo or FaMo was Negidal, she was baptized by the Russians or given a Russian name. This would be reiterated in another form, below.

Then followed a curious statement or exposition: They, e.g., an Ulchi person, must pay to be baptized. If they pay much they get a nice name like Swan, e.g., Lebedev; if they pay little they get a name like cockroach, e.g., Tarakan. Precisely who got paid is not clear, if it was a shaman, official or clergy. The name giving had several implications; one was the Russian suppression of natives; another angle could be that Ulchi thinking was totemic, and that they transferred this line of thought to their Russian names; unfortunately this remark came in passing and the Curator moved on to other topics.

She returned to the exhibits and showed us a model of a house with carved posts, made by Ivan Pavlovits Rosugbu, Bulava village. She noted a (traditional) settlement on Lake Kizi, Sanpiki, which was Ulchi, adding that most people there moved to Mariinskii Reid.

Once more we tried to get back to the topic of kinship and clanship: About 'dokha' she said that Hodyer should marry somebody from Gye- or Dyatala. Also Kalym, either as a clan or dokha, was another example of possible intermarriage; that there were other clans they married into. From this she generalized that people should marry outside the clan. A man must either look for a wife or pay a bride price to a family in another clan.

We tried to get down to specifics by asking: How many clans were there among the Ulcha?

She paused a little and then she started enumerating: Rosugbu or Orosugbu; Angi; Dyatala; Dankan; Udii; her own clan, i.e., Hodzher, Kwisalí, Duwaam – the last two were (part) Ainu. And many more... We hoped she would tell us more about specific clans and clan relations. Instead she cited a few general names that she may have told to other scholars before; a kind of routine.

She next related the clans to marriage relations, also inter-ethnic: There was a case of Nivkh in-marriage. There were people or brothers called Imenja who went to Sakhalin to fish and came back with Nivkh blood [sic: wives or spouses], and now it's a huge clan.

There has been Russian in-marriage; apparently she thought of an early case or cases when the offspring would speak better Ulchi than Russian. A particular case of Russian in-marriage, perhaps the one she was thinking of, was with a Dankan person. This was the clan of the woodcarver in Bulava; he was half Russian but spoke Ulchi.

RZ felt that one way of getting answers was to let the Curator speak freely; so much of what followed was not translated. Some tidbits were that: 'Rodsvinik' [rodstvennik] is 'dokha', i.e., a Russian word, 'relative'. There was mention of marriage rules; that traditional rules allowed both consanguineal and collateral marriages; e.g., marrying relations in other clans. RZ and the Pevnovs began discussing this and other statements in Russian. Khasanova claimed that for the natives on the Amur there were assumptions of descent in the female line, 'matrilinska linie'; i.e., she thought they were matrilineal, based on Marx-Engels. She claimed Xodyer or Khodyer as a case, that the Curator indicated matrilineal tendencies related to marriage, wedding costumes or other customs. She added that this is a big clan; i.e., a clan like Hodzher is big and does not operate as a single unit. There may be matrilineal tendencies within the larger units, even though they are supposedly patriarchal.

Here scholarly input and preconceptions fed into the discussion of kinship and clanship, namely the old Marxist and Soviet ideas of original matrilineality and 'group marriage'. If our inquiries had been frustrating before, they became even more convoluted now, with the scholarly debate. Preconceptions included the view that clans were unilineal local groups (also territorial), who married as a group with one or more other localized clans; views that had been constructed by Russian scholars such as Shternberg between 1890 and 1930. The discussion then touched on the fact that clans actually are dispersed and that local communities have many clans; the scholars trying to make the reality conform to the preconceived model, by and large false. I (LS) was glad not to join in this old style academic dispute and discourse; my interest was in conditions on the ground.

The Ulchi are all related to each other, both through patri- and matrilineal connections. This was as far as the discussion got, partly in the moderating view of Pevnov, with the Curator in support. At the same time it was interesting to observe the gender aspect of the debate, Khasanova arguing for matrilines, RZ against, and Pevnov in-between.

The Curator, prompted by Pevnov, presented some stories. One was about her clan origin: There was a Hodyer man who lived upriver; he had 3 wives from different clans. Thus he procreated a huge family who became the Hodyer clan. Perhaps the 3 wives can be interpreted as a connubium, that there were (at least) 3 other Ulchi groups, up- and downriver, and that Hodyer people intermarried with clans in other settlements. The Curator already had mentioned one intermarrying clan, Dyatala; others could be Deduska, Talym or Kalym, etc. In addition were inter-tribal and inter-ethnic marriages, such as with Negidal partners.

Here the session kind of broke up, with RZ and the Pevnovs still arguing.

It seems apparent that the informants, in particular the Curator, were reticent on the topic of clans and totems. This was something she did not want to discuss openly. In many ways I had expected this; people do not talk about totems or clans freely. With some doubts I noted that Informant B said she would tell us about 'dokha' after lunch; she has an old knowledgeable relative, over 80 years old. She added, this is an old woman, who is a shamaness, and claims to be 100, but is less. With this seemingly promising suggestion the session ended.

In spite of their reticence, the talk with the two informants left us in much better spirits after the last days' erratic adventures. Very soon we returned to reality. After the Museum we went to the local police station and were met by an officer carrying a Kalashnikov. But the atmosphere was subdued; the immigration and customs officer looking at our passports and travel permit was a younger jovial woman, so we left the police station much relieved. Then we had a surprisingly good lunch at the local 'café', in the back room of the 'Amur' magazine; the place was reserved for the local police and officials. The only people allowed there with us were the local police and an older half-native woman who talked herself in and got one remaining portion of food; other people were turned away at the door. The Curator had reserved this lunch for us.

As noted, Bogorodskoe had about 5000 people; a separate Ulchi village, 'Ukhta', was 3 km below across the Amur. In Bogorodskoe the Russians and Ulchi were said to live mixed. This apparently was not quite true; there was a native part of town to the E, upstream; for some reason this part of town did not show clearly on old satellite maps, perhaps intended. It should be noted that this eastern part of Bogorodskoe also had a number of poor Russians living in it.



Part of SE Bogorodskoe (Google Maps)

Bulava is one of the biggest Ulchi villages, bigger than Bogorodskoe; in Bulava the Ulchi have their own section, in Bogorodskoe they live more scattered among the Russians. At the same time Bogorodskoe is the capital of the 'Ulcha Republic' – governed by Russians.

After lunch we returned to the Ulcha Museum at 3 PM. Fortunately the Curator was still interested in talking to us. She now had company from a native woman who tried to compile an Ulchi dictionary (on file cards) using her own ad hoc system. She was one of the few young people interested in the language. This woman was a little reserved or reticent; probably with good reason. She did not give her name, but she talked to the Pevnovs. It seemed that she was teaching Ulchi to kids, more or less systematically, in a kindergarten or primary school. Pevnov and his Wi were looking at embroidery patterns with the woman, who also knew the dokha with their names etc., as Pevnov complacently informed us. So now there was a new female informant, and the situation became even more complicated than before.

Pevnov was looking through the young woman's manuscript 'dictionary', actually a pile of file cards, about 400 of them, without asking permission. Occasionally he found an interesting word that he copied into his own notes – he found about 50-100 of those. Otherwise he did not seem interested, dropping the woman's file cards in bunches on top of a display case as he was done going through them. The Curator let us look at a dictionary by Orest P. Sunik, *Ulchskiy yazyk* (1985).

We tried to get straight to the point: RZ asked about dokha. In the translated answer they were ‘agnates’, specified as people who became unified relatives from different patrilineal clans. The follow-up answer was that dokha members are ‘friends’; in the past they were relatives. This was a ‘fraternity’, inserted Pevnov; he kept commenting on what the informant said in an imperative manner. The comments are important because they indicate what is ‘lost in translation’: a dokha is not ‘agnates’ or a ‘phratry’, but a loose union of formerly decimated and dispersed clans, hence ‘friends’ or (extended) ‘relatives’. (Though in former times it would appear as a phratry – as indicated in earlier chapters.)

RZ asked about khala: This is the clan or family name. Another word is ‘sengi’: this is a type of family or clan unit. Pevnov added that it’s Manchu: ‘blood’, meaning consanguineal kin.

Here Pevnov elicited an Ulchi word: ИҫТЭ I Зубы и зерна ягод; loosely translated by RZ as: something about strawberries or berries. With my (LS) pocket diary I later decoded it as: ‘ikte’ means ‘teeth and seed of berry’. The phrase is included here simply because this was the eliciting situation; 4 scholars and 2 informants with different views and interests discussing various topics at the same time in 3 languages.

When talking about the word ‘udili’ the Curator and the vocabulary authoress started discussing toponyms; they listed places where Ulchi lives and presumably where ‘udili’ were found: Bogorodskoe, Bulava, Dudji, Kalinovka, Mariinskoe, Nizhnyaya-Gavanj, Savinskoe, Mongol, Salontsy, Kolchom, Sofiyskoe, Tyr, Ukhta, etc. Unfortunately the term was not translated, but it may refer to descent or marriage relations of some kind. The implication would be that people from all these villages were intermarried.

At this point some statistics were quoted: In 1979 there were 2600 Ulchi, distributed more or less in the villages noted; this was before their forced removal or resettlement in Russian towns after 1980. The proportion of native speakers was: 1970: 60.8%; 1979: 38.8% or 1000 people. By now (2000) this was reduced to 400-500 people who could speak Ulchi, according to our informants at the Museum.

We tried to get back to the topic of the dokha, if it’s a patri- or matrilineal union. Again the Curator avoided the topic. She mentioned an old shamaness, less than 100 years old, of the Dyaksul clan. But this old woman could not come because of poor health or some other reason, so her help was not to be elicited.

Instead RZ and I became observers of Pevnov’s work at eliciting words, as the informants appeared to have little more to say about clanship, at least at the moment: The two women repeated: vakolí: a word being taught Pevnov.

Then they (or one of them) switched attention to R and me: The informant(s) tried to explain about clans in a village: In a settlement there would be unified (allied) and segmented clans. There were several clans in the same settlement; and the union or alliance would be including people from other clans; this was a dokha. This somewhat straightforward statement called for amplifications: Or, she said, they entered into marriage relations with representatives from other clans; who subsequently were joined as a larger unit, a dokha. Obviously it was difficult to explain that a ‘dokha’ was considered to be a unit, but lived distributed in different settlements together with other clans; so that the settlement of a ‘dokha’ actually was mixed with other clans residing there. Dokha, described as a unit, were not local ‘territorial’ group,

but distributed and scattered groups that lived in settlements composed of several clans. Older (and younger) Russian scholars would ignore this complexity, believing more in Engels' ideological constructions of territorial clans and 'group marriage'.

One woman, probably the Curator, said frustratedly: The clan organization has disappeared, hence new family names are used, not the old clans; new names include Syny, Sypin, Kuchekta, etc. The old clan names may include the ethnonyms of immigrant clans: Olchi (Oroch), Kilor (Evenki), Gilemsel (Nivkh), Kuisal (Ainu), etc. Here Pevnov added an observation, noting that Zolotarev wrote that there are 25 clans among the Ulchi, most or some also found among the Nanai: Hodzer, Tumali, Geyker, Beldi, etc. Other clans found were also with the Negidal: Khatkhil, Orosugbu (Rosugbu), etc.

The shifting dialog switched to marriage. People practiced sororate; when an OBr died he left his Wi who married his YBr; actually levirate, as noted by Pevnov. As for bride price, this was sometimes paid – and then the Hu died so the Hu's family didn't let the Wi go; if there was no YBr, she had to wait 20 years for a new man to grow up. However, this may have been a mythological theme rather than a reality.

On the topic of exogamy we asked if close kin can marry? The museum woman or Curator said: They can marry a 3rd cousin; i.e., a person can marry his or her third cousin. This answer was made after some reflection on who a person can or cannot marry. I (LS) commented that the Shawnee Indians did not permit marriage with kinfolk. The Ulchi tradition was somewhat similar; marriage partners were found outside local kin, clans and dokha, with spouses often – perhaps generally – found in other villages.

This brought the woman with the dictionary to join in; she had heard that they can marry a MoBrDa; i.e., a man can marry his MoBrDa or similar. This seemed somewhat like a textual observation; the Curator looked dubious whether this was allowed. She started to correct the young woman. But the dictionary woman seemed pretty sure that a man could marry close kin if he wanted to. Some uncertainty remained; or rather: the Curator seemed to think this was untrue. As for local exogamy, the rule was that a woman goes to the Hu's village; in this case she brings a dowry, according to the Curator.

Here the women began eliciting for Pevnov again; he somehow switched the eliciting back to our topic of kinship, while recording each word in his notebook. The word for 'dog' is *īnda*; there was a comment that a woman brings along her dog to her husband's village when she gets married. The Curator mentioned that a woman can bring her dog because it looks after her or guards her. The word for 'dowry' is *olbú*, 'to carry or to bring with' you something. While 'bride price' is *torí*.

I (LS) asked the Curator: What does the dowry (*olbú*) consist of? She seemed amused; there were so many things; she listed up: hats, necklace, a kaleidoscope of fur necklace, clothes, kettle and plates. She mentioned other things: jewelry (earrings), silver, precious stone, Chinese coats with ornaments. Basically a Wi would bring what she needed in her new home plus valuables. The trousseaux or dowry was important: The Curator carefully explained that a mother starts making clothes for the trousseaux at birth, such as coat and trousers; later, when she gets old enough, the daughter helps her make or assemble things for the trousseaux. The Curator went on: the Fa gives her all fur things: hats, necklace etc. Apparently the articles for a bride's chest were collected from her birth until marriage, a period of 17-20 years.

I asked: Should a spouse be found in another settlement? This seemed to be the ideal; but two people can get married in the same village as long as the clans are different. The marriage regulations are all but gone: In the old days the parents decided who a Da should marry; now nobody cares.

In the old days there were lots of debates about different possibilities of marriage for a young person. The elders were discussing the dangers of blood mixing and the possibilities for marriage; ‘mixing’ in the sense of in-marriage. Who a person could and could not marry apparently was a precarious issue; finding the right spouse for a Da took a lot of planning and negotiations between elders and clan members.

The precariousness is indicated by vocabulary: They had lots of words for marriage rules, such as ‘nukiti’ or ‘nōkití’, a term for levirate and sororate. There were many other words for marriage restrictions; unfortunately I could not elicit them.

Another aspect of affinal precariousness that the Curator mentioned or talked about was: Marriage by capture, as well as wife stealing and elopement. She told a mythical story about this: Once a beautiful woman in Dyudi was married; then somebody stole her; her Hu and friends caught up with them; they fought; and the Hu brought her back to his village. Rather than a happy ending, this was a moral ending.

Here the Curator turned back to exogamy and clans: Inside a dokha you cannot marry. The Mo’s dokha, referred to as relatives, are Brs and Sis, they can’t marry. Here we were getting close to an important observation: exogamy would extend both to the father’s and mother’s clan. Note that the dictionary woman suggested MoBrDa-marriage; in the Curator’s version this would not work; exogamic rules would extend to third cousins and perhaps farther.

The Curator added another interesting statement with a bearing on social organization: She said that traditional villages were divided into sections or residential areas with particular names:

solinchá = upper part } of
hudinchú = lower part } village
tokondú = border/ middle part of village.

Apparently upper and lower would refer to the orientation of the village in relation to the river; though possibly not always; this was a traditional arrangement that could override physical features. The ‘border’ or middle part would span the upper-lower division near the center of the village or settlement.

These words for village parts probably are ancient terms; they would have a bearing on issues such as moieties, phratries or ‘matries’. For instance, some clans occupied the upper and lower part of the village, respectively; while the ‘border’ or ‘middle’ part would be the ambiguous position of a third group of clans, that may have been seen as neither upper nor lower, yet may have had a commanding position in the village. They could be chiefs, they could be outsiders, or they could be seen as lower than the other clans; yet their position would be crucial to understanding the social organization. A similar case would be the 3 phratries in a Shawnee village (Selstad 1986: 38-39). An underlying complexity is implied: a 2-partite system (upper-lower), evocative of moieties; and a 3-partite system (upper-

border/middle-lower), as in a set of phratries. Unfortunately very little is known about how traditional village sections were organized among the Ulchi.

Here the Curator finished her exposition of the village structure by noting that it was a unified polity: The elders would run the village. There was no big chief; things were run by consensus.

She said some more about how the village was organized; but time limitations and conditions led to a limitation of notes. Among other things she noted that unanimity or consensus was important to keep the village unified and to manage conflicts. At this point she hinted that there might indeed be a strong man or chief, at least in some villages, to keep things together. Political issues among the Ulchi are poorly known and would depend on further studies of historical materials.

The Curator noticed my (LS) interest but had already talked a lot. She said: In Bulava there are many old people who still remember many things. She apologetically added: Her shaman friend is too old to remember.

The Curator said: Her Mo was traditional, illiterate, made embroidery; she envied her Da who was educated and lived in town; ‘be nice to her’ she told her SoLa. By the time of her marriage her GrMo had died. She may have mentioned this both because she did not get traditional advice about marriage, and because it was sad to leave the Mo behind alone.

The Curator mused: Her old folks lived in darkness because they were illiterate, but knew their culture very well. The term ‘darkness’ may refer both to Orthodox rhetoric and a lamented lack of transmitting or preserving what they knew.

At this point the Curator began reiterating some of her earlier statements. She indicated her own kinship:

Fa’s clan: Dyatala } the marriage was based on an alliance custom

Mo’s clan: Hodzher } i.e., of Dyatala men marrying Hodzher women.

Hence the earlier statement that ‘Hodyer’ should marry ‘Dyatala’ actually was based on her parents’ marriage; particulars become generalized, a very common mode of thinking.

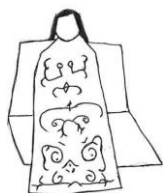
Her father’s residence apparently was at: Katarak or Katakí. The Curator explained: These were not just 2 clans, but 2 villages: Dyatala in Kalchom and Hodzher in Kadakí. Somehow this was a reversal of earlier statements; misunderstandings may be a result of the eliciting situation. The Curator concluded with a general statement: So they have an example: A man went to another village looking for a bride. She hinted that this was an ordinary situation.

The Curator tried to specify: Her FaMo was Negidal; belaglimki. She was from Amgun River. Her Fa or FaFa was a hunter, he went to Amgun where the Negidal lived; there he experienced many things and married the GrMo, Húngunchú. There also was a relationship with the Kíle, who were Evenki; possibly her FaMo’s ‘clan’. As the information became more confusing and involved, RZ found it increasingly difficult to translate.

I (LS) asked if young people leave the villages to study or work? The Curator said: Some young people have relatives in cities and go there. At home, they sit and drink vodka. Girls also drink, but girls are slightly better than boys; they don’t want to marry a drunk, so they

marry Russians. As an afterthought she added that Russians drink too; yet life with a Russian is more stable.

In order to wind down the Curator returned to the exhibits. She showed us some dolls.



One was a fold-out doll, made from paper. This she referred to as ‘hakhuá’, a toy for children, or girl’s toys. The doll’s hair was made from kombu or seaweed, extending down the back. The clothing represented a decorated wedding dress; two figures in the middle may represent a totem such as deer. Toys included ‘yak’taburí’, ‘bow and arrow’, for boys.

Walking around in the Museum some scattered comments about native culture were made. In the Nikolaevsk Institute of Education they teach Nivkh and Ulchi; one of Pevnov’s statements. In Kalchóm they have separate clan cemeteries even today; here (in Bogorodskoe) the Ulchi and Russian graves are mixed. Reiterated comments included the shaman’s dolls that protect against venereal disease. This was coupled with a more general statement about native medicine, that spirits help against ill health. The wooden loops used after children were born to ensure health were noted once more. They were said to be one of several life rituals performed through life, many having the person’s well-being as a focus.

This brought today’s visit to an end. It is worth reiterating that the Curator was reticent on the topic of clans and totems. As noted I (LS) had expected this. Yet we had hoped to learn more. The two women most graciously and accommodatingly agreed to meet us tomorrow morning for some more talks; we still hoped to get some more relevant information on clanship.

RZ and I walked around a bit and discovered that also in Bogorodskoe there are young Ulchi or native ‘bullies’. In this village too there seems to be a Korean lumber company, with a new bridge built to the winter lumber road, now used year-round, to the E (apparently all the way to Khabarovsk). On the local ‘boat port’, which was an outdated passenger boat serving as a landing ramp and passenger ‘hotel’, a Russian woman talked to RZ. She said that the drunk young man sleeping off his vodka intoxication with a sullen expression in a chair, his feet across the entry, is the native ‘boss’ of the local ‘bullies’. In fairly racist fashion she equated the natives with criminals, bullies and drunks, pulling her eyelids slantwise to show who she meant. Social problems were evident. There appeared to be gangs of young native-Ulchi men in Bogorodskoe who try to intimidate travelers and strangers into giving them money. She said this young man intimidated her to buy kaviar (okura or ikra) from him, immediately using the money to buy vodka and falling into a drunken stupor. RZ and I would also see him on the 15th, still in the same chair, but now apparently sober, questioning people who came aboard the port ship with half-closed eyes and a blank expression. The Russian woman said she was a water inspector and hence could visit all the villages, but warned us against going by ourselves to some of the native villages. The local ‘bullies’, young men aged 16-25, would ask why you were there, and if you couldn’t give a clear answer (and ‘tourist’ is not clear) they would demand money. I also saw two young Russian men with black eyes, so Bogorodskoe appears to be a ‘tough’ place.

The water inspector said Savinskij is a Ulchi village, inhabited almost only by Ulchi; and at Sofiisk there is a beautiful museum of native culture. Sofiisk is inhabited by Russians and ‘aboriginals’. Down the Amur, Nikolaevsk is a ‘beautiful town’ of ca. 40,000 inhabitants. She

said we shouldn't take a cargo boat to Sovyetski Gavany (as RZ had planned), because of the 'angry police' there. It would be better to take a plane from Nikolaevsk to Khabarovsk (as also Irina had said).

Before parting the Pevnovs had warned us against criminals, saying 'everybody here knows you have a tape-recorder' (RZ had a tape-recorder, unused). Pevnov said he talked to someone in the Rayon administration (apparently the leader is an Ulcha woman from Ukhta) who could take us to Ukhta, but we didn't have time to go. The Pevnovs left early on the 15th.

RS and I spent Tuesday the 15th in Bogorodskoe. After breakfast we walked to the port. We began preparing to get a boat down to Nikolaevsk the next morning.

Soon we set out for a new interview at the Ulcha Museum, August 15, 2000, 10-11 AM:

There were two female informant, A and B, A being the Curator, the other unidentified, perhaps the dictionary woman. This time the conversation was quite direct. Informant A said that a dokha can go through segmentation, when they 'divide the heart', at which time people moved away, but keep their exogamy. It doesn't work the other way, that newcomers would come from the outside and make a union with local people in a 'dokha'. To distinguish a local clan they refer to it as 'umukhala', 'one family' or family name.

The informant mentioned and tried to elucidate the case of a segmented clan: Pilda and Udi would enter into a union called 'Pilduncha', which is both a clan and dokha. Actually this was more like a fusion than a segmentation. The topic of dokha would be returned to later.

The informants turned to the topic of religion, noting spirit protectors associated with clans.



At the Museum was a human figure, carved on the end of a log or post. The Curator called him 'kaljami', 'snow man'. There was a local legend about the 'snow man' or snow people; it told how humans outsmarted them; parents will tell kids to come home early because the snow man is lurking around.

It is tempting to associate the carved posts with myths of clan origins, as distant progenitors of local clans; though this need not be a correct interpretation. There were smaller carvings referred to as 'house gods'; these were small human figures that were said to take care of the health of children and house members.

One informant, presumably the dictionary woman, wanted to talk about language. She elicited words in the 'Kalchomska Ulchinski dialekt' from the Curator: lepó = khleb (bread); öpu' = khleb (bread); narho gay so = crow: gay; čindö' = bird; tuktú = ambarr (storage).

There was a comment on the warm sunny weather. RZ interjected an anecdote from the published diary of an ethnographer, Ponyatofski, who went down the Amur River in June-July 1914, which said that it was raining all the time; which hampered his work of collecting data.

The Curator mentioned a clan story or myth, perhaps inspired by the Pilduncha case, which was about 3 mythical brothers who had 3 groups of sons (3+2+3), each inhabiting new and unknown villages.

This led Informant B to enter into a lengthy presentation about 'dokha' based on what she had learned from published sources. At this point the Curator claimed to be the one compiling a dictionary; that the young woman was helping her; in officious manner she had asked Pevnov to help her publish it, but he wasn't very encouraging about getting it published. What followed was a lengthy discussion between Informant B and RZ about the written sources on the 'dokha' organization. The informant would tell RZ in Russian how the dokha works, who is a member today etc. Translation here became difficult, since this was a literary debate, throwing out a few names of 'dokha' and what scholars claimed they were.

The gist of the conversation was that the reading of the sources was different; RZ thought the younger woman had not understood the scholarly views, 'she doesn't really know'. What appeared was that the dokha is a composite phenomenon, a group of clan lineages spread in many settlements, partly in the shape of a composite clan such as Pilda, Udi and Pilduncha, and partly with parts of the same clan located in separate villages side by side with other clans; a kind of clan complementarity. Though the informant noted that the dokha organization didn't work on 'newcomers', people moving in, this may involve some misunderstanding during the talk. What seemed to be on her mind was that dokha is something more than segmentation, a clan union or a group of related clans or descent groups spread in different settlements. What a dokha 'was' would have a distinct meaning in each tribal group, perhaps even in each native settlement.

The discussion had moved to a conceptual and scholarly level. Informant B noted an example that she felt was crucial, involving 3 'brothers' in 3 settlements:

Group I	Group II	Group III
Br 1	Br 1	Br 1 (Tata)
Br 2	Br 2	Br 2
Br 3		Br 3

The 3 groups had 'fathers' who were 'brothers'; and these in turn had 'sons' who were 'brothers', like the originators of the 'Udi' and 'Pilda' clans, 'Pilduncha'. She had names for each Br, that unfortunately could not be copied at the time – except for one, Tata, perhaps the placename Data or Datta. The informant claimed to have confirmed this information by calling an old person living in the Ulcha village of Ukhta last night. When asked where the Brs lived she simply said 'ne znayu', 'I don't know', a common Russian expression. The general idea was that different clans, villages and whole districts, also across tribal groups, had relations of extended or fictive kinship – a shared mythical origin based on kinship. Similar myths are found elsewhere in the world, such as Slavic 'brother' people; but in a totemic universe the relations become more direct and immediate. As I tersely noted at the time: 'The genealogy is 'mythological', and concerns the origin of a 'dokha'.' It would have been far more rewarding to record her phone-call with the old Ukhta person. The scholarly debate is far too involved and contentious to be of help in a simple fieldwork context.

With these somewhat unsatisfactory observations our time at the Museum ended, and we were cheerfully seen off by the ladies outside the door. Following guests to the door and seeing them off may be a native custom.

We walked around Bogorodskoe, which is a sprawling village or small town some 4-5 km wide. Our walk took us E and SE towards the river, hoping to meet some natives; but we did not see anybody to talk to, so this was chalked off as another unrewarded effort, a common experience on such a short fieldtrip and indeed in fieldwork in general.

We returned to the central area near the port. As noted we saw the Ulchi youth gang leader or 'boss' again on the landing barge, now sober. This was when we went to get our boat tickets for the next day. At the port we saw more 'bully'-type youths. We sat watching today's 'Meteor' come in at 4:15 PM, and the youth 'boss' to the right and another man by a plank fence behind us sat wearing sunglasses but obviously observing us. We also were accosted by some Russian youths, two young men aged 17-18 outside a house being joined by two others on a 'Hitler bike'; but people were walking by so they didn't follow us. If bullying strangers is common in Russia's villages, then Russia may be facing a growing problem of youth criminality.

It has to be added that views of 'bullies' and troubled youths were affected by our temporary situation as travelers. Outside Magazin 'Amur' we saw two native youths hanging out; at first they seemed like 'bullies', but a closer glance indicated that they looked harmless, especially since they wore glasses, which made them look like Ulcha students. Apparently they were unemployed, shabby looking, and somewhat alcoholic, but one of them gave us a pensive look. Life cannot be easy for native men in town – they have skills, but are kept passive.

As evening fell we had a view of Ukhta across the river earlier, said to hold ca. 35 houses. Around 7 PM we shopped supper: bread, salami, cucumber, tomatoes, canned ham bits, beer and mineral water. RZ overheard a boy asking another boy 'are you coming to the banya (bath) with me'; there is one common bath house for the whole village, as there was in Bulava and other places.

Returning to the gastinitsa on the 15th, an old Ulchi couple was sitting outside a house W of the hotel, he in his 50s with a beard, she around 50. RZ thought they looked like an American still painting. All in all we had a nice and interesting time in Bogorodskoye, learning about native (and Russian) culture. This was written by a lamp at a table in my (LS) room in the gastinitsa; taking notes before going to sleep is a fieldwork habit.

The next day, Wednesday, August 16, we got up at 5:30 AM, before dawn, and trotted to the 'Meteor' boat as dawn was breaking in Bogorodskoe. Once again the trip on the boat down the Amur was an adventure; though a little sleepy. On the boat there was plenty of room, and we came to Nikolaevsk in the afternoon. On the 'Meteor' we noticed that it didn't stop at some villages that we surmised to be native – it apparently stops mainly at Russian settlements. RZ thought it was because the natives do not have any money, but it contributes to the isolation and suppression of the native residents.

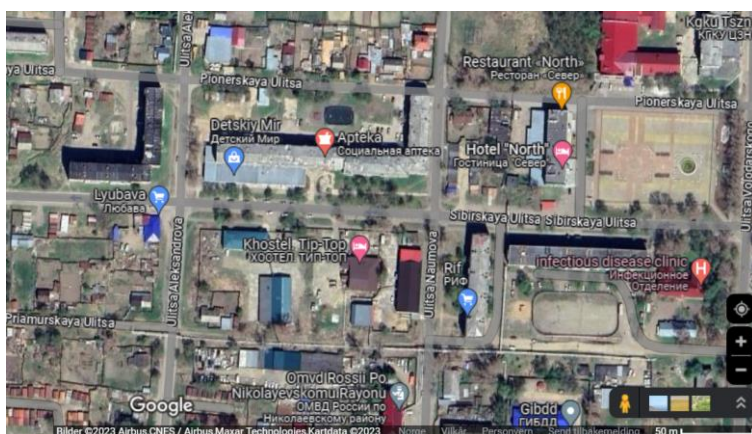
Nikolaevsk officially had 40,000 residents, but Irina Rosugbu later said 25,000 – people are leaving. At night I (LS) called Irina and she came to meet us. Her family's apartment was in a housing block near the hotel. As a young colleague she provided us with a wealth of information – and she spoke Norwegian! Some of the things Irina told us were that Ulcha people are trying to keep their clans and traditions; they are still marrying out of the clans, often on the advice of parents and elders. She said there was a traditional wedding 10 years ago, possibly an attempted revitalization of Ulcha culture, apparently in Bulava. She told about her family: Her Fa came from Auri, a settlement near Bulava; her Mo also came from a

place near Bulava. They experienced the harsh Soviet and Russian treatment of the natives; all the Ulcha settlements were forcefully resettled at Bulava in the end of the 1930s. She said her Fa had extensive information on the family genealogy, and she also collected kinship data during her fieldwork on Ulcha culture. Censuses and population data are kept by the village administration. In Bulava there are 128 ‘employed’ Ulcha people, out of a total of 600-800 natives. People keep their clan names as family names, and a sense of clan identity – but many young people want to move to Khabarovsk for education, jobs and other opportunities. Lake Kizi appears to be populated by Russians now, after the natives there were forceably resettled in nearby towns. Incidentally Irina said she knew a Norwegian colleague, Øivind Ravna, through his Wi, who is a Nenets (or Yakut) and studied in Petersburg; so there were many coincidences on this trip.

The hotel in Nikolaevsk, Gastinitisa ‘Severy’ (North) had Nivkh or Nanai décor along the stairs and in the rooms, made by a local artist in the 70s. In every town we saw statues of Lenin and other Soviet sculptures, places are still called ‘Lenin Square’, ‘Sovietskaya’ Street, ‘Komsomolsk’ Street etc.

When Irina came to the hotel at 9:15 PM she brought us a glass of raspberries that she picked. She told us her family has 2 datsjas; she didn’t call them summer houses but ‘work places’, because they have gardens there and pick berries near the huts, on the S side of Amur; one such house might be N of the Amur. Near the datsjas bears came to eat berries, her Fa saw one on the road not long ago; it didn’t bother him, but he turned and went back. Her family included her Fa, Mo and Si. The Mo and Si both work for the Nikolaevsk Administration, the Si as an accountant. In the house was a ‘friend’ of the family, a woman aged 45-50, divorced, with 2 kids. In addition there was a Si who was a single mother in Moscow. Irina told us the hot water had been turned off in Nikolaevsk for 2 weeks; RZ and I saw people fetching water with buckets from water posts or water stands on the street. RZ’s no-nonsense comment was: ‘how could this country get so fucked up’. Irina told us that several of her friends died young, from cancer, TB and ‘poisonous ticks’ (Lyme disease). One Russian rumor was that the Japanese inserted the ticks with poison from their biological warfare labs to test its effect on people. About her friends she said they ‘just died’ from disease because life in Nikolaevsk was not easy in the 1990s – now it’s a little stabilized.

Nikolaevsk was originally a beautiful town, with wooden houses, spacious streets with trees, and parks along the River; but the Bolsheviks burned the whole city during the civil war in the 1920s, and the Soviets placed concrete brick dwelling blocks in the center; only a few blocks of wooden houses remain.



Part of Nikolaevsk (Google Maps)

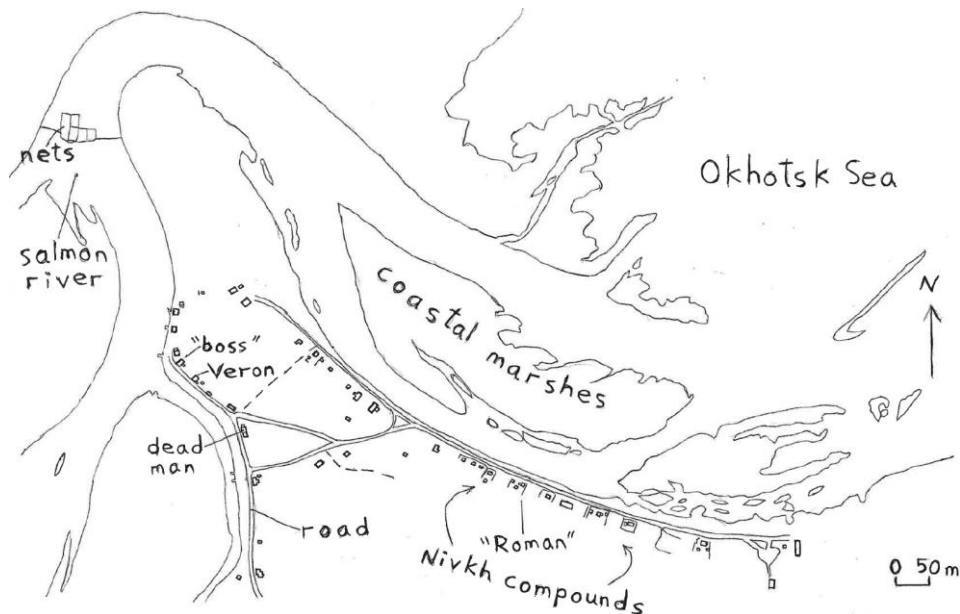
We went with Irina at night to visit her parents' apartment and talk briefly to her father. Through Irina's father we arranged a trip to a Nivkh village; everything happened very fast.

On Thursday, August 17, we set out on yet another adventure. As noted, Irina's Fa helped find transportation to a Nivkh village, Vlasevo on the Okhotsk coast. The participants on this expedition were RZ, LS, Irina Rosugbu (IR) and Tolya or Anatolij, the driver, last name not known, aged 35. IR and Tolya showed up outside the gastinitsa at dawn in a big, old army truck, the only vehicle that could maneuver the mud-holed forest road, with special 'mud gears'. This was a strange journey; the road became increasingly bad and rutted as we approached the village. The trip of 30-40 km took several hours; but eventually we descended to the Pacific Coast and reached Vlasevo – for a dramatic welcome.

First we met 2 men in military uniforms who said there had been a killing the night before – a man, a Nanai, was knifed by another man, a Russian, who accused the Nanai of 'poaching'; i.e., the dead man came there to fish. The week before, 2 motorcycles collided(!) in or near the village and at least one person was killed; another man had died or was killed the week before that; all these deaths were connected with people being drunk on vodka. No police had come; the soldiers were sent to fetch the killer. Our driver, Tolya, who used the army van as his car, had spent some of our pay to buy 4 bottles of vodka that he wanted to exchange for salmon caviar or 'ikra'; vodka and 'ikra' were central parts of the barter-smuggling economy.

We drove to the shore. Two Russians showed up with a boat and Tolya asked if we wanted to take a boat ride. RZ, LS and IR got in, and the 2 men tried to take us around. But the outboard engine hardly worked at all; the 2 men swearing in Russian; the older man was Aleksandr or Sasha, age ca. 35, the younger was Arkadij or 'Arkan', age ca. 25-27. Their attitude was obnoxious, 'Arkan' made fun of the 'foreigners', calling us bad names, and Sasha proclaimed himself a patriot and became aggressive, almost threatening, when asking if we were 'patriots': 'What would you do if they killed your father and mother, your brother and sister, your grandfather and grandmother?' I told him Norway is a small country. Sasha said he would die for his country. When they saw us at first they asked us if we were 'Chechens' and RZ laughed, but the mood was really kind of ugly: belligerent, depressed and alcohol-induced. It quickly became apparent that the Russian men had taken control of the village and used the Nivkh as 'wards' or pawns. The men had nets standing in the river, quite illegal, to catch salmon during the run and extract roe they could sell. In the boat Sasha took us to some of the nets in the river, where salmon is caught and kept, then slaughtered mainly for the roe, to be bartered for vodka etc., and brought to towns like Nikolaevsk and Khabarovsk for sale. Sasha explained that fishing salmon is 'prohibited', but that they had a 'kholkhoz' who kept the nets, as if this made it legal. No doubt the collective was Nivkh, that the Russian gang controlled.

So this was a group of 8-10 Russian men who now monopolized or controlled the local resources, 'paying' the villagers with vodka (and threats). After a short ride to the nets we returned to the shore. In spite of the beautiful scenery, the serene river with its grassy banks, this was hardly a romantic boat ride.

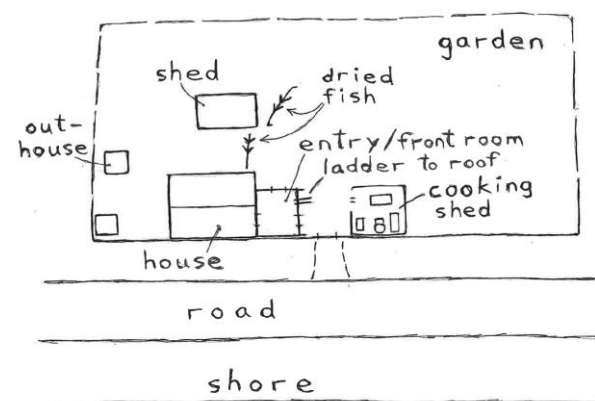


Nivkh village: Vlasevo aka Vlas'yevo

The strained situation led to some disjunctive observations. We noted elements of Nivkh décor, such as wood carvings on the house awnings.

The Russian men who controlled the area were led by a domineering man who called himself a 'kholkhoz' 'boss', named Vasilij or Valentin. With him were Aleksandr, Arkadij, and 5-7 other men; there may have been one named Anatolij, like our driver. Of the Nivkh who lived or used to live in the village we learned two family names, Veron and 'Roman'.

The obnoxious Russian men, shadowing our movements, made racist comments. 'Sasha', after making light of our request to meet the native, Nivkh people, at one time said as we passed a Nivkh man: 'This is an aboriginal (aborigen), take his picture!' RZ quietly observed that his knowledge of the word 'aborigen' showed Sasha must have had at least some education. Sasha and 'Arkan' followed us around the village, but did not know where to find a suitable Nivkh family we could talk to. After asking someone they took us to the 'Roman' family, where we interviewed the old grandmother.



Nivkh compound, Vlasevo (not drawn to scale)

The 'Roman' family included an old man (2nd Hu), old woman (Wi) age 69, a son in his 30s, a son or relative around 30, and a Da or DaLa age 30. The Da lay drunk on the roof of the front room. Our companion, IR, set about interviewing the old woman in the family, as part of

her own research. The woman told about the painful resettlement in the 1970-80s from a village down the coast, 'Petrovska', or a Nivkh settlement there. Old grandma mentioned some of the clans in her old village, such as her own clan Byksefing or Bonkeving; her family later took the name 'Roman'. Other clans or family designations were Nili, Tolf, Chetvin and 1-2 more; indicating 5-6 clans in Petrovska. The matron talked of a hard life; she married a man in her village, had children, then they were forceably resettled to Vlasevo, and now lived from hand to mouth, on potatoes, vegetables, and a little dried fish. About her childhood she said she didn't remember, but when Irina mentioned Nivkh dolls, a research interest, she remembered that she played with a fairly large one as a child. She told IR what she recalled about the doll and growing up. What was unspoken was the Russian men controlling the village. Grandma's son claimed there were 4 (extended) Nivkh families or clans in the village. In addition a few Nanai and Ulchi stayed locally – including the one who was killed yesterday.

As if on cue, Sasha and 'Arkan' now barged in on our interview, demanding beers and asking stupid questions like how do you say something in Norwegian-English. They were going to take us to another house, and before we knew it 7 Russian men, some drunk, had entered our van for the ride. The house they took us to was that of the local 'boss', a Russian man aged ca. 45. The impression grew of 10 or so Russians controlling the village, practically crashing-in there, who had 'appropriated' the local fishery of salmon. The group of Russian men in Vlasevo were self-appointed 'guardians' who dominated the native people completely. A handful of native men would take part with them in the fishing and go around with them at their mercy. Besides Nivkh there were also some Nanai and Ulchi; a 'Polack' was also mentioned. In ominous fashion Sasha claimed the local Nivkhs were 'dying out', which was a twisted way of explaining the Russian gang's dominance.

The man in charge of all this was the Russian 'boss', a forceful and dominant man, called Vasilij or Valentin. The 'boss' took charge of the barter. Tolya got 'ikra' for the vodka, but was cheated on the weight, he later claimed – they promised 3 kg for 4 bottles of vodka, but it turned out to be only 2 kg. The 'boss' came to our van, gave us 'strong tea' (dark tea), and wanted to barter with RZ: He said he had a 'souvenir', and held his hand around something, and told RZ to produce a return gift. He held up his clenched fist, palm upwards, and told RZ to do the same; then they opened their hands at the same time and switched the contents with each other. It turned out to be a bear's canine in the 'boss's' fist, and RZ gave him some ruble coins in return, but the 'boss' threw them away angrily, saying you can't exchange rubles for barter-presents. He wanted to switch watches with RZ. The situation was getting uneasy, and we decided to leave. It was an intense moment; I (LS) at one point thought of giving the 'boss' my belt as a return gift, but realized I could not go without it; somehow I ended up with the bear's tooth, RZ did not want it. The departure was dramatic: Tolya said the 'boss' was angry; we must leave at once; the 'boss' jumped from the back seat in anger as if to arm himself, and we took off.

Tolya was not more worried than he had a last stopping place, hoping to get some more 'ikra': Before leaving we stopped outside a house where a Nivkh man was sitting. He said his name was 'Veron', and he was completely subdued. When we asked, he couldn't remember anything about his past, not even the village of the wife he once had. His house was used by a young Russian couple, and the woman (aged 20-25) bummed a ride with us to town. Her man had a bare chest (as common with local Russians, or even in town) and camouflage military pants. She went to the next house and brought another woman and heavy bags that turned out to be full of 'ikra'. Tolya had them cover the bags of illegal 'ikra' with blankets in case there

was a 'militia' (police) control. On the way back we picked up 2 men walking who hitched a ride. The army van served its purpose as it filled with a mixed crew of anthropologists, smugglers and hitchhikers.

The visit was extra scary for me (LS) who did not speak Russian, with little control of what the men said or did. Irina's Fa later would explain that the region was being robbed. Profit leaves the region; there is no longer any local payoff from timber, gold, minerals (oil), salmon, ikra etc. Everything is taken out; the profit goes to export and to Moscow, where the politicians are 'corrupt'. Yet this was said in a mild conciliatory manner. RZ subsequently explained about the barter economy: Remote parts of Russia, such as Vlasevo, are reverting to a pre-modern economy. This also happened in Bogorodskoe, where Andrej brought gifts to the native girl and she in turn brought him food (and sex). Even in central places like Nikolaevsk and Khabarovsk barter goes on, goods and favors are exchanged without money being involved. High up in Russian society this may occur. IR had a friend Veronika whose Mo is a professor, but who is exchanging hospitality for favors; since contacts and relationships are counting more than monetary remuneration. Wages are becoming inadequate and uncertain in recent years; which is also a historical experience in Russia, that life is uncertain. Barter was increasing. People exchange potatoes, vegetables, fish etc. for other goods. A bottle of vodka serves as a kind of 'currency' that can be exchanged for most goods. In Vlasevo the Russian 'boss' took vodka in exchange for 'ikra'; this was vodka he would not drink, but exchange for other goods and services. Money had little value and was even depreciated; in barter goods cannot be exchanged for money; the 'boss' said money had no value to him and he did not want to see it; it was an insult and disturbed the 'business' that he ran. The most ominous part to me (LS) was that the Russian gang had taken over the Nivkh village and threatened the livelihood and even the life of the native people.

It was good to be back in Nikolaevsk and breathe out after our dramatic experiences of the day. Back in town, on Friday, August 18, we visited the local museum; and bought IR an air ticket, as she was going to Khabarovsk with us and from there by train to Moscow. The Museum had a native (Ulchi) section, a nature section and a history (Soviet) section, including a bust of Stalin. In town there also was a Far Eastern Culture Center where native dances are performed, classes taught, etc. Some random observations were that in Nikolaevsk goats were used as 'lawn mowers'. Also some cows roamed the street.

At night on the 18th we ate supper with Irina Rosugbu's family (we also talked with her Fa on the 16th). There were quite a few guests, and the Rosugbus had prepared quite a feast in their apartment. Present were the old Fa and Mo, Irina and her Si, the residing family friend, Richard and me, and one or two others, including a woman who was an Ulchi teacher in school; in all roughly 9-10 people, all seated around a long table in the living room.

The dinner banter was pretty free and open, with few formalities; the old parents, children and guests discussed openly, as in a familiar situation, which was both refreshing and a little surprising to me who perhaps had expected formality; but the father spoke with much authority and apparent insight; he was listened to.

Irina's Fa, Aleksandr Rosugbu, would converse freely on several topics. He talked with an old man's authority, based on his own ideas: He said that 'dokha' and 'khala' are related terms; here he emphasized the 'kha' parts, because the 'kha' element in these two words is the same, as he saw it. In his view, 4 clans made up the 'original' part or dokha in the Ulcha Nation: Gimsali or Gyusali, Orosugbu, Dili or Dyari and one more, not Hodzher.

The Ulchi practiced moxification, it seems. Mr. Rosugbu told us that he as a child, age 7-8, e.g., ca. 1944-45, was treated by a shaman. This was a real famous (Ulchi) shaman, one of the big ones or the biggest one; even Soviet people (Russians) came to see this shaman instead of seeing a doctor. This shaman treated Rosugbu of 'appendicitis', and the treatment proved effective. It apparently included moxa. Rosugbu also said that it's not true that shamans are secretive or reclusive. Instead they depend on fame and people's knowing them (and their power to heal) in order to perform. They were public persons of renown (only the Soviets made them reclusive, forcing them into secrecy). Because the shamans needed spectators to help them in their seance (their journey to the other world); the spectators would support them, hold them up during trance, making sure the costume didn't fall off, and serving as witnesses. Later the crowd could say if the shaman's performance was good and effective or not; hence increasing his or her fame; or adversely, denouncing the shaman as ineffective and weak. So the shaman needed success in these public séances in order to promote his or her reputation.

Rosugbu and the woman teaching Ulchi added that shamans were omniscient: on their spirit journey they could see everything; hence they could report correctly from places they had never seen. A (good) shaman could describe far-away places, asking people who had been there if they had visited certain places, i.e., statues in towns like Irkutsk and Moskva.

Mr. Rosugbu seemed to have many fixed ideas about culture. He would use random linguistic similarities such as Japanese 'yama' and Ulchi 'nyam', Japanese 'kon' in 'konnichiwa' and Russian 'kony', 'horse', etc., to 'prove' cultural migrations. What was fascinating was that all the movements centered on the Ulchi nation. He reiterated that Rosugbu was part of a 4-clan 'dokha' that formed the 'original' part of the Ulchi nation – but they all came from somewhere else. He started out with Genghis Khan, and went on to China and Manchuria to explain his origin; he also included Adam and Eve, Thor, Ishtar and other cosmologies. In his view the Tungus (Ulchi) were from the original roots of mankind; all cultures could be derived from or shown to be related to them. This was partly an old man's hang-ups, partly a traditional, native view of cultural salience, similar to Shawnee informants voicing the centrality of their families and tribe. Irina's Si kind of told us to ignore him, she said he was getting old, senile, and had fixed ideas. Yet I (LS) found universal elements in his views pointing to nature beliefs and totemism. In such a view Thor as a god of thunder would relate to the thunder spirit among the Ulchi, and by extension to totems such as eagle or raven. Totemism is a globally encompassing concept. A modern view by contrast sets up boundaries that cannot easily be transgressed, such as between humans and nature. It was a significant and somewhat mysterious part of the conversation.

After this pleasant meal and family visit in Irina's parents' apartment, she followed us back to the gastinitsa, before returning home.

On the 19th, a Saturday, we flew to Khabarovsk. As we came from Khabarovsk Airport in 'Yedushka's' taxi, a driver we had met before, and stopped outside Hotel 'Tsentralnaya', another coincidence occurred: Professor Pevnov and his wife Khasanova came out of the hotel; RZ ran out of the taxi to greet them; they were headed to the Khabarovsk train station for the long ride back to Petersburg. They told RZ and me that we must contact them in St. Petersburg, adding that it's close to Norway, so it's easy for me to come. Unfortunately I never could follow them up on their invitation.

As before we got rooms in Hotel 'Tsentralnaya' after some argument; when coming into a hotel the staff routinely say 'it's full', a hangup from Soviet days when hotels were state controlled. Then it turns out there are many rooms; in Nikolaevsk they said the hotel was 'closed for repairs' but gave us a room each after all; in both places we got bad rooms above the bar with lots of noise. IR kept us company until her departure for Moscow at 4 AM on the 22nd. She was staying with her friend Veronika, Da of Dr. Anna Aleksandrovna Ponomarova who works at the Khabarovsk Museum; a Russian. Veronika lost her cash card in a bank automat. IR did not pay to stay with her friend's family; friendship and acquaintance counts a lot. The next day, Sunday, August 20, was spent sightseeing in Khabarovsk. We went to the beach on the Amur bank, where city folk swam and enjoyed the summer.

On Monday, August 21, Irina and Veronika arranged a trip to Sikachi-Alyan, a Nanai village that is a tourist spot with some famous petroglyphs along the Amur River nearby. Our driver was Andrej, a former military cop and now a security guard in a supermarket; Veronika & Irina also came along. RZ and I paid altogether R700 (\$24) for the trip. At Intourist they asked \$75 each to arrange a trip there; Irina explained that this was a steep price; instead she and Veronika arranged the visit through private contacts.


The trip to Sikachi-Alyan was about 50 km on roads of varying quality, but far better than to Vlasevo. The well-known Nanai village had a population of 350 people, 95% Nanai or natives. It had a store (magazine) as well as an administration house. Besides tourism there was a little fishing, and we saw pigs and gardens.



Part of Sikachi-Alyan (Bing Maps)

We visited the Museum in the village schoolhouse, and a village 'assembly house' nearby where the local women (ca. 40 of them) had lain out their handicraft souvenirs. I (LS) bought some carvings, headbands and other items. A local man, half Nanai, half Russian, took us by boat to the petroglyphs for R100 (\$3.45). We brought our own lunch, the salami later giving me diarrhea; poor amenities make this a worry on travels.

In the Museum in Sikachi Alyan they displayed a book by Okladnikov: Ancient Art of the Amur. This contained diffusionist views about the continuity of art forms across millennia,

such as spirals and waves:  More contemplative was a plaque showing local Nanai who were killed or wounded in World War II. A few had used Russian family names, but most were Nanai clan names, the dominant one being 'Aktanka' with 10-12 names. RZ thought this was a 'one clan village', but I (LS) noted that there were at least a dozen family names, some common, such as 5-6 Donkan, and others rare, like Dyuzher. The construction by Russian ethnographers of 'clan' territories may actually have influenced native views, so that they start emulating this fictive notion. Native settlements have always been multi-clan.

The woman at the museum, a smart lady in her 40s, said the Nanai clans were totemic: She said that she was part of the Aktanka clan that came from tigers. To explain this, she added that the clan members had origin myths of coming from tigers. She further said that other clans had other totems; some others used bears as a totem. Here followed an interesting exposition: She showed us a wedding gown whose dress or front part was 'totemic'; this front part was like an apron attached to the dress. On this dress were embroideries that showed the 'tree of life' symbolizing the clan or 'nation', with animals underneath its branches, deer and others, that supposedly were totemic. The symbolism was extensive: the 'tree of life' had its roots in the water, where fish swam, symbolizing ancestors or spirits; it stood on the fruitful earth, like the familiar mother earth metaphor, represented by a green line and plants such as flowers; in the branches of the tree were birds, representing spirits or babies. Near or along the trunk of the tree the totem animal was embroidered (or rather a pair of animals). This was a similar exposition to what we had heard on August 13.



Nanai wedding gown or festive apron

She showed us several different gowns with different animals embroidered in this or a similar position. From this and other exhibits the following totems were noted: tiger, bear, deer, salmon, rooster or peacock, perhaps also eagle and snake; these were not necessarily seen at once, but noted on different occasions. To me, the embroidered gowns or aprons, with their animal symbols, were unique objects that await closer study. Something should have been written about them: who made them, how old are they, who wore them, were they inherited and by who and so on. As far I can remember in retrospect, a Mo (perhaps with the help of a

GrMo or relative) would embroider the colorful wedding dress for her daughter's wedding. Exactly how long the dresses had been in use was unclear; the ones at the Museum apparently were old, from the period 1890-1940, with fragments dated 1780-1800; and a few similar gown may have been worn by brides also later, possibly into the 1980s or even later; at least the symbolism was remembered.

The visit to the assembly hall or village community house also was memorable; RZ hesitated when the village women assembled and summoned us to enter and look at the souvenirs. To me (LS) this was an indication of the women's influence. The artefacts included birch bark containers with carvings, embroideries, glass pearl accessories, woven bands or mats, and more. It was quite nice; each woman or two had a table on which they had laid out their works. Their anxiousness for us to buy was related to the general depression of native villages; incidental income was scarce even though this was not far from Khabarovsk. The women must have represented all the clans in the village.



Village assembly house; women preparing crafts sale inside



LS buying souvenirs in Sikachi-Alyan (with thumb-shadow)

The third experience was the boat trip to the petroglyphs, also memorable. The shore cabin and boats were the men's domain. The man who took us to the petroglyphs, carved not on solid cliffs but on loose rocks or boulders in the river, was taciturn but helpful. One guess is that the fantastic petroglyphs, with faces and figures, marked the village territory; they might also represent spirits near the river. We returned to Khabarovsk about 6 PM. At night we walked by the Khabarovsk Museum (Krayevichiski Muzei) and noted that the price for Russians was R10 (\$0.34) and for 'foreigners' R80 (\$2.75); this caused us to delay our visit while contemplating the inflated prices for foreigners.

Also the traveling was taking its toll. We had visited 8 towns and villages over the last two weeks, all with memorable experiences. Like other tourists, we would wind down with walks around town, observing the street life. Some incidental notes or observations was that 'Savinskij' was an Ulchi village; at Sofiisk was a native museum; there were many places we did not have time to go. Not every move was scientific; there would be inebriated discussions about Russian ethnography. RZ defended the old scholars, while Irina was more critical of their work about the natives (which she had every right to be). At one point, apparently, the name of a Russian scholar, Melnikova, came up, whose work on the Amur natives RZ had read; Irina was not impressed, saying she had met the woman, and seemingly called her a 'bitch' (suka); with alcohol involved this led to a deteriorating debate and no fruitful results. While reflection is a scholarly ideal, reality is more complicated.

The next day, August 22, Irina left for Moscow. She had been an important helper in our work, and continued to be so, providing contact with Veronika's Mo, Dr. Anna Ponomarova. RZ and I still intended to visit the Khabarovsk Museum, that according to him was known for having a nice and informative exhibit on native cultures, including archeological investigations of old and recent native settlements, with charts, models, displays etc. The director of the Khabarovsk Museum is named Ruban, but Dr. Ponomarova informed us that he is on vacation or leave now to finish his dissertation. She claimed that Ruban complained 'we have 30 researchers here (at the Museum), so why can't they write the dissertation for me?' This day Dr. Ponomarova was to show us the Archaeology Museum, but both RZ and I had loose bowels, so we didn't get there till 2 PM and she had left, so we went to check the 'Meteor' schedule for a trip to a native-Nanai village, Troitskoe, a quite known place where RZ wanted to go.

Walking around Khabarovsk that night, RZ informed me (LS) about some of the ethnic history in the area: During a so-called 'resettlement' of the native peoples in the 1970s or early 80s, under Brezhnev, the natives or 'aboriginals' were forcibly resettled in large mixed settlements with Russians, to foster an assimilation to Russian culture. The native villages were bulldozed and burned by the Russians to make sure that the natives didn't move back there, and to consolidate the Russian-native (Nanai, Ulchi) mixed settlements. The ethnic groups settled in different parts of the towns, or native sections developed, such as in Bulava. Eventually, into the 1980s and particularly after the Soviet breakup in 1991, people started moving back to the old villages, where they had kept up a seasonal presence in spite of Soviet repression.

Tired and weary I went back to my room to try to settle my stomach with mineral water, do my laundry and write my diary-notes. The intense travel took its toll, and I mused this might be my last adventure of this kind. (Yet within a few years I would be back on the road). I randomly noticed that on Russian TV there always appears people in uniforms (which would

seem odd in Norway). I also noted the fact of children drinking: in a Nikolaevsk outdoor café some boys who said they were 13, 14 and 15 drank beer and vodka-based drinks; and in Khabarovsk RZ saw a group of boys as young as 8 drinking at a table in an outdoor café.

On August 23, a Wednesday, RZ and I went to Troitskoe from Khabarovsk by the ‘Meteor’ boat in the morning, going back by boat at 7:15 PM. We visited the adjoining villages of Troitskoe (‘Trinity’) & Dzhari; respectively Russian-native and native-Nanai. Here there was a neat boundary, in the form of asphalt and non-asphalt on the road: Where the asphalt ended and gravel began was the boundary between the Russian and Nanai settlement.



A part of Dzhari (Bing Maps)

We visited the Troitskoe Museum of Nanai culture; outside there were 3 ‘Nanai ancestor figures’. By now we got batteries for our cameras, though mine worked poorly; we took photos of the museum front with the wooden statues or figures. Nearby was an ‘Extra-Curricular Study Center’ with some Nanai and Russian children. A Nanai man sat by the door of the Museum, scrutinizing us as we came up; he may have been related to the women working at the museum, or a kind of caretaker. Inside the Museum were 5-6 Nanai women, aged 25-50, and one of them, ca. 30, served as our guide.



Troitskoye Museum with ancestor figures

In the Town Museum of Nanai Culture in Troitskoe, the price of 1 ticket for a Russian was R4 (\$0.14), for a 'foreigner' R28 (\$1); similar to the Khabarovsk Museum. As RZ spoke Russian, the Nanai women first gave him 2 R4 tickets. The young woman who showed us around seemed 'thoroughly ignorant of Nanai culture', in RZ's view. My (LS) impression was that she was simply unschooled; which need not detract from her informant abilities; she was a cheerful, naive, not uncomely woman. So I appreciated her guiding, while RZ pretended to scoff at it.

At the Museum we saw at least 2 Nanai wedding dresses or wedding gowns, one complete and of known provenience, the other old, fragmentary and with owner unknown. The complete wedding dress, in its skirt or front section had the customary 'tree of life', one on each side of the split in front; this might be termed an apron or apron-like embroidered section of the dress. These dresses had gradually gained significance for me (LS) as cultural symbols. The woman showing us around proved her ignorance to RZ when she did not know that Dersu Uzala was a Nanai – of movie fame. Yet she acted as a spontaneous informant during the guiding, and seemed quite competent: On the wedding dress, the deer depicted under the tree on each side of the trunk were symbols of living relatives; i.e., totems. The birds depicted among the branches of the tree were 'spirits' or 'future generations', children not yet born; and the roots of the tree depicted or 'were' the ancestors or the origin of the clan. Also the fishes swimming among the roots reaching into the water may have represented the spirits of ancestors, as I understood it. The plants and (totem) animals would then represent the living or the human surroundings. The totemic significance of these dresses became increasingly intriguing; as noted there were different animals by the tree trunk on different dresses: bear, tiger and so on. Also other scholars had similar observations, even back in Norway: Fish, perhaps salmon, was later noted as a 'totem' on Tungusic wedding gowns by my colleague Stein R. Mathisen in Alta on August 30. If I remember correctly he had seen this in the Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg.

Again it seemed that the animals depicted under the tree were like totem figures, because on the fragment of a wedding gown there were not deer but birds under the tree, on each side of the trunk, two of them, apparently chicken, roosters or woodcock. This second fragment of a wedding gown was said to be old, possibly dating 1790-1830. Whether the Museum had more dresses we could not ascertain, as the tour progressed around the native exhibits. The women at the Museum tried to make us buy souvenir artefacts, but we already had some, and RZ thought we would be 'ripped off'.

RZ later, in 2003, would mention the 'tree of life': He had met Khasanova and her linguist husband, Pevnov, in Petersburg, and on one occasion she informed him that she could 'find no story of a tree of life among the Amur Tungus'. This followed our study of the Tungusic wedding gowns, decorated with a tree, animals and birds that were explained to us as representing the clan, the ancestors and the unborn babies, as well as the totem of the bride. That the story is not recorded need not mean that the belief did not exist. Yet RZ would later observe that the claim about a Tungusic belief in a tree of life was dubious. This could mean one of two things, that the story had not been recorded, or that the wedding design was copied from somewhere else, and hence not 'native'. However, one source explicitly refers to the 'tree of life' on Nanai dresses (Van Deusen 2001: 194). Another source has the 'tree of the worlds' (Okladnikov 1982: 19). My view is that totemic expressions would have to be studied, in depth, rather than being dismissed off hand.

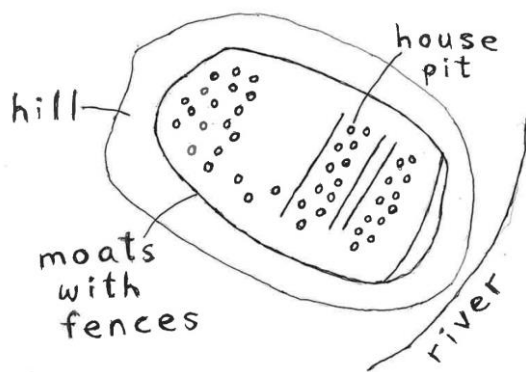
We walked from Troitskoe to Dzhari taking pictures, not talking to anyone on the way, but people noticed us and looked from windows and near fences. In Dzhari there was something called 'The Nanai People's Culture Hall & Ethnographic Center' (a green modern building); outside it there was a WWII monument to the war dead, with about a dozen family names such as Beldeg, Geiker, Kile and Hodzher. Due to time limits we did not go in; precisely why there were 2 cultural exhibits in the same village is not clear; possibly one was Russian controlled, the other native. Three men appeared at the door of this 'Nanai Center' on our way back, but disappeared inside when they saw we weren't stopping.

We tried to take a bus back to Khabarovsk at 2:05 PM, but it was full, and the line in front of the ticket window inside the bus station was chaotic; 'typical Russian', RZ said, 'no order'. We couldn't get near the ticket window, and all the buses seemed to be full; some other buses left 2:55 PM, 7:05 PM etc. There appeared to be some sort of quota system for the natives, since 2 Nanai babushki made sure a group of 7-8 Nanai (mostly young men) got on the bus at 2:55, acting as intermediaries talking to the Russian passengers, to the ticket window babushka, and to the driver. So we basically stood around waiting for the bus.

Finally we got a return boat at 7:15 PM. On the boat there were plenty of seats, and RZ attributed this to the price difference: the boat is expensive (R80-90; \$3), while the bus is cheap (a few Rubles). This 'Meteor' also was referred to as an 'ikra boat', it was filled with people bringing large nylon bags holding plastic containers of salmon caviar (ikra); some of these people looked like 'gangsters', tattooed and rough; they were mostly Russian, and some had military tattoos.

Back in Khabarovsk, on Thursday, August 24, we finally visited the Khabarovsk Museum. First we went to the Archaeology Museum in a separate building; here also 'foreigners' paid R80, Russians R10). The layout of the Museum was on 2-3 stories, around a stairwell with walk-through rooms on each floor. The exhibit on native prehistory was interesting, such as of ancient pottery going back to 12,000 BC or earlier, and displays of art and symbols. The 'paleolithic' was dated 30,000-12,000 BC; the 'neolithic' 12,000-4,000 BC (with pottery); yet some of the dating seemed dubious. RZ pointed to the characteristic net impression on some pots, from fish nets made of nettles. There was also the spiral pattern reproduced by Okladnikov. Other continuing elements were pit houses, a salmon based or 'ichthyofag' economy etc. One map had a 'culture area' dated to the II-VII centuries covering Sakhalin and the Maritime region E of the Amur, vaguely identified as Ainu or Nivkh; yet all such identifications are dubious. Cultures would extend much farther, and all native groups would be involved, also the Tungusic ones. There was one section in the Museum for petroglyphs, found at Ussuri, Kij, as well as Sikachi-Alyan, dated 7,000-2,000 BC and later. Motifs included elk-moose, bear, fox, deer, tiger, bow, boat, sun, face of shamans, ancestors or scary masks, etc.

In one room was a model of a hill fort with ca. 50 houses dated 1000 AD:



Supposedly the ‘fort’ indicated that warfare and social consolidation came to the area with bronze spearheads after ca. 400 BC; later also iron tools and weapons from trade with China. Yet what the site represents is not clear, it could be native or intruders such as the Mongol, Manchu or Chinese. Such supposed warlike displays are not only factual but also may serve an implicit purpose to legitimize the current colonizers.

Even though the Museum was interesting, with all its artefacts and displays, my (LS) claim is that there was something missing: native voices. The complexity of clans, villages, life stories and myths relating to native home area were somehow lacking. This was a museologist’s way of looking at the past; what the natives thought did not come into it, at least not to any appreciable degree. Based on my research interest I would like to see the names of the clans in each village; something an archeologist might not even consider or bother to look into.

From the Archaeology Museum we went to the Main (Krayovichiskij) Muzei, and outside we spotted Kazuyoshi Ōtsuka and his entourage; they included a young assistant or note-taker, perhaps a son, a female assistant, perhaps his Wi, an old male assistant or record-keeper of objects, a Russian interpreter, and even a Japanese body-guard or enforcer. This was yet another coincidence; we had spotted them earlier on the street, and now met them at the Museum. Being a colleague (though not Japanese), RZ followed them to the Director’s office with me (LS) in tow. The Director, Ruban, was on ‘leave’, perhaps even kicked out; and Ōtsuka went straight to the head office as if he owned it. The scene became a display of ‘we-Japanese’-ness. RZ approached the professor as a colleague and began discussing the regional research, tribes and artefacts, in particular boats. The old body-guard tried to prevent us from coming into the office, saying ‘dame’ in a low, gruff voice; RZ ignored him, and Ōtsuka said it was okay, so he reluctantly stepped aside. Inside RZ talked to Ōtsuka, and later claimed that Ōtsuka was scared by his presence, because Ōtsuka does not know Russian, and wanted to find out who sent RZ to Amur and what we found out. He noted avidly our interest in ‘dokha’, and his young ‘assistant’ noted every word RZ said, all in Japanese.

Here was a kind of hidden ‘colonial’ enterprise, a Japanese interest in the Russian Far East, aiming to see the natives as culturally related, without making this obvious to the Russians. Ōtsuka’s entourage was on a purchasing tour for Minpaku, Ōsaka’s ethnographic museum, buying a full complement of native artefacts and objects. They had bought 100-200+ items for Minpaku. RZ thought their intent was to prove cultural links to Japan, and speculated that Minpaku planned an Amur Native Region Exhibition in Ōsaka. He was a little peeved that he was not informed, being a ‘gaijin’, foreigner. RZ noted that money was not an object, the Japanese could pay anything the Russians or natives asked for, and demanded perfect specimens for their collection.

The artefacts were being neatly packed, labelled and listed under Japanese supervision; they included bows and arrows, animal and deer calls or bark horns, all kinds of clothing, including women's wedding gown, women's belly belt (to be compared with the Ainu), mittens etc. The artefacts they had collected were fabulous, such as a large scale boat model, beautifully made and brand new, its wood gleaming. The organization and treatment of the objects were impressive, Japanese style: each item was carefully identified, meticulously packaged in suitable covering, and inventoried in detail.

Two Russians were with the Ōtsuka entourage, one serious looking man, sturdy, with a beard, who had assisted Ōtsuka in Russia for 4 years (and looked fed up), and a woman named Melnikova who is a curator; RZ liked her and resented Irina's criticism. It occurred to me (LS) that this was a small world; too many coincidences and strange events.

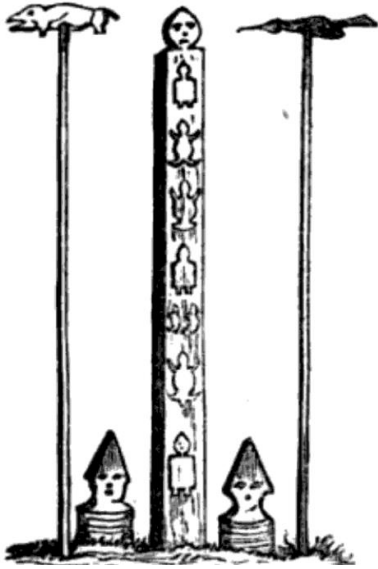
Things got interesting when each item in the collection bought by Ōtsuka was to be checked and recorded. At this time our presence as gaijin and outsiders became an issue: the old Japanese enforcer bluntly told us to leave. He did not want us to see the unpacking and registration of the heap of native artifacts, now Japanese property. But Ōtsuka let RZ stay in the room and write a memo to Ruban, anxiously checking if RZ wrote it in Russian (which RZ happily did). Melnikova brought RZ a sheet of paper for the note, and later when we left she came running after us with a pair of booklets from the Jessup Exhibition, apologizing for the way we were treated (by the Japanese) in the Director's office. The enforcer, aged 63-65, spoke some Russian besides Japanese, and was obnoxious in his bluntness, though fairly typical of this kind of behavior in Japan, when men choose to be rude: 'We have work to do here, you must leave' (shigoto ga isogeru, dete ike); and (as I was offered a chair by Melnikova): 'leave that chair for the young man, he's going to need to sit there to take notes'; (I meekly conceded). As a kind of registration, Ōtsuka's group anxiously took RZ's and my pictures; RZ said: 'like in a criminal gallery'. They needed to know who we were if our names popped up in this connection later; so somewhere in Japan there is my handsome photo in a file on ethnographic case notes.

As always with RZ things turned out more eventful than expected. Then we fell back to more touristy routines, exploring Khabarovsk. In our rambles we stopped by the 'Far Eastern People Research Library and Reading Room'; they had quite a few relevant works, but there was little time to go into the material. We also explored the fancy Intourist Hotel.

Towards the end of our stay I wrote some rambling and summative notes; too convoluted to cite in full. They included some thoughts on the Russian dominance in administration, bureaucracy, urban life, politics and more. We had met a few native and non-Russian administrators such as Mayor Kim and the woman manager of Bogorodskoe's Ulchi Museum. But the Russians take on the appearance of overlords over native interests and settlements. Of course this could be discussed endlessly, but becomes too extensive for a 'travelogue'. Similar notes were made on the economic problems and injustices facing the Russian Far East, such as a lack of native control over resources. This too could fill a treatise. Natives may try to exert some control, like the young men in Bulava; but their impact is limited. The North Koreans have built their own, exclusive town by the Amur, controlling the lumber export, and paying 1/3 of the proceeds back to Russian power-pins. Hence local Russians are barred from economic control as well. The region is ruthlessly exploited by external operators.

Then I focused on the question of native culture: This included an attempted revitalization, such as traditional marriage ceremonies and clan names being kept. Museums now show more

native culture and artefacts, less Soviet-era propaganda. At the same time the local natives are economically depressed, losing control of their land and resources, such as at Vlasevo.



Cultural expressions are disappearing. There is a fanciful drawing of Nanai totem poles by R. Maack, 1854-1860 (Ravenstein 1861: 377-8). Animals represented seem to include boar and crow; there also may be snake, bird, frog, hare, marmot, owl, eagle and beaver or bear. If the depiction is half realistic, there may at one time have been hundreds of similar poles located in native villages near the Lower Amur. Yet they are barely found today.

Animal symbolism is found everywhere, yet it is hardly ever specified in the sources. Among the Nanai and Ulchi we found indications of totems and tutelary animals such as: fish, salmon, woodcock or rooster, swan, owl, eagle, bear, badger, fox, tiger, deer, beaver, hare, sun, etc. The issue of totemism can be over-interpreted, e.g., every mention of an animal is interpreted as a totem. Yet here the problem is opposite, Russian and other scholars ignore native references to animals, seeing them as irrelevant, or making a general reference in passing, with no specifics. Ideally there should be an ‘ecology’ of natural references, where every mention by informants of animals and other beings should be specified. The opposite is the case: such mention is ignored and remains unpublished. In particular, the native wedding gowns need to be meticulously catalogued and described in a publication by an eager scholar.

On Friday, August 25, 2000, RZ and I flew from Khabarovsk to Niigata, from there taking a train to Kôbe. This was the fairly unceremonious end of our fieldtrip. On August 28 I (LS) flew from Japan to Norway, returning to work at Finnmark University College on the 30th, taking a first inventory of my material, books, photos, maps, souvenirs and more.

Fieldtrip to the Lower Amur and Maritime region in 2003

On this second trip RZ and I stayed in Russia July 21-August 4, 2003. Earlier, in 2000 I thought there would be no more research trips to the Russian Far East, since conditions were difficult and things sort of petered out. But both RZ and I were still interested in learning more about the Tungusic clans, he from the perspective of regional ethnography, and me because I needed to explore the totemic implications (Zgusta 2015). So in 2003 another trip was planned. I intended to combine my visit with some fieldwork in Japan.

Ahead of this second expedition there was some correspondence between RZ and me. One area of research that required particular scrutiny was the vocabulary of clanship near the Lower Amur, specifically the terms 'khala' and 'dokha', loosely translated 'clan' and 'clan alliance', that we had considered before but which needed a fuller analysis. RZ made a heroic effort of copying hundred of pages of source materials in Russian, Japanese, English etc., and looking for available books, in particular from the Russian publishers 'Nauk', who had an office in Tokyo. Already at the start we knew about the huge amount of sources, but had to put this on hold as our journey started, with minimal baggage and a tentative itinerary. As things turned out, we would learn more about current affairs than ethnographic details.

On July 15-16, 2003, I (LS) flew to Japan. After a few preparations such as getting visas and tickets in Tokyo, we set out for Niigata, going to the beach and looking out at the Japan Sea before flying to Khabarovsk on July 21, a Monday. We got to Khabarovsk around 8 PM, and after cumbersome Russian immigration procedures we got a taxi to take us downtown for R400 (\$13), an exorbitant price (\$1 = R30). At Hotel 'Tsentralnaya' they (as always) said 'nyet', they had no rooms, and in any case they did not rent out rooms without reservations and explicit invitations. They told us to come back the next day after 12 noon. So we went to Hotel 'Versaly', which turned out to be a tourist trap charging nearly R1500 (\$50) per night. We had little choice but to stay there. Considering the unfriendly welcome RZ had a flashback about being arrested by Russian police.

On the morning of Tuesday, July 22, we went to the Khabarovsk train station to buy tickets for Sovyetskaya-Gavany (SovGavany). Again we encountered the weird, seemingly chaotic and anarchic Russian queue system. Instead of lining up more or less in a single file, people seemed to be coming in from every direction on the floor, milling around each window, moving from one window to another, arguing and parleying about whose turn it was to buy a ticket. The women behind the ticket windows went through a series of formalities: checking (national) passports, permits and other documents that each traveler had to submit, checking their obsolete computer screens to verify data, writing a lot of bureaucratic big-brother stuff (by hand, in duplicate), until asking for a flimsy sum of rubles and handing out the ticket; a 5-page document, with stamps, hand-written notes, printed ticket info, rules, etc. So that writing each ticket took at least 5 minutes. In addition, the ticket women would argue with people applying for tickets. After standing in line for 30 minutes I discovered that there was a 'system' to the chaotic line. People would ask the person next to them to keep their place in the line, and then leave the line until their spot got near the ticket window. There also were professional ticket-standers who would walk back and forth getting tickets for other travelers. For a foreign tourist this was a nightmare. After an hour or so, RZ and I got out tickets, R644 (\$21.5) one-way to SovGavany. The ticket said 'July 23, 19:20 PM', but this actually was Moscow Time, so our train would in fact leave on July 24, 2:20 AM.

From the station we went back through the shabby 'Amurskiy Bul'var' park to Hotel 'Versaly', picked up our bags, and trudged along to Hotel 'Tsentralnaya', where we got a little after 12 noon. It was hot, close to 30° C in the shade. After lots of 'nyet, nyet' and 'nichivo' (no way), we finally got 2 rooms at R1020 (\$34). While RZ took everything in his stride, I (LS) felt exhausted. After this we went to a bookstore in Khabarovsk.

The next day, July 23, was spent in preparation for our trip. Not wanting to stay outside all day, we paid R500 (\$17) each to keep our rooms until midnight. The weather was hot, 29° C. Among other things we checked the guidebook for museums we wanted to visit: Khabarovsk Krayevedcheskiy Muzei, Sovyetskaya-Gavany Kray. Muzeum, Vanino Kray. Muzeum, Uska-Orochskaya Kray. Muzeum; together with places we would visit, such as Datta. Furthermore we discussed the conflicting data of Larkin and Shternberg on Oroch kinship, probably reflecting their own biases; the impression was of a mixed Iroquoian-Hawaiian terminology with many quirks. Larkin, who copied other scholars' material, used a mixture of words to refer to 'clan brothers' and 'clan sisters': 'dzamuka', 'hunyadi', 'tuwaka', 'puryamdy', 'hadakhta', etc. Shternberg has a completely different terminology, that he gave an 'Omaha' twist, possibly by analogy with Gilyak (Nivkh), e.g., the term 'gocho' for 'MoBrSo'. One major headache was to sort out the 6 Oroch 'dokha' or 'clan alliances' listed by Larkin, respectively headed by: khutunka, yominka, namunka, vagla, seochonko and bizyanka, presented earlier. What did these groupings represent 'on the map', and what is the relation between kin based and regional groups? All information was general and confusing. There were hints at totems such as fish, bird, cuckoo, crow, eagle-owl, aquatic-bird, tiger, animal, hare or rabbit, rock, flint or stone, river etc., which to me (LS) was fascinating, though viewed skeptically by RZ.

We had some time to go through the few printed sources we brought along. Larkin thought the 'dokha' alliance is practical, made for purposes of 'cooperation' such as fishing, hunting, warfare, court attendance, paying fines and bride-price. His Oroch speculations included 'symmetrical exogamy' or Br-Si exchange (tamumuna), levirate and stepSo-stepMo marriage. There was a quaint note on 'marital unfaithfulness'; if a Hu discovered infidelity he could beat up the culprit and slap (sorode) his Wi; but if the affair involved a breach of exogamy rules there was no punishment, and the Hu would sulk for a few days.

At midnight we grabbed our bags and left Hotel 'Tsentralnaya', trotting towards the Khabarovsk Train Station. It dawned on me that I had packed too many clothes, while RZ only had a couple of shirts and t-shirts in his little knapsack. The back streets had a shabby look, chipped blocks of concrete and musty smells. Drunk Russian men noted our passing. At one point, where we had to walk under an overpass to the road leading to the station, two cars filled with mean looking men followed us, and further down the dark road one car stopped in an alley off the dark road, where young men gathered. RZ was not perturbed. At the station we headed to a beer tent to dull our nerves and fatigue. A drunk woman came in, sat down at our table, and gave us her life story: She had been dumped by her boyfriend, and wanted us to help her call him. Her name was Tanya, age 34, educated as a schoolteacher in Nikolaevsk, but working in the Pyramid, a casino in Khabarovsk. At the next table two Central Asian men, from Azerbajdsjan or Dagestan, sat with two Russian girls; at one point a small, drunk Russian man came, uttered a racial slur and told the girls not to be with them; immediately they struck him to the floor and was gonna beat him up; the beer attendant ran over and got in between; while 4-5 Russian men at another table got up and started rolling up their sleeves, ready to fight for the Russian honor. Somehow the male attendant of the beer tent managed to cool things down; everybody proceeded drinking again.

In the end we scrambled on the train a minute or two before it left at 2:20 AM. As we found our cabin in the train, we saw that the lower bunks were occupied by a bare-chested young Russian and his girlfriend. RZ reacted negatively, viewing the masculine habit of wearing no upper clothing as disgusting, but I (LS) simply climbed into my top bunk and fell asleep.

July 24, Thursday, was a long train ride. This truly was a 'slow train'; the trip from Khabarovsk to SovGavany took 28 hours; partly because the train stopped in Komsomolsk from about 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM. We shortened our time by walking on the platform, looking at stray dogs and people milling around seemingly aimlessly, but in some cases looking for things to barter.

Finally we left Komsomolsk. RZ and I spent most of the next 7 hours standing in the corridor, looking out the window of the moving train. Once the city was behind us the scenery was one of amazing forests, valleys, mountains, gorges and rivers, with a few scattered villages along the railroad tracks. This area had been isolated until Brezhnev built a railroad in the 1970s and moved a few Russians here; but most of the landscape remained a wilderness, slowly taken over by Korean forestry and other exploiters.

At one point I started noticing that nearly all the stations had native (Oroch) names: Kun, Uktur, Kenai, etc. Stations shown on Acme Mapper are: Komsomolsk, Pivan, Gayter, Kartel, Selikhin, El'digan, Tudur, Poni, Kun, Snezhnyy, Khumma, Gurskoye, Pochepta, Uktur, Aksaka, Kenay, Udom, Oune, Kosgrambo, Novyy-Kuznetsovskij, Otkosnaya, Sollu, Vysokogornyy, Datta, Khokajti, Kenada, Dzhigdasi, Koto, Tuluchi, Akur, Tumnin, Khutu, Imbo, Uska-Orochskaya aka Ust'-Orochi, Chepsary, Mongokhto, Landyshi, Dyuanka, Toki, Chudinovo, Vanino. We probably did not stop at every small place, but it felt like it. RZ described how the railroad was built in the Brezhnev period to strengthen Russian claims to the region east of the Amur River after China declared its interests in the region. At the same time there was a drive to make Russian 'pioneers' settle along the railroad; few people were interested at first, so the government offered benefits to people who would volunteer; hence all the settlements are artificial railroad-station colonies. At the same time the native (Oroch) villages were disbanded (burned or bulldozed) and the inmates 'resettled' in villages with a Russian majority population. This policy continued till about 1980-81. Before the railroad was built, the eastern towns (Vanino, SovGavany) could be reached only by ship. Nearly all the inhabitants of the railroad villages appeared to be Russians or non-native. A little before 6 PM we stopped at a station with a native (Oroch) name, perhaps Kun; on the platform a group of people, mainly 'babushki', had gathered. As the train stopped, these women started a hefty banter with people on the train, offering cucumbers, berries and smoked-fried fish. Only 1-2 faces were native-looking, though possibly Korean. The village of 15-20 houses stretched along the N of the railroad; a Russian belle came strolling towards the train looking for nothing and no-one as the train moved on. Other 'station villages' had even fewer, 3-10 houses, one tiny station appeared to have only 1-2 houses, yet the train stopped. Later we found out that one of the main Oroch settlements is supposed to be near Kun, at the village of Snezhnyy, yet at the station nearly everybody were non-native.

The train went through a beautiful river valley, the Udomy valley; a river winding through a flat bottom with taiga-like vegetation, surrounded by wooded hills, mountains and cliffs. RZ said that the cliffs must be the holy rocks that are described in one of the books he has, worshipped by the Oroch as gods, supposedly part of the shamanic cult, and possibly also with a totemic reference to a clan's territory – or a village territory. The train continued to

climb until we reached Vysoko Gornyy (Top of the Mountain); the time was then around 10:30 PM, but because of the weird time zone in Russia (2 hours after Japan) it was still light enough to see the mountain valley sloping away beneath us; the mountain plateaus were colored purple by fields of willowherb. It was time for another night with the bare-chested Russian; I climbed into my bunk and fell asleep.

Around 6 AM on Friday, July 25, we reached Sovyetskaya Gavany. Actually the station turned out to be 'Zavyety Ilyitsa' ('Lenin's Testaments') – 40 km from SovGavany. A taxi driver offered us a ride, but RZ wanted to find a bus; I persuaded him to take the taxi.

In SovGavany it turned out to be fairly easy to get a room at the local hotel, Hotel 'Privaly'. The reason may be that there is an oil boom in the region, the rights of oil exploration in Sakhalin has been given to the Americans, and this also affects SovGavany and the east coast, as we were to find out, so that 'foreigners' are quite common, a 'daily sight' in SovGavany. My room was right above the 'bufet' and stunk of boiled meat and grease; since RZ spoke Russian he was generally given a better room at most hotels, I fretfully thought. We went down to breakfast; unfortunately I ate some rice and sausages that would give me diarrhea for the next 2 weeks. Our plan for the day was to search the town for the museum and traces of the Oroch.

In the breakfast buffet room eating at the same time as us, was a Korean man, Mr. Lee, who was from South Korea (Seoul), but now lived in Sakhalin large parts of the year and worked for a major South Korean timber-lumber company. He was in SovGavany overseeing the shipment of timber from the region, in particular pine, 'red pine', highly valued in Korea. He said he knew an Oroch girl, or rather 'half Oroch', she works at the port where the South Korean company arranges some of its lumber export. It seems all the export of timber-lumber from the SovGavany and Vanino districts is controlled by one or more South Korean companies. Mr. Lee, perhaps Lee Im-hon, told us that even though this girl, Anya, is only half Oroch, her father Russian, Mo Oroch, she knows quite a lot about Oroch affairs and people, and is eager to defend Oroch native rights; also, he said, she's quite a pretty girl and a 'good friend' or girlfriend of his. Mr. Lee said he was about to go to the port; he offered to call this young woman Anya and ask her if she would talk to us. We accepted the offer.

So around 9:30 AM, less than 3 hours after we arrived in SovGavany, we set out to meet our first native Oroch. Mr. Lee picked us up at RZ's room, and said he had a man with a car coming to drive us, a Mr. Kim, a Korean native born in Russia, who speaks Russian and poor Korean, and now works for Mr. Lee as a driver. Mr. Kim was a sharp-eyed Russianized Korean, with a desire to be a fisherman, who sat waiting for us in a white SUV outside the hotel. He said he'd prefer if it was a Korean car, but it was Japanese like nearly every other car in eastern Russia. RZ explained that Japan introduced a 'car tax' on every car older than 4 years, ostensibly to improve safety, but in practice to help the car companies, Mitsubishi and others, sell more cars. This car tax makes it virtually impossible to own or sell a car older than 4-5 years; this opens the market for Russians who buy the used cars in Japan at extremely low prices and bring them by ships to Russia; 'Pakistanis' and some 'Finns' at Wakkanai serve as middlemen in this trade in Japan. Kim scrutinized us, then drove us without much ado down the hill to the 'port' that the company used, 'Port Galina' or 'Galena'. RZ asked Mr. Kim if he was a Korean from Sakhalin, but it seems he was from Kazakhstan. The population in the Khabarovsk-Amur region seems to be 60% Russians, 10% Caucasus region (Armenians, Azerbajdjanis), 10% Kazakhs and Uzbeks, as well as Ukrainians and others, all settled here as a colonial population by Stalin and other Soviet leaders.

The port office turned out to be a small building or cabin consisting of a front room with a tea cooker and a back room with a few secretaries. Anya [age 25-28] came out on the porch to greet us, followed by a Russian woman. Anya actually was quite pretty, with the rosy cheeks of a white woman and the features of an Oroch girl, smiling and gay. The Russian woman was a babushka-to-be: squat, bulldog-faced, peroxided; pardon the non-PC description. Our Mr. Lee embraced Anya in a manner that was all but collegial (he has a wife and 3-4 children in Seoul). Then he turned to us, his arm still around her shoulders, and asked her if it was okay if we asked her some questions about the Oroch. With a smile she said, sure, if we wanted to; and invited us into the office and offered us tea. Already my (LS) problem in being an observer had started, because the conversation that followed took place almost wholly in Russian (with some English comments by Mr. Lee). RZ found much of what was said as irrelevant, except in the case of clanship and kinship information, and the shifting dialog was hard to follow. A few critical or funny comments would be translated. Also Mr. Lee's translations were useful, as he saw I had difficulty following what was said. This was from a sense of decency, since he felt I was being left out and he thought what was being said would interest me.

In the little office, the Russian woman had the innermost seat (near the back wall). She was not one for questions; a sign above her desk said: 'speak briefly, ask clearly, leave fast'. Outside of her (facing her) sat Anya. RZ and I sat in chairs along the wall near the two women; Mr. Lee partly sat, partly stood near the door of the (inner office); while Mr. Kim was outside (seeing to his car, drinking tea) for a little while before joining Mr. Lee in the office.

Anya said, she didn't know too much about the Oroch (people or culture) herself; like, she couldn't speak the Oroch language; but her Mo had grown up in a traditional Oroch family. Her Mo belonged to an Oroch 'clan' [khala] and spoke Oroch as a child, and could still understand Oroch. At one point Anya also mentioned her MoMo, an old woman who knew all about the Oroch; Mr. Lee told me that Anya had told him that her MoMo spoke Oroch fluently and would be a good informant for us; yet RZ thought the GrMo passed away.

Anya's family background seemed fairly typical for ethnically mixed families. Her Mo came from a traditional Oroch family, in fact from the biggest Oroch clan, perhaps Akunka. When young she was impregnated by a Russian man who drank vodka and didn't care much for his Oroch wife and 'half-breed' Da. But her Mo and Mo's family looked after her, and Anya got a reasonable education and subsequently could land a job, or several jobs, with the shipping companies and the port authority.

Anya told us that in the Soviet era and later in the 1990s, only fullblood natives were listed as natives (Oroch) in the official registers or censuses, while children with one Russian parent automatically were listed as (ethnically) Russians; e.g., a part of Russification. Very recently, in 2001 or 2002, this rule was changed, so that children of mixed native and Russian parentage could now register as natives (Oroch). For this reason Anya could now be registered as a member of the Oroch Native Association; but it was not certain if she had actually changed her ethnic affiliation in the official registry. (It would later appear that some 'native' associations are manipulated, even controlled, by ethnic Russians, such as for the rights to forestry and other resources).

Now Anya seemed to be leading a ‘betwixt-and-between’ existence. She clearly stated that she was interested in the Oroch, knew many Oroch (in particular in SovGavany and Savyety Ilyitsa), identified with the Oroch and wanted to help them. Among other things she was trying to learn some Oroch handicraft, such as embroidery. But at the same time she noted that the Oroch were now a displaced people; she didn’t know of anywhere where the Oroch lived in anything like a village or compact settlement among themselves. RZ here objected that he had Russian ethnographic literature from 2001 saying there were compact Oroch settlements at Datta, Uska-Orochskaya and 1-2 other places; something we would later find reason to question. Anya in her beautifully noncommitted way said that she didn’t know. As we subsequently discovered, there may have been a recent displacement of the Oroch by local Russians in these places, something Anya may have chosen not to go into, especially with a Russian audience.

In her daily life now, Anya is surrounded by Russians or by non-natives: at work, in the stores, when she goes out at night. So it is difficult for her to break away from her Russian surroundings. Even if she wants to do something with other Oroch, there may be other (ethnic) Russians who will meddle or interfere. So Anya keeps her Russian membership, rather than registering as Oroch – apparently as a safeguard against (systematic) discrimination.

Anya knows many Oroch because she takes an interest in them, and she comes from a big Oroch kin group on her Mo’s side. It also so happens that many Oroch have been resettled, either voluntarily or involuntarily, sometimes in toto, other times individually, over a long period ranging from early Soviet times via the early 1970s to today. There was a heavy relocation in the 1980s in SovGavany, and partly in Zavyety Ilyitsa as well. At one point Anya said that she thought as many as 600 or more Oroch people lived in SovGavany and Zavyety Ilyitsa, mainly relocated to Russian-controlled housing developments.

At one time, around 1986, all the Oroch living in scattered villages south of SovGavany, in the wider SovGavany District and beyond, were removed. They lived in small settlements such as Innokentyevka (Innokentyevskiy), Koppi and other places. Then they were forcibly resettled in a housing development or residential block. These were multistory apartment buildings; a few such concrete apartment blocks were set up in SovGavany. She added, even now some people visit Innokentyevskiy every year by boat to fish, but they are not allowed to live there permanently. The same thing apparently happened to all other Oroch settlements at one time or other from 1970 to today: They were disbanded and the inmates were forcibly resettled in Russian population centers. RZ interjected that this policy may go all the way back to ‘Big Joe’, Joseph Stalin.

On satellite maps places such as Innokentyevski, Koppi River (called a ‘fishing base’), Nel’ma and other places show up, but it is unclear if native people stay there. We had no opportunity to extend our travels that far.

At this point the Russian woman broke in on the conversation, and said RZ and I missed a big event, if we were interested in native peoples and Oroch culture: On June 27 there was a great People’s Festival here, in SovGavany or Vanino, in which they had a display of natives in costumes, including Oroch costumes. There were Oroch dancing traditional dances; and they had stands with native foods and handcrafts. She added, actually, this was not an Oroch festival, but it was a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Kray or region. So the main part of the celebration was taken by Russians. But it was turned into a

folkloristic event, they wanted to show ‘all the people’ living in the region; that the festival would be for all the people, so nobody would feel excluded.

The Russian office woman at first seemed favorable to our interest in the Oroch, as a quaint ethnographic regional interest; but gradually she became more critical when the conversation turned to native rights. But she tried to maintain a bilateral view, both criticizing and defending the natives, when Mr. Kim got down on them later.

Anya started giving us names of Oroch persons we might talk to, both knowledgeable old men and women, and officials, such as the leaders of the Oroch native organizations. RZ would write down some of the names, unsure how many we could locate, hoping we would meet people informally instead. He asked Anya to note some of the names and if possible call them for us to ask if they might meet us.

Anya obliged. She mentioned the leader of the Oroch Native Association, a Mrs. Namunka, who lives in Zavyety Ilyitsa; that’s where the office of the Oroch Association is. Anya seemed to be working as a secretary or volunteer assistant of the association. Another name, Mundinka or Udiminka, may have been my mishearing of Namunka. So Anya called Mrs. Namunka and explained who we were; the leader asked to talk to RZ, who tried to set up a meeting before returning the phone to Anya.

Things were about to turn bad. At this point the Russian-Korean, Mr. Kim, came in and in an angry voice told Anya to stop yapping with the foreigners and to come outside to take care of some business. Anya excused herself and went outside to see to Mr. Kim’s demands. In passing Anya told us that she only worked until 12 noon and that she later might have time to show us around. The Russian woman followed her outside before returning to her desk.

When Anya came back inside she was followed by both Mr. Lee and Mr. Kim. Anya told Richard and me that she knew an Oroch woman nearby, perhaps named Namunka, who grew up in an Oroch settlement and now stayed very near the port in SovGavany. She asked us if we wanted to meet this woman, ‘Tasya’, and we agreed. Anya made a phone call, and in a very few minutes a thin Oroch woman, pretty in her day, but strongly marked by alcohol, came to the office and took a position by the wall. Even though marked by vodka, there was a glint and a spark of resistance in this woman’s eyes and countenance.

The Oroch woman, perhaps aged 45-55, but possibly younger, was just starting to tell us something about the situation of the Oroch, that they had to leave their villages and settlements – when the Russian-Korean, Mr. Kim, interrupted her in a loud, angry voice and said the natives (‘indigenes’) were bandits, buccaneers, thieves, degenerates and drunks.

She responded tit-for-tat, by saying something similar to him, that he was a mafioso, scoundrel, and errand-boy of people who came to take the food of the natives away.

The gist of this angry exchange was that some Oroch still go on fishing trips, in rivers, bays, and along the coast to feed their families, and have obtained special permits from the regional government to fish, as a token recognition of their rights as a native people. Other groups have not obtained this right, but have to obtain ‘quotas’ to catch such-and-such an amount of fish, and permits for the ‘quotas’ are hard to obtain.

This is where Mr. Kim's bone of contention came in. As far as I could learn, he was passionately concerned with fishing. Also, if 'quotas' were transactable and hard to obtain, he may have been interested in getting into the fishing activities as a middleman between Russian and Korean actors. He was a 'fisherman at heart', by all appearances.

He told the Oroch woman, her people had no business fishing, because they didn't have any 'quotas' and hence no fishing rights. He claimed, 'you Orochon don't need any government rights to fish, because you are all degenerate drunks who will die out anyway, there is no such thing as native people (aborigenes). And who gave you the right to fish, you don't even know how to treat the fish, you don't fish – you steal, you're supposed to use the fish as food, but you bring it here to the market (on the square) and sell the fish. I've seen you sell fish, that's not allowed, it's illegal. It's not food, your children may starve but you sell the fish to buy vodka. You natives are just degenerate people who should be exterminated.' His denunciation continued, using all the nasty epithets he could think of against the Oroch woman; RZ would whisper them in my ear: 'now he said the Oroch are buccaneers'.

The Oroch woman countered in the same vein, but in a much more level voice, saying to Mr. Kim that he should be careful about not allowing other people the means to live. It was not the Oroch who stole the fish, but people like him who came there with no rights at all; he talked about 'quotas', but 'quotas' were only on paper, people who fish do not care about them. There was illegal fishing; people fished as much as they wanted, and they didn't report the fish they caught, they sold it on the black market; Mr. Kim was one of those who caught fish without permission. People catch 'ikura' and sell it without a permit; he was a liar and a scoundrel telling her that her people couldn't fish, when he poached himself. Thus she went on, RZ trying to interpret.

In the midst of this quarrel the Russian office woman tried to be a voice in between, saying that the native people should respect the rights they were given and not sell fish illegally; but people like Mr. Kim should honor the quota system and not blame the natives when the other fishermen fish illegally. Yet her voice was largely ignored.

After this venomous exchange Anya quietly whisked the Oroch woman away. When she returned to the office she tried to tell us a few more things about the Oroch; about the SovGavany Museum; about people we might talk to, and so on. She mentioned a woman who headed the Oroch living in Datta; she mentioned her mother's sister who was an Oroch from Uska-Orochskaya; etc. RZ, somewhat distracted, would try to note the names she gave him.

At this point Mr. Kim turned his attention to RZ and me, since there was no handy Oroch to yell at – Anya being his boss's friend and meeting all his vile criticism with a smile or 'I don't know' [ne znayu]. He now burst out saying we had no business asking about the Oroch. 'You say you are tourists, but you have no business asking about natives. This is not how things are done here.' He claimed that all contact with individuals has to go through official channels. 'You have to go to the administration office and talk to the officials before you can talk to any Oroch.' Mr. Kim was now taking the old 'Soviet' stance of a good Russian citizen reporting on suspicious activities by 'foreign' nationals.

RZ asked me what we should do, and I told him all we could do was to say that we are tourists and that we want to go to the SovGavany Museum to look at their (Oroch) exhibits.

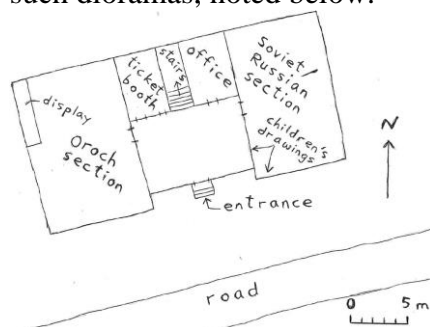
This made Mr. Kim hesitate a little bit; he wasn't sure if tourists could visit the museum; but then he said we still had to talk to the 'administratsi' to get their permission to visit the 'Krayovetsiski muzei'. At this point Mr. Lee was trying to calm down his driver.

So off we went again with Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee, to the administration building east of the port. Here Mr. Kim played the 'big guy', shaking hands with a top-notch administrator. When we were shown into the Cultural Office, and they smilingly said we could visit the museum any time we wanted, and that they would call an Oroch woman who could explain the exhibits to us, Mr. Kim rapidly became quiet and sullen. He said something like, it was good he took us to the 'administratsi' so that everything was arranged in a proper manner, otherwise we might have done something illegal.

Mr. Kim then made a point of driving us to the 'Krayoveycheski muzei' under his watchful eye, and explaining to us very carefully where it was, to make sure we didn't 'skip' our duty. He also made a point of following us inside and demanding to speak to the 'direktor'. She came, her poignant self, down the stairs, a fairly classy Russian babushka, who gave us a lofty explanation about the museum, built as a tribute to the Soviet progress, now Russia, and that they are in the process of reconstructing the exhibits; it seems most Oroch objects were either stowed away or lost. Mr. Kim in a loud voice explained to her that these 'foreigners' would come to the museum at 2 PM to be shown the exhibits (by Mrs. Akunka), and that the museum people should make sure everything was proper. The director assured him everything was in order, eager to get him out the door.

Then Mr. Kim drove us back to the hotel, seeing himself as a good guide of the Russian Federation, as if to make sure we didn't drift off to talk to any 'aborigenes'. Our friend Mr. Lee looked like he wanted to apologize for the violent behavior of Mr. Kim, but he couldn't well do so in front of the latter, and just gave us an apologetic smile. (Mr. Lee apologized to us the next morning, saying he didn't know what got into Mr. Kim, but it must have been something with the question of fishing 'quotas').

At 2 PM RZ and I were back at the museum in SovGavany and were met by 3-4 women working there (the staff seems to consist of 5-6 women with the director) – but no Oroch woman. These women followed us around the two exhibit rooms. One woman (with the air of a school mistress) had a pointing rod. First she took us to a massive statue of Joseph Stalin, and when RZ asked her when they could get rid of 'Big Joe', she didn't understand the question; she said he was a historical figure. Next were some Sovyet exhibits (sewing machines, picture of factory chimneys, etc.; Russian and state icons). Then came all the pictures on the wall, mostly made by children and showing (ethnic) Russian scenes as well as local tokens: tigers, mountains. One picture showed a scene of a (traditional) Oroch settlement, 6 huts on the bank of a river, 4 boats in the river; actually there would be several such dioramas, noted below.



SovGavany Museum (Mbak Rayonnyy Krayevedonesky Muzei)

Recent events left me extra attentive at the museum; I even made a fairly accurate sketch of the museum layout, later checked against a satellite map. Yet I still would not understand what was being said, except for RZ's intermittent translations. Probably I was still in shock from all the drama. The reader might ask why I bothered sketching a random museum; partly this was to calm my nerves and focus. But I also was fascinated by the layout; nearly all the museums we visited had (old) Soviet-Russian sections and (new) native sections; it was as if they had stowed away part of the Russian stuff to make room for native exhibits, sometimes grudgingly, making a wall, corner or minor room available for native, Tungusic displays. But here the contrast was striking, perhaps because the old house had two wings, and it was difficult to separate the two cultures in any other way. And separated they were; no museum attempted to mix Soviet-Russian and native exhibits, apparently because this would make the colonial-suppressive situation too obvious. Some places still emphasized the Russian section; but after the Soviet collapse in 1991 museums could not rely on state support, and depended on paying visitors and tourists who were fascinated by Tungusic culture. That this transition was made reluctantly was seen in several places where Soviet busts and displays took central place.

As we left this first room (or were about to leave it), our Oroch guide came. She was a woman of about 45 years, quite handsome, short but strong; she said her name was Akunka, and added that Akunka was the most populous clan among the Oroch, and that Anya (from the port)'s Mo also was Akunka. Mrs. Akunka came together with a girl of 13-14 years, who she said was the second oldest of her 4 children (ages 8 to 17); this daughter had native features, a wistful smile, looked bright and healthy, but hardly spoke a word during our visit.

Mrs. Akunka started telling us a little about the background of the Oroch people. Among other things, she told us that, before the Russians, the Chinese came here, and the Chinese were bad people, who cheated and oppressed the Oroch; taking their furs and giving them liquor. RZ asked if the Russians did not oppress the Oroch as well. Mrs. Akunka said, when the Russians came, they helped us get civilized (tsivilizatsie) – at the same time glancing at the Russian teacher. The Russian teacher interrupted, saying: thanks to the Russian people the Oroch today have obtained some rights as a native people, such as medical care and education. I asked if this right also included housing, and she said, no, not housing, but medical care and other rights.

In the other room were more pictures made by schoolchildren, but also a diorama of Oroch houses along a wall, and a table with samples of Oroch cloth ornamentation, and a stand with skis, shaman's drum, bows, arrows, and other utensils. The skis had sealskin underneath. At this point it got interesting, because Mrs. Akunka proceeded to tell us that she grew up in the kind of pole-house or platform house we could see in the diorama (shown below). This sounded slightly unlikely (the Russian teacher seemed incredulous), because Mrs. Akunka hardly seemed more than our own age (45-50). Possibly it was Mrs. Akunka's Mo who grew up in such a fishing-camp pole-house. Mrs. Akunka said, the Oroch for a large part lived in such native camps and villages from ca. 1930 to ca. 1950, in particular along the rivers south of SovGavany (Koppi, etc.), but also along the Tumnin and up north. At that time the Russians were concentrated in the towns of Vanino and Sovyetskaya Gavany, and were mainly associated with the military. After 1950 the Russian presence increased, and the first efforts to relocate (and control) the Oroch were started. Children were sent to boarding schools, and eventually most Oroch were relocated to Uska-Orochskaya, where there also was a boarding school for Oroch children (seemingly around the time the railroad was built, the

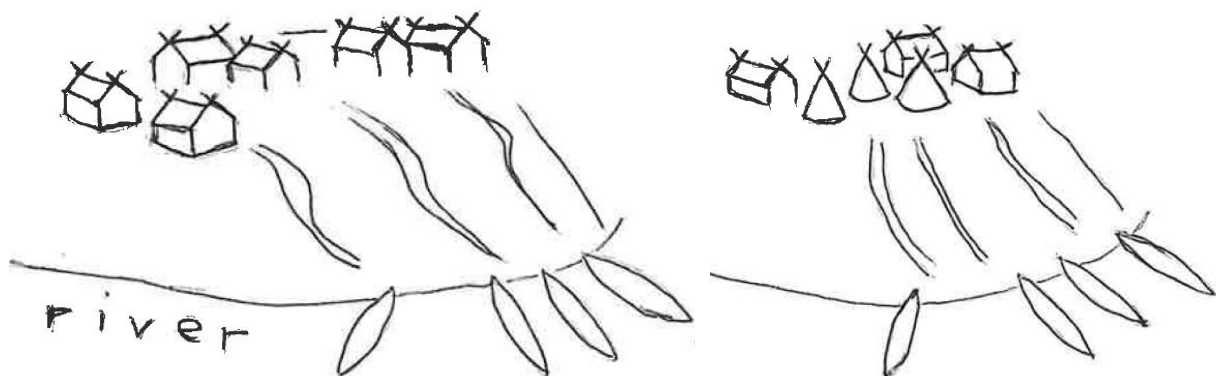
Brezhnev Era, 1970s). Apparently, the southernmost Oroch were not so much affected by this development, but around 1986-1987 the final dismantling of the remaining Oroch settlements took place, all being relocated to Russian towns and villages.

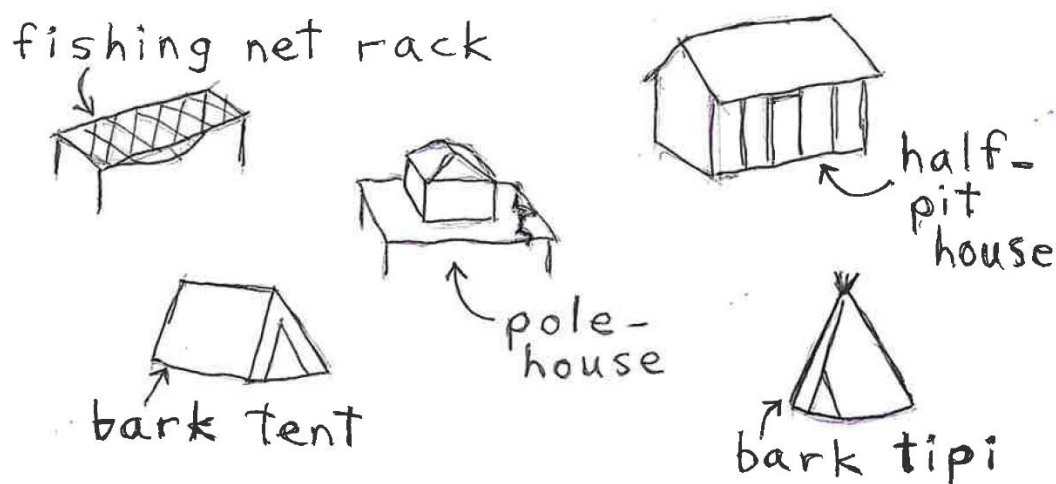
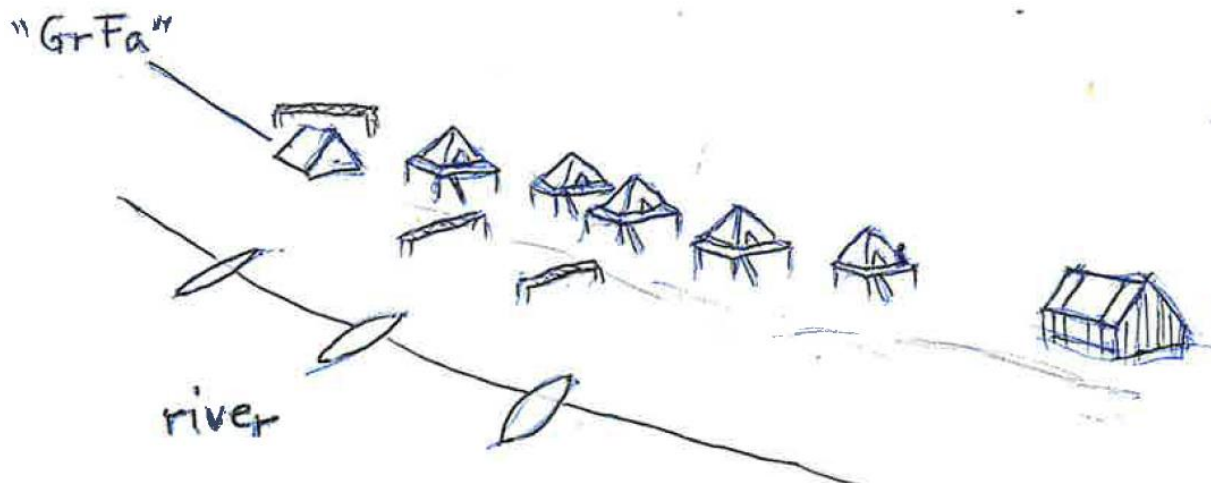
I asked how many people would be living in the Oroch settlement where Mrs. Akunka grew up (in or after the 1950s). She said, oh, she wasn't sure, maybe 30-40-45 people; she said, they had a pit house, a half-pit or semi-subterranean house at one end of the village; this was where several families could gather; it was a large house; then (in addition) each family would have a pole-house, a house on a platform raised on 4 poles; here each family would stay during most of the fishing or salmon season in summer. The platform kept them away from flies and bugs; each platform had a log staircase. And Mrs. Akunka added, the oldest member of her family, her GrFa (or GrMo) stayed in a bark tent or hunting hut, beside the family's pole-house near the river beach; this was a house where hunters or fishermen could gather (in the morning); here they also brought fish and food for the old person living in this bark tent.

Interestingly Mrs. Akunka was describing the diorama of the old village, but presenting it as her house, her family, her GrFa and so on; possibly she was present when the dioramas were made, and identified strongly with the reproductions. The purported small size of the settlement (30-45 people) could indicate that the Oroch by the 1950s had scattered out to secluded locations in order to get away from Russians and the threat of forced relocations. Yet the information need not be accurate.

RZ asked Mrs. Akunka if they kept pigs under the pole-houses; Mrs. Akunka said they kept dogs there. RZ told me, the ethnographic literature claims the Oroch had no agriculture, yet archeology has documented domesticated plants and animals; I said, maybe the region went through a general depopulation from epidemics similar to the Black Death in Europe, leading to fewer people, more game and more hunting.

On the wall, I noted another artistic drawing of an Oroch village; which the Russian teacher said had been a model for some of the children's drawings. Actually the Museum, in particular the Oroch part, had several dioramas and reconstructed models. Some craftsmen had been busy carving and assembling the models; one possibility is that the recent oil boom and American companies had brought in funds that allowed carvers, perhaps native, to make many models and earn some hard needed money. My (LS) impromptu sketches of these models are presented below.





Sketches from the SovGavany Museum

It is hard to assess how realistic the models are (or my sketches of the models); but they convey some ideas about Oroch life. The models focus on types of houses rather than the (actual) layout of settlements. One somewhat realistic model seems to be the one with 7 houses where Mrs. Akunka thought she had lived in a pole-house, with the GrFa-tent at one end and the large pit-house at the other end. It was as if the model-maker had worked on different ideas about how Oroch settlements and houses had looked, not managing to settle on one version, so including all. Hopefully he got paid for each contribution.

As for the skis and ornaments, I noted that one of the ornaments used as a clothing decoration resembled a stylized bear's head. I also noted that the shaman's drum had some lines and scratches barely showing on the surface, and asked if it had been decorated; the Russian teacher said, she had no idea, *ne znayu*.

Next RZ asked Mrs. Akunka about kinship. He asked if she knew the word 'ama', and she said, 'maybe that is papa – or mama?' RZ concluded that she didn't know, but she may just have been hesitant and safeguarding herself. I asked her about the words 'gocho' and 'gamasu', but she said she didn't know; she mentioned a word 'gatsu' that meant some kind of wooden implement.

Then Mrs. Akunka volunteered an interesting bit of information; she said, when she was a child, she could speak, or at least understand, Oroch, but she didn't take much interest in the culture, she was more interested in playing with other children. Then the Russians took her and sent her away to boarding school (perhaps in Uska-Orochskaya) when she was still a small girl (6 or 7). Here she met many other Oroch children, there would be 50-100 Oroch kids, and she would get to know all of them by name, Sasha, Anya, etc. Later, after she had been in school a couple of years (age 8 or 9) she told her parents about the kids (in the boarding school), and that's when she realized how wide or great the amount of kinship is in Oroch society. She would mention a child to her parents, and they would say that's your 'brother', that's your 'sister', that's your 'uncle', and so on. It seemed that for nearly all of the 50 or more Oroch children in her school, there was a kinship term she could use, such as 'uncle' (Russian 'dyadya'; she said she didn't remember the Oroch term). But she didn't address the other children by kin term, but only by first name, 'Anyshka' and so on, because this was what they got used to in school.

I asked if the boy she called 'uncle' was older than her, and she said, no, he was small like me (7 years to her 8). Then I wanted to ask what she would call the boy's father, if he was 'uncle' too, but RZ thought the question was too complicated. At least, Mrs. Akunka confirmed that there was a system of classificatory kinship in operation among the Oroch in the 1950s; and that the terms included collateral kin ('brother', 'sister') and matrilineal kin ('uncle' or 'dyadya', and 'MoSi', 'tata' or 'maty'); I wanted to see if the terms were extended across generations (e.g., MoBr, MoBrSo), but RZ found it hard to translate this into basic Russian.

Then Mrs. Akunka volunteered another bit of information, that RZ conceded to translate to me (after the interview): She said that, from what she had been told by her parents about her kinship to other children and to other (Oroch) people, it seemed to her that she had more relatives (kinship relations) on her mother's side than on her father's side. RZ remembered this statement because he had heard something similar in another connection; e.g., in scholarly texts.

At the museum, all the time we were talking to Mrs. Akunka, we were followed around by 2-3 of the Russian women working at the museum. They interfered when something difficult or critical was said, such as on Russian-Oroch relations. Even so, they didn't try to stop us asking for Oroch contacts, but even helped us elicit names from Mrs. Akunka of old people we might talk to. Among the people we were referred to, was the woman in Zavyety Ilyitsya, Mrs. Namunka; and the leader of another (local) Oroch association in Datta called Ljudmilla Antonovna Grizhina; and finally an old man named Anton Filipovich Namunka (or Mundinka), 73 years old. The latter was an old man, lonely, somewhat alcoholized and in poor health, but knowledgeable about Oroch culture, who lives in a 'Brezhnevka' (housing block) across from Hotel 'Privaly'.

After we left the SovGavany Museum we walked around town. There I saw the Oroch woman who came to the port earlier, 'Tasya', aka Mrs. Namunka or Ilunka. She was standing in the shade under a wall outside a store at Ulitsa Lenina or Lenin square, with 6-7 fish spread on a newspaper by her feet. With her was a young woman (in her 20s) and 2 Russian men, who looked at least as alcoholic as 'Tasya'; the young woman could be her daughter. They were waving flies away from the fish and trying to sell it to passers-by. This is the sight that may have made Kim mad; but along the walls by the square were other peddlers, all ethnic Russians or Central Asians, also peddling or bartering products: fish, vegetables, berries.

At one point RZ recalled that the taxi driver this morning was from Birobidzhan. RZ pointed out that this is a Jewish town, so the driver was Jewish, a hidden status in the Soviet era. After the journey and the events of the day we took an early night; my stomach was acting up; a problem that would last for the rest of the trip.

On Saturday, July 26, we were to talk to Mr. Filipovich, but RZ thought it was useless. Instead we went to the 'main street', Pionerskaya Ulitsa, and bought airline tickets to Khabarovsk for August 1. Also on the 'main street' we ran into a group of American 'oilies' who were here working on a supply ship as part of the US oil adventure in Sakhalin. In the evening we ate in a restaurant next to the hotel, and there ran into two of the top dogs of the 'oilies'. One of them was the boss of the operation of the supply boats, perhaps Exxon. His name was Dag Eriksen, he was a Norwegian from Seattle. The waiter dropped us at their table because we were all 'foreigners'. They looked like they might object, but were also amused, and listened to our visit to the Oroch with marginal interest. Their main concern was to get as much oil as possible out of Russia as cheaply as possible, with as little hassle from the Russians as possible. Their staple drink was whiskey. On Sunday, July 27, RZ planned a trip to Vanino, but I was sick. We walked around like vagabonds in a nation of drunks on the Lenin square near the hotel.

Finally, on Monday, July 28, we walked up 'main street' past the rows of Stalinka, Krustchevka and Breshnevka 'styles' of housing blocks to catch the buss to Vanino at 12:20. Around 2 PM we got a room at Gastinitza 'Vanino'. My impression was that Vanino was divided into a 'new' or main part stretching from the port up on a hill, with a main street, going past some housing blocks and an outdoor market below; and an 'old' or adjacent part to the south on another hill, that actually seemed picturesque and panoramic. Here we located the local museum, but it was closed. The Vanino harbor is totally dominated by numerous lumber yards and mostly Korean lumber ships. The outdoor market was interethnic, with Uzbeks, Azerbajdjanis, Koreans, Russians, Ukrainians, etc.

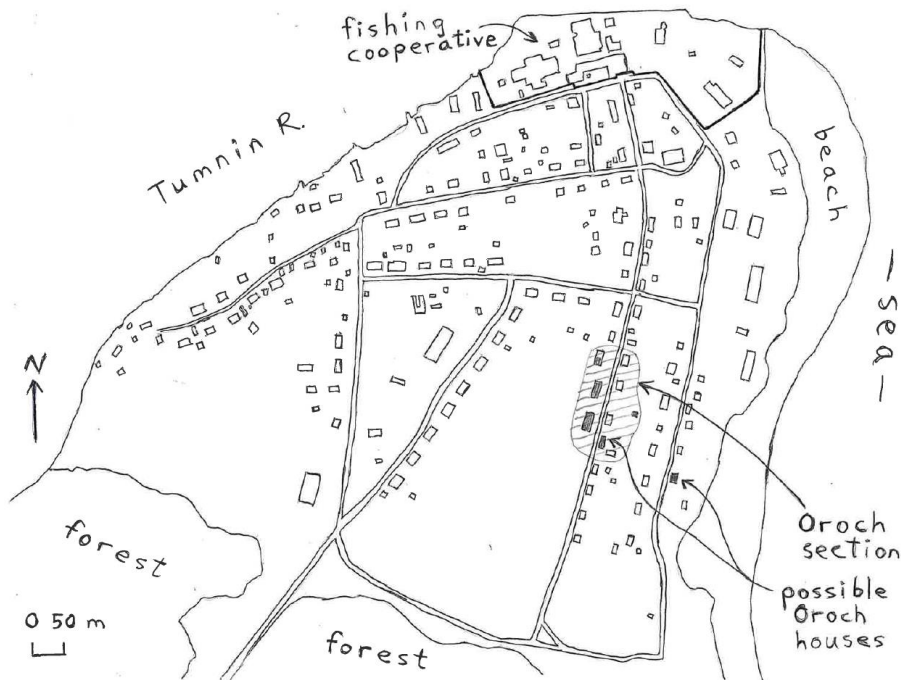
There was a Russian bookstore on the main road up the hill in New Vanino, where us two foreigners raised considerable curiosity. Later, at a kind of market place near the railroad tracks, we saw a group of Russian men grabbing hold of some Korean sailors, and managing to drag one behind a shed while his comrades simply walked away; at the very least he would get robbed. What was significant was that nobody reacted to the scuffle, everybody just walked on, even his mates. A strange place – and somewhat scary.

The next day, Tuesday, July 29, we tried to contact Ljudmilla Antonovna Grizhina in Datta, but could not reach her; she may have been in Uska. We went by bus to the village of Datta, north of Vanino. This place – Datta is an Oroch place name – has been portrayed in recent Russian ethnographic literature as a 'concentrated settlement' of Oroch people, and we had some expectations of meeting Oroch people when we got there. For the first few hours we didn't see any Oroch, except one middle-aged woman walking from a store and a woman and boy leaving a house near the beach. The place was totally controlled by ethnic Russians: the fishing cooperation was run by Russians, and there were signs prohibiting 'private' persons from entering the beach.

Only later, when we talked to a young woman store attendant, did we get some information. RZ asked her if there was a museum. She said, 'there is no museum, and no theatre, no art gallery' – with an ironic smile and coquettish shrug of her shoulders. Then RZ asked if she

knew where the natives, the Oroch, were staying. She said, there are some, not many, and made a vague motion with her hand over her shoulder.

What we found were a few Russian-style boarding houses, made of wood, each with room for 6-8 families, fairly in the middle of the village, surrounded on all sides by houses with Russians; also some of the people living in the barracks were Russians; beyond this a few houses nearby were inhabited by Oroch. Across from one barrack was a wooden house, where a middle-aged native woman, worn by alcohol, midget-like came toddling out of the house; next, a middle-aged native man, equally drunk and worn, came shuffling to the house, barely getting the gate in the fence open, and greeted by a hungry polar dog inside. He was followed by an alcoholic young man, half Russian and half Oroch, presumably their mixed son; he briefly glanced at us before carefully going inside. Other Oroch entered or left the barracks and a few of the nearby houses, mainly women and children. It was a dismal scene, and we literally didn't talk to anybody. The streets and any other public spaces were completely dominated by ethnic Russians, as was the beach and local fishing. My estimate was that 50-60 Oroch lived in Datta, surrounded by hundreds of Russians. Ms. Grizhina, head of the Oroch Association in Datta, may be Russian, RZ thought.



Datta

With low spirits we returned to Vanino. There is not much more to say about this day. It is possible we ended up in a bar and talked to some 'oilies' who may or may not have commiserated with us. As the comedian would say: who feels sorry for a 40-year-old man?

On Wednesday, July 30, we made a new attempt to reach an Oroch settlement. RZ claimed that the second settlement promoted in recent Russian ethnographic literature as a 'concentrated settlement' of Oroch people, a place called Uska-Orochskaya, would be different from Datta and would have a large number of Oroch people. Among other things, Uska-Orochskaya had a boarding school reserved for native people where the Oroch language is supposed to be taught, and it has its own museum managed by the Oroch themselves, according to the literature. Furthermore, Uska-Orochskaya is supposed to be the center of Oroch activism. So this definitely would be a different experience.

Our first problem was finding a way to get to Uska-Orochskaya. The map showed a road leading to the settlement, but when we asked local taxi drivers in Vanino they laughed at us and said there was no way they would take us there, the road was so poor you couldn't go there in an ordinary car; they could ask some acquaintance with a 4WD to take us there, but the price would be R6000 (\$200). This kind of heightened my hope that the place actually was an isolated Oroch settlement; while lowering my hope of getting there. Then one of the taxi drivers casually added, you could go there by train, there's a local train that runs twice a day. Even though we had asked about this at Vanino Station, the people there said they didn't know, ne znayu.



Uska Orochskaya (taken over by Russians) (based on Google Maps)
 -Most public services, such as the Administration and hospital, seemed not to be in operation.



Part of Uska-Orochskaya (Bing Maps)

At 8:30 AM we got on the train that took us to Usty-Orochy (R25 (\$0.86) or so). When we got off, after some beautiful views of the Tumnin River, it turned out that the station was a lumberyard. Every person we saw as we got off the train, and as we walked past the lumberyard and through the village, was a Russian or non-native. So we kept on walking until we got to the end of the village. Near the upper end of the village I noticed a few native faces, including an elderly couple, at 2-3 Russian-style wooden houses. Unsure what to do we followed a lumber road into the forest, partly to get higher up so we could get a view of the village, and partly to see where it led, if there possibly might be a camp or house with natives; but all we encountered were big Russian lumber trucks going for timber higher up along the river, Khudyami. This should have given us an inkling that the Oroch reserve had been taken over by Russian lumber interests. The road was hot and dusty. We soon returned to the end of the village.

There, near the river, as we approached a compound with a house (marked 1), we were greeted by a pack of loose dogs, and RZ felt uneasy as they growled. A woman (age 27-33) appeared from the house and walked towards us, scolding the dogs, and asked us who we were (in a friendly way). We told her we were tourists, and asked her what people lived in the village. She said most of the people were Russian settlers or 'pioneers' like herself and her husband. Then we said that we read that there were supposed to be natives called Oroch living in the village. She said, there were no natives (aborigines); there may have been natives called Oroch living there, but they disappeared. Anyway the natives didn't want to be natives, they wanted to be Russians, to live like Russians, and in order to do that they went away. She added, actually there were Oroch living in the village, until a few years ago (2-3 years ago). She and her husband moved here fairly recently (6-7 years ago – 1996-98), and at the time they took over this house, which belonged to an Oroch family or old man who drank himself to death; so back then there were Oroch in the village.

She said, the Oroch were ashamed (studno), ashamed to be natives (aborigenes), and so they drank, and because they couldn't take the alcohol like the Russians can, they all died from drinking vodka. The Russians tried to help them; but the Russians can stand vodka much better, the Russians eat plants (crops) that help them stand vodka; while the natives all died. The natives came from a weak breed, they were dying out, they had very few children and the few they had they couldn't take care of, so the children died also or were sent far away, to boarding schools or orphanages. So the Russians had to move in and take care of things, such as houses, schools, the forests; while the natives drank, became decimated, and died out every one. Today, she said, there were only 2 or 3 houses in the village that were occupied by natives. This we interpreted as Oroch; later we learned that also Evenki and/or Negidal were in the village. Depending on the interpretation, there could be anywhere from 5 to 35 Oroch now living in Uska-Orochskaya.

We had several objections to the woman's account. She related all of this very matter-of-factly, though a little apologetically: how the Russians moved in some (6-7) years ago and later, up until 1-3 years ago, to 'help' the natives, who were dying from drink and degeneration, but (alas) the Russians could take vodka much better than the natives, so today there are only Russians left in the village. This sounded like a rehearsed story.

We said, we read somewhere that the natives, the Oroch, had been granted hundreds of square kilometers of land by the government as their hunting territory, and how could they hunt if they didn't live here; or did perhaps the Oroch now live in hunting camps in the forest? She

smiled (wistfully) and said: All the hunters are Russians. The Oroch men do not know how to hunt; they forgot all about hunting long time ago, and they drink. Russian men are strong, they know the woods, they can handle guns, so all of the hunting around here is conducted by Russians. No native can hunt, they don't know how to do it even if they were allowed to. But Russians do all the hunting.

We asked about the rights to the river areas that the Oroch were given, and she said: the Oroch are not here to take care of that land; they cannot handle themselves, they are helpless. So we Russians have to do everything for them. There used to be an Oroch Association, but this organization now was managed by her husband, who was an ethnic Russian and 'pioneer'. She said, my husband now is in Geneva 'on behalf of the Oroch' to see about or to make a petition about those lands (the hunting territory reserve) and to make sure the rights of local people are not violated. In effect, she said the Russians moved into the village and took over the houses and resources of local Oroch, using vodka as a tool or excuse to get rid of the natives; and they also took over the Oroch association and institutions in order to exploit the local resources.

I (LS) wondered why the woman talked like this, so blunt, extensively and revealing; one impression was that she was bored, and a little horny. But also she talked like backwoods racists would, like rednecks, and it seems that this was talk and versions that had been going around, probably voiced by her husband among others. If what she said was true, her husband had gone to Geneva on behalf of the Russians to petition for a 'local' use of the land, e.g., by ethnic Russians. The word that sprang to mind was 'pogrom', the chasing of minorities from a village, originally applied to Jewish villages taken over by Russians in the 19th century.

A little alarmed RZ and I set out to look for the Oroch boarding school. We found what looked like a school and boarding house with 8-10 children sitting outside. At first we thought they were native children, but they all turned out to be (ethnic) Russians. Their hair had been shaved, and their faces were dirty, so from a distance their ethnicity was not clear.

We entered the school building and looked around inside. The rooms we could open had been stripped of all movable objects, completely robbed; on the second floor we saw a set of picturesque murals showing Oroch bear hunting, tents and houses, in the process of being painted over.

As we came back downstairs, a woman opened a door to what looked like (and was) the school office, and asked us what we were doing. We said we were tourists, and that we were looking for the Kraynoveysiski Muzei. Her expression changed from one of apprehension to one of interest: oh, you are tourists, foreigners (inostrantsi). Quite friendly she showed us into her office (which turned out to be one of very few intact rooms) and offered us a chair. She took the time to tell us about the school: She said, there actually were native and Oroch children in the school, about 20, but they were now away at some kind of summer camp in the region, and since the native children were away, they now used the school for the local (Russian) children; so that the Russian children would have a place to eat and enjoy some comfort without straining their parents' time and money. She also claimed that some of the local children at the school now in the summer were natives, though we hardly saw any.

She also told us about herself, she was from Kazakhstan (age 37-45), educated as a veterinarian. When Kazakhstan became 'open' in 1989, the Russians gradually started leaving the state, even if they comprised the majority of the population in northern Kazakhstan.

Because she couldn't get a job, she and her husband left Kazakhstan, and finally ended up in Uska-Orochskaya when she was 'offered' the job as head master at the boarding school. I'm sure she said she had this job a little more than a year, but RZ claimed she'd been here 16 years; perhaps 16 months. RZ made it clear he had no interest in what she said.

Then she called a woman who would show us the museum. Before that, we talked about the local Oroch. She gave the same story that we had heard before: Uska-Orochskaya did have natives called Oroch living in it; but now nearly everybody here were Russians. What happened was, the Oroch couldn't take care of themselves, and drank themselves to death, nearly every one; or: nearly every one of the local Oroch died from drinking themselves to death. She described how everyone, men and women, children and old people, drank vodka and finally died from alcohol and exposure. Seemingly very few survived this ordeal; and the few who could left the village for places like Vanino, SovGavany and Zavyety Ilyitsa. Now only a very few people, an old man, an old woman, maybe an alcoholized couple, stayed in the village; but even these were not Oroch, they could be Evenk or Negidal.

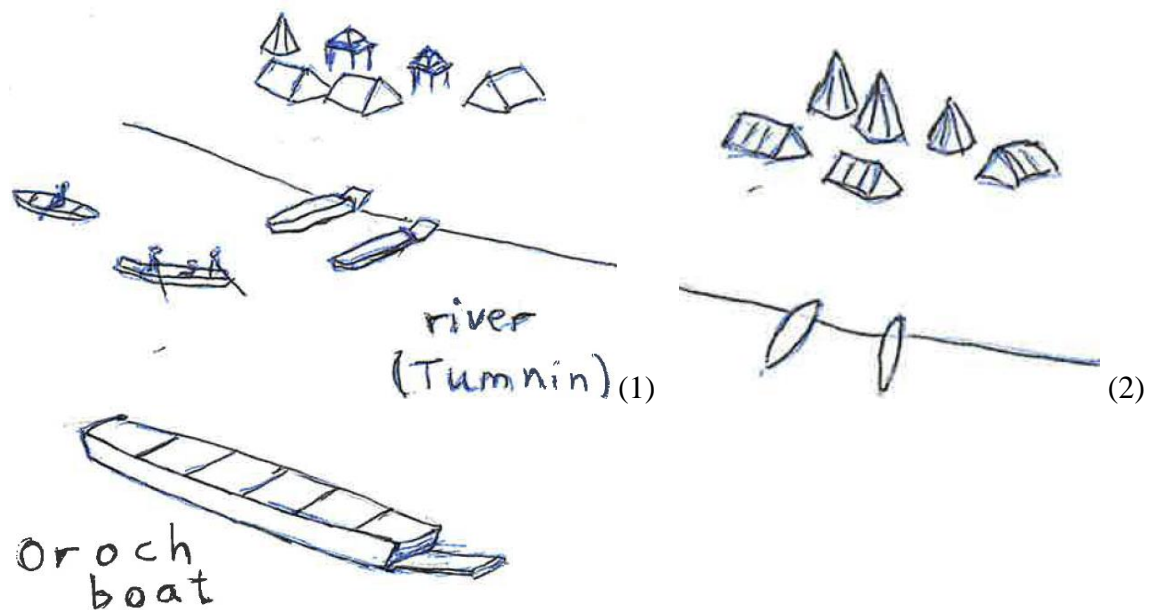
Part of the reason why the Oroch stayed in Uska-Orochskaya, was that a boarding school for the native peoples was established here. This made it very convenient for the local Oroch, who could leave their children in school, while the parents got free time, that they mostly spent in drinking vodka. She claimed that, the Oroch forgot how to take care of children, the parents couldn't take care of their own children, not a single pair of Oroch parents could take any responsibility for children. So the boarding school in practice had to take full responsibility for the children; native children in effect became orphans with the full charge left to the boarding school in teaching, feeding and raising them. Then (a few years back) something happened that she said she wouldn't go into; the Oroch adults started dying, until all of them were either dead or had moved away, very few remaining today in the village and they too alcoholics; they all drank themselves to death. At the same time, Russians moved in and took over the homes of the Oroch, 'to help the Oroch'. But, she said, the Oroch are primitive people, they have no 'immunity', which means that they couldn't tolerate vodka or alcohol. The Russians have a resistance to alcohol in their blood, that they get from plants (food), and Russians are strong; so the Russians could handle vodka while the natives all died from drinking alcohol.

There is a curious similarity between the story of the school master and the 'pioneer' wife, such as Russians tolerating alcohol because they eat 'plants' as 'food'. If many natives died from drinking vodka, this would indicate that the liquor was poisonous or poisoned. The stories were unreal and depressing.

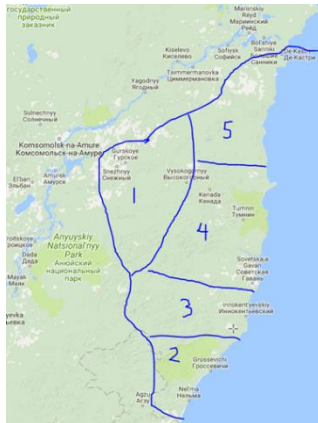
A woman appeared who would show us the museum. She was a typical Russian 'babushka': stocky with a dog's face and shrewd eyes, aged ca. 65; an old school-teacher. The museum turned out to be a room in the school building, locked with a padlock, narrow and long like a storage room or cellar; with windows on one side. Here the Oroch exhibits and artifacts were in the back of the room, while the front was dedicated to the history of Russian colonization and Soviet civilization, and one side of the room was dedicated to the Second World War. RZ had little interest in translating the old teacher's tedious prattle; she went on about the Soviet empire's proud achievements and brave defense. She used a pointing rod, as did the woman in the other museum in SovGavany, and started out with a wall chart near the door portraying Soviet history in a fairly rote form: The victory over feudal slavery, building factories, railroads, World War II, and so on; most local casualties in WWII seemed to be Oroch men serving in the Soviet Army at places like Stalingrad, etc.; she hardly noted this. Gradually she

worked her way around. The Oroch exhibits were in the back of the rooms and along one of the long walls. Here her presentation became much more haphazard, noting carvings, bark vessels, etc.

Among the exhibits I noted more skis, Oroch dresses, and a diorama that included boats and an Oroch camp. The boat models were interesting, since the Oroch ‘big boats’ had a ‘neolithic’ shape with raised prows; they also had ‘small’ dugouts. Another interesting feature was a model of a camp (1) and a hunting camp (2).



She picked up her pointing rod and told us that the native Oroch territory at one time was divided into 5 ‘districts’:



1: Snezhnij (W of mountains); 2: Innokentyevski, or rather, Nel'ma; 3: Kopp; 4: Tumnin-Datta; 5: Dekasty or De-Kastri (N of Tumnin)

RZ, upset like me, called her talk nonsense, paying little attention. Suddenly a man and two children, all Russian, came into the room; a man of 39-40, boy of 10-12 and girl of 13-14. It turned out they were the son and grandchildren of the babushka teacher, and she wanted them to meet us and take a picture together with us ‘foreign guests’. We also had to sign the guest book she kept.

After this seance, our emigrée headmaster invited us to have lunch with the children in the boarding house. The children had to line up, greet us, and wait for us to be fed first, though

they were clearly hungry. Some 12-15 children were present who looked Russian, except for 2 boys who may have been native, but who didn't eat with the Russians. As we were eating, a Russian babushka (age 45-50) suddenly appeared from the corridor and gave the headmaster a solid scolding for letting 'inostrantsi' eat there. A verbal altercation followed, in which the headmaster dexterously led the babushka into the corridor and out of immediate earshot. We decided to leave quickly, in the corridor the emigrée headmaster said goodbye cheerfully as ever, while the irate babushka glowered at us from a doorway; perhaps a school matron or cook. My impression was that the angry babushka didn't want 'foreigners' to see how the boarding school was being used by local Russians; but she may simply have resented our eating the children's food.

Among other things, I asked the headmaster about the extracurricular Oroch language class that supposedly was offered at the boarding school. She said, the teacher, a native woman, Marya, died about 3 years ago (e.g., 1998-2000), and there had never been a class since; she herself had never bothered with it.

It seems like everything happened ca. 1996-2001: the natives 'drank themselves to death', including the language teacher; and the Russians took over their houses. What we learned was that earlier there was a Russian village nearby, Ushka-Russkaya, east of the Tumnin River, who thought their location was not so good but mostly wanted the Oroch resources. So at one time they simply moved across and took over the Oroch village; they got into the forest business and the lumber trucks started coming. This was very much like a 'pogrom'; surreal and depressing to hear about.

A 'mini-pogrom' had taken place in Ushka-Orochskaya. The babushka-teacher who showed us the museum told us that she took over the job only a few years ago (2-3 years), that she used to live in Ushka-Russkaya on the other side of the Tumnin, but now lived in Ushka-Orochskaya with her family. Hence the school, or parts of the school, may have been run by Oroch people, with language classes in Oroch, activities for the children such as crafts classes, as well as the museum with its Oroch exhibits; not to forget the native mural paintings, now about to be destroyed. But after 2000 any Oroch employees in the school are gone and Russians have moved in both with teachers and children.

What I think has happened is as follows: In the 1990s the Russian Government became 'sensitive' to native rights; the Oroch successfully managed to be awarded more than 700 km² of hunting territory between 1991/92 and 1996/98. The Russians in Uska-Russkaya resented this and protested, but the land was awarded anyway. The Russians in Uska-Russkaya then realized that they were in a disadvantageous situation, on the 'wrong' side of the river; the bridge was decaying. And sometime around 1996-2000 they quite simply moved in and 'took over' the Oroch settlement. Their tools were threats, violence and bad vodka; it is difficult to say no to Russians offering vodka, since they consider this rude. If what the informants say is true, that nearly every Oroch in Uska-Orochskaya died from drinking alcohol, then the sinister possibility presents itself that the Oroch were given poisonous alcohol, like methanol or a solvent, by their Russian neighbors; though more likely violence was used to force the Oroch out. It was a pogrom-like 'mini-ethnic-cleansing'. Reading this now it seems cruel and absurd; yet it seems to be what happened. Apparently the Russian takeover had been noted by the authorities, as all public offices then closed.

We waited for our return train at the station; walking around a bit, but mostly sitting there. One truck loaded with timber drove down to the lumber yard in Uska-Orochskaya every 5

minutes or so. RZ said he told the emigrée headmaster that the first woman we met said the forest might be gone in 10 years; the headmaster said, she thought it would be gone in 2-3 years. They claimed the lumber yard was Russian, but probably it was all directed by South Koreans; similar to the complex arrangements of Russian and Korean lumber, export and import companies noted elsewhere.

At 3:30 PM we (with relief) boarded a train back to Vanino. On the way we were pestered by 2 drunk Russian vagabond fishermen, on their way back to town, who insisted we drink vodka with them. One, particularly obnoxious, Mikhail, age 33-35, had been to Japan several times to buy used cars; he said the middlemen selling used cars to foreigners in Japan were all 'Pakistanis', except in one place, Wakkanai, where they were 'Finns'. He told us what he thought about Pakistanis – he would shoot them, but Finns were okay. The other man, Volodya, age 36-43, kept pestering RZ about the natives: 'Why do you want to meet natives (aborigines)? Aren't we Russians good enough for you?' And: 'What are you gonna do with the aborigine if you find one? Pat him on the head?' We were glad to get off in Vanino, but Mikhail insisted on following us to the hotel and asked that we buy him some beer, which we did. Mikhail took an interest in me being from Norway; perhaps he was of Finnish ancestry; he wanted to follow me to the hotel and talk; but I was in no mood for conversation.

On Thursday, July 31, I took store of our travels. The rest of our stay in the 'Russian Far East' may be described as an anticlimax. The Oroch now appeared to us as totally broken people, who subsided miserably on the fringes of Russian towns and settlements. The man, Volodya, told RZ he thought the Oroch had been given land near Lake Muchke, N of Vanino, because he had seen some 'natives' there and the government would probably build them 'nice houses'. So RZ and I naively went there, but all we saw was forests and garbage along Lake Muchke, and we finally arrived at the conclusion that he had probably seen Korean workers building a new lumber terminal and railway section; or he was pulling our leg. Even if given land the Russians would control the area, like Volodya. In dismay we walked back to Vanino.

In the afternoon of July 31, RZ and I visited a museum in 'old' or outer Vanino, which turned out to be fully dedicated to a Russian nationalist painter, Rerikh, with not a single native item. Still the visit was kind of interesting, because the manager, a sympathetic man around 40, complained about the 'nomenklatura', old Party and KGB oligarchs, who controlled (almost) everything in Vanino and made life hard for him because he was partly independent. Going towards the museum we noticed graffiti on the house-walls in 'old' Vanino: 'smyerty krasnum', 'kill the Reds'. This graffiti was painted on assorted house walls. We went several times as the museum was closed, until it opened by our request. RZ thought some of the graffiti predated Glasnost (some of it had been removed or painted over, but could be gleaned). In other places the graffiti was new, 'Kill the Reds', and RZ said this is because the Communist nomenklatura kept power and control even after 1991, through corruption, mutual contacts and the secret police; so there is no change, and people from the old 'bourgeois' part of town still has a grudge against the 'commies'.

All this can be concluded with a note on the natives: It seems that the Oroch have lost control of their areas; they live surrounded by Russians who control fishing and lumber; this control extends, mafia-like, to local activities, such as keeping the old 'cooperatives' alive without any formal permits, like at Datta. The active companies are foreign, such as Korean lumber shipping, Japanese forestry imports, and Chinese liquor chains. And last but not least: The rights to exploit Sakhalin oil fields have been given to a US company. The Russians are reverting to a stage of dependence, a kind of serfdom. All they need is a new tsar, or some

more vodka. Reflecting on this in 2023, it would seem they got what they wanted, and warfare to boot.

On Friday, August 1, RZ and I flew to Khabarovsk from the small airport of SovGavany, leaving the Pacific Coast behind. By August 1 we had colds as well as other disorders: diarrhoea, fever, headache, etc. In Khabarovsk on Saturday, August 2, we visited the museum and some bookstores. Some maps and books were bought; otherwise the time was spent in walking around town until our departure for Japan on the 4th.

Some random notes were: There was a mention of 'Urururan' and of Chukchi people 'crying' on Gilbert Island; this was a recent report on the Chukchi, who apparently had a hard time with the Russians, much like American Indians had with the Americans. RZ made a comment on the 'tree of life', noted earlier. RZ noted that Russians were forbidden to settle east of the Amur till ca. 1910, as were the Chinese, due to a Sino-Russian Treaty. Later the region was overrun, leading to today's situation. A frustrated reflection was that the East should be given to China or to Orientals; because the Russians can't manage anything. A visual proof was the new and fancy vodka stores run by the Chinese along the Amur. An indication of the Oroch tragedy are current populations estimates; one source noted 1400-1500 people, while an official survey gave 259 people (in 2003). The loss of people is a warning cry.

On August 2 and 3, RZ and I visited the Intourist Hotel in Khabarovsk, observing a board on the wall listing attractions people could visit. They included Sikachi Alyan priced at \$100-130 per person; a visit to Bogorodskoe with a presentation of Nanai dances at the same price; and performances of native dances priced at \$80-110 per spectator. All other attractions were 'Russian', such as a: 'Visit to Kossack farm', with meal served, at \$35 per person.

Finally, on Monday, August 4, 2003, RZ and I took a plane from Khabarovsk to Niigata. The mixed, confusing and worrying impressions lingered. A few weeks of fieldwork in Tokyo, Japan, would take my (LS) attention elsewhere.

So what did we learn on this trip? We learned that the Oroch face unspeakable challenges in their minority situation. Their rights to land and resources are not respected, and are taken by Russians who even take their homes. The 'opening' of Russia after 1991 was a disaster to many peoples, as Russians aggressively asserted their domination while accepting payoffs from foreigners looking for natural resources to exploit. Hopefully the situation will improve in the future when Oroch people again can learn their own language and practice their own pursuits. Till then all we can do is record what goes on and work towards rectifying what is wrong.

Fieldtrip to Hokkaidô in 1993



Travel route in southern Hokkaidô 1993

I had long contemplated a visit to the Ainu settlements in Hokkaidô, but it was not until 1993 that I finally had an opportunity to go there. The following are some of my notes from the trip. The language at times may sound stilted, as I wrote part of the notes in Japanese. As always my preparations were poor. On top of this I suffered a prolapse at the start of the trip, which made the journey painful. Unless otherwise stated, all the people I met were (ethnic) Japanese.

My trip went via Heathrow on June 24, 1993, to Tokyo on the 25th. Much of the fieldtrip was aimed at doing research in Tokyo, a continuation of my doctoral studies (Selstad 1998b). What little I will include about this is that people I talked to felt that Japan was changing, due to economic difficulties and growing social problems. The wealth and stability that people had taken for granted seemed to be coming to an end.

After nearly three weeks of Japanese fieldwork I hopped on a train at Ôsaka Station on July 14 heading for Hokkaidô. On the ride I looked at the landscape near the Japan Sea, musing on how ‘universal’ the view became as night fell: gleams from windows, trucks driving, shadows of trees and mountains. Uncharacteristically the train was delayed 80 minutes by rain. Fellow passengers talked about the loss of Japanese traditions, such as native festivals. Finally we left Aomori and was approaching the tunnel to ‘the promised land’ Hokkaidô on July 15.

I came down to earth when arriving at the rainy station of Yakumo, where a Japanese man (giving me a critical look from the entrance) had come to fetch me in a van to an out-of-the-way Japanese inn (ryokan, onsen). There was a slight earthquake at 4:47 PM. Hokkaidô still has the air of a ‘colony’: houses without cultural personality, wide fields and junk car lots, but also a lot of green and scenery. I noted military helicopters; subsequently I saw on TV that

they had come in connection with an unfolding disaster; what became known as the Okushiri earthquake and tsunami. By 6 PM the TV noted 122 people killed or missing; at 9 PM given as 126 dead and 85 unaccounted for. On Okushiri those affected perhaps also were in part Ainu; 10 dead were noted there. Typically the Japanese authorities would downplay the disaster; the numbers would increase later.

I found myself in a Japanese inn, guests wearing slippers and a sulphuric onsen connected to a common bath. My notes at this time became wholly Japanese, a continuation of my earlier fieldwork, and will be passed over here. The room cost ¥6,500 (\$54; \$1 = ¥120); this included breakfast and a lavish dinner. I found the place very reasonable. A girl in Ôsaka had told me that Hokkaidô is expensive, but this may be a southern prejudice.

‘Today it has been raining all day long. I had hoped for sunshine, so that I could get around easily. The cold weather instead has given me a sore throat. On TV the forecast for tomorrow is rain. My room stinks of roachkiller and disinfectants; while the water smells of sulphur.’

On Friday, July 16, I walked around Yakumo, to ‘get the feel of the land’. First I went to the town center, to a bookshop near the station, and to the library. The librarian asked me why I wanted to see a book about Yakumo; so I told her I’m travelling and interested in tourist stuff. She brought me some books, but they contained extremely little about the local Ainu, in particular the newer books and recent history.

The following are some notes from the local history books: When the first Japanese settlers came around 1878 there was a great Ainu town at Yakumo, a native ‘population center’. The district had 500+ Ainu inhabitants, like a grand village. By 1881 the Japanese settlers wanted to leave because rice grew poorly; but one settler refused to leave, so they all stayed. The settlers set up a guard post in the valley with the Ainu not allowed S of this post. By 1882 Ainu children were brought in to teach them Japanese. This became the start of a Japanese school, and then more institutions, as the town rapidly grew around 1890. After that the Ainu were pushed completely out. There was an ecological boundary; once the Japanese discovered that they could grow rice on the plains, the Ainu settlement was doomed, and they were chased away. After that the native population vanished from Yakumo history books. One exception is place names, such as Yûrap, ‘hot springs river’. Another exception would be natural resources, such as herring being a local Ainu staple; possibly a totem. Otherwise the Ainu are never noted; as my colleague RZ commented, they would have a totally hidden identity, as in most of Hokkaidô, afraid to be sanctioned by their Japanese neighbors. Yet to the degree they look physically different they are still discriminated against.

After this frustrating study I walked to the Yûrap River, across some fields to a farm in Hiraiwa or Tateiwa. On the way I saw a fox, quite a big one, crossing the field before me, not visibly scared. The farms are a sort of European-American and Japanese amalgam; not really well run, but intensively exploited. All farms would advertise ‘certified Holstein’ cows. I saw men on tractors wearing white gloves; and an obasan (old woman) out weeding, Japanese style. My walk took me up to the next bridge and beyond; but I saw virtually no one besides road workers and cars. A friendly dog came up to me near one farm. It was an interesting breed, a bitch, yellowish-light brown; possibly descending from Ainu dogs. Going back past more farms S of the river, I decided to hitch a ride back to town. The man who picked me up was a Japanese farmer. His new Japanese car stunk of cows. He asked me how I like it here. I said I was tired from traveling. This reflected my situation, having a sore throat and back, walking alone, and not seeing any Ainu or other people that I could talk to.

Anyway I got a feel of the width of the area. It must have been quite primordial before the colonization. The highway near the hotel clearly is a major thoroughfare to Sapporo, lines of trucks passing by. Also there were frequent freight trains on the railroad tracks.

On TV at 9 PM they announced 156 dead and 117 missing from the recent earthquake; the initial official underreporting is typical in Japan. Nationalism is seething under the surface, such as on TV at 10 PM: 'From now on let's play 'Wa-fuu' (Japanese) style!' The advert showed a picture of Tsukudajima, my old fieldwork location, with high-rises in the background; but rather than focusing on cultural preservation, the message was about the Japanese style blending into the modern! While watching TV for 3 hours there were 2 earthquake messages in Hokkaidô, both force 2; another earthquake was announced at midnight.

On Saturday, July 17, I got up at 9; had a natto (fermented beans) and nori (sea weed) breakfast. Found out that a train was leaving at 12:34 noon, so I asked to hang around till noon. My back was still bad; using the squatter toilet is a pain. As I emerged so did the sun. Took a stroll to the sea, which was dirty close to shore. A gull was watching me critically. The change in the weather was an upper. Back at the hotel a man (age 40) came driving up, got a ticket from the manager, and asked about buses. When I did the same, the boss asked the man if he could drive me there, and he said yes without hesitation. This would be a case of personal relations, that he owed the boss a favor. On the way the driver told me he graduated from high school in Yakumo (was born here), and after some years working for private companies in the Toikai region (S central Honshû), he found out that the 'countryside' is better. Now he has his own enterprise running a movement to make people aware of the unhealthy stuff they get in their food. He said there are 360-some chemicals added to foods (by farmers and processors) in Japan; that people get incurably sick from it. He may have been influenced by the Minamata disaster and scandal 1959-1969, in which countless people suffered mercury poisoning. He said he believes in making people aware of dangerous food additives, to make them eat more natural stuff, such as brown rice, not white rice. He said the Japanese still have a reverent attitude towards white rice, as a national food, even though it is unhealthy. So it is meaningful work to him, he concluded. What he said also had a national tone: When I said I'm going to Shiraoi, he said: 'So your gonna look at the Ainu (museum)', without much enthusiasm. He was campaigning against a national food, white rice, yet he was a nationalist at heart.

Hokkaidô is 'young' in every way. The plains near the coast, as at Yakumo and Oshamanbe are quite extensive, with hills and mountains (of volcanic origin) rising abruptly inland. The colonial air is emphasized by the primordial forests and hills, faced by expansive farms with garbage dumps or car cemeteries in between.

So I got to Shiraoi. Walking down Main Street there was an American style parade of high school children, each class with its own float. In one group there were some girls in 'Ainu' patterned yukata kimonos (but no boys). I had to wave to the geared up kids a number of times, as they shouted: herô (hello), Amerikan, foreigner (gaijin), etc.

Was friendlily received at the Ryokan (inn) 'Kashiwamuro' (after a short wait) by a brittle old woman around 70-75, who decided to give me a Western style room and let me use the ladies' (Western style) toilet. Bless her! She said the place has been here for 70 years, since 1923. There's only one bath for the dozen or so rooms, open 5 PM to 8 AM. (No key to the bath,

just turn the sign around). The lady asked: 'Did you see the Ainu Museum (hakubutsukan)?' It was open until 5 PM. She made it sound like a duty to go there. Most likely she had (Japanese) kin working there.

So I decided to go straight away. Outside the Museum was a number of sightseeing buses, with a large parking lot for private cars a little nearer town. After walking past the Japanese-run 'Ainu' souvenir shops, the visitor came to an entrance gate in a fence, paid a fee (¥515), and then could move about in the open air exhibits next to a fairly picturesque lake. I went into the nearest Ainu exhibit hall and stepped up on the matting (taking off my shoes), but a lady (age 40) in Ainu dress said (nicely) I was not supposed to step up there. In the museum hall the crowd of Japanese and occasional foreign tourists could look at the culture they had destroyed. The Ainu doll souvenirs were made to look Japanese in their faces, except for the beards, making the exhibits look like a masquerade.

I started wondering if the people working here were not also Japanese, so I talked a little to one woman in a window selling books and pamphlets. She was just finishing selling a pamphlet to some Japanese women. There were two female attendants at the window; they asked me to buy some books; I ended up buying 4; in particular they were anxious that I buy 2 left-over books from a 3-volume work, about Ainu lore in Shizunai. The author or informant was a woman who died recently, but who really knew a lot, they said; Orita Suteno. I got vols. 2 and 3 with her stories, and copies of the first 15 pages of vol. 1 that contained ethnographic material, which was sold out. The younger attendant hurried to make copies before I changed my mind. The older woman was more informative; her features were markedly un-Japanese. So eventually (after buying some books etc.) I asked her if there were areas in Shiraoi where there live many Ainu. She said something like: This is not so today; there is no difference now; 'because we are all the same (minna onaji)'; a Japanese phrase of conformity; 'we are all together' (minna issho); another phrase. So I took another angle, and asked if people here would not recognize who is Ainu and who is not: She said they would know, like herself; 'oneself (jibun) would know'; 'well, only among the 2,-3,000 people one knows'. She would know the Ainu in her family, friends, acquaintances. So indirectly she informed me she is Ainu; but she wouldn't say it right out.

The vast majority of tourists were Japanese. In the 'Shiraoi Kotan' or Ainu tourist village I also met tourists from Taiwan and Korea. Among the busloads of sightseers was a group of Koreans who apparently marveled at the reconstructed houses; somehow this made them comment on how 'primitive' the Japanese are, to allow something like this to go on – a minority display. The Koreans felt confident that their own country was homogeneous.

The attendants, mainly women in Ainu costume, were visibly edgy and defensive. They would speak to the visitors only in formal terms. They were amused to hear me speak in Japanese though; and dismayed that I came alone. They would like to see more (foreign) tourists. They asked if I had a girlfriend or Wi that they could meet. I could see that their formality was mainly defensive, and that they were quite capable of direct speech and resolute action underneath, if the visitors did something they were not supposed to or allowed to. There were 2 men, I think Fa and So, seemingly only part Ainu (wearing an 'Italian' moustache as a sign); the older man served as 'boss' of the attendants with his So seconding him. These 'bosses' made the cultural presentations in one of the houses. I heard the So talk of Ainu food and the language: 'now of course nobody can speak it', but 'stories' (monogatari) and 'songs' 'still remain', e.g., in recorded or written form. Then he gave some

examples of words that sounded distinctly Japanese in his pronunciation, that he read from a sign written in Japanese katakana on the wall.

Next the 2 men and 8 or so women would ‘dance’ on an outdoor, concrete platform, calling the performance ‘kamui-iomante’, god worship. (I put ‘dance’ in quotation marks because these were long rehearsed motions that they routinely went through.) First there were a few minutes of music on the Jew’s harp, next a song (in Japanese) seasoned with a few Ainu words (pirika), and said to be written by a Japanese teacher in Meiji 30 (1898) who had come to ‘civilize’ the Ainu, as a means to encourage his students. Finally came the dance, lasting 4-5 minutes, and not quite convincing. (I don’t know which was more depressing, the concrete platform dance or the bears moving restlessly in their hot and narrow cages). There was a schedule near the dance platform listing precisely by the minute when a dance would be performed, such as 1:53 PM, and the attendants carefully followed this schedule, its definitive form indicating a Japanese boss somewhere who would dictate events.



Ainu tourist dance

The Ainu Kotan or village was inside a 5 m high fence all around, hidden by trees. At first I thought Shiraoi was like Oklahoma, USA, where Indians are discriminated. But somehow it seemed worse: Back outside the gate I went into the nearest souvenir stall in the Japanese traders’ hall and talked to a woman there. Mostly women were selling; in the middle there was a round bar selling Sapporo beer, and outside were some food stalls. After buying a carving, I asked the woman if anyone there were Ainu: She said: ‘Not here; Ainu people are inside there’; meaning inside the reconstructed village display. So ‘inside’ is Ainu, ‘outside’ is Japanese: but this is judging by the costume only; in social terms the Japanese were ‘inside’ (naka) and the Ainu ‘outside’ (soto) – with a massive fence in between. Then she added: ‘In the shops they are few’; indicating that just a few Ainu had work in the souvenir shops;

perhaps 4-8 of the 40-50+ vending attendants. The distinction is formal: ‘outside’ there are no Ainu, only Japanese; ‘inside’ they are ‘Ainu’ because they wear the costume and do the performances. It seems there were nowhere I could go to meet Ainu in private; at least then I would have to ask some pretty blunt questions.

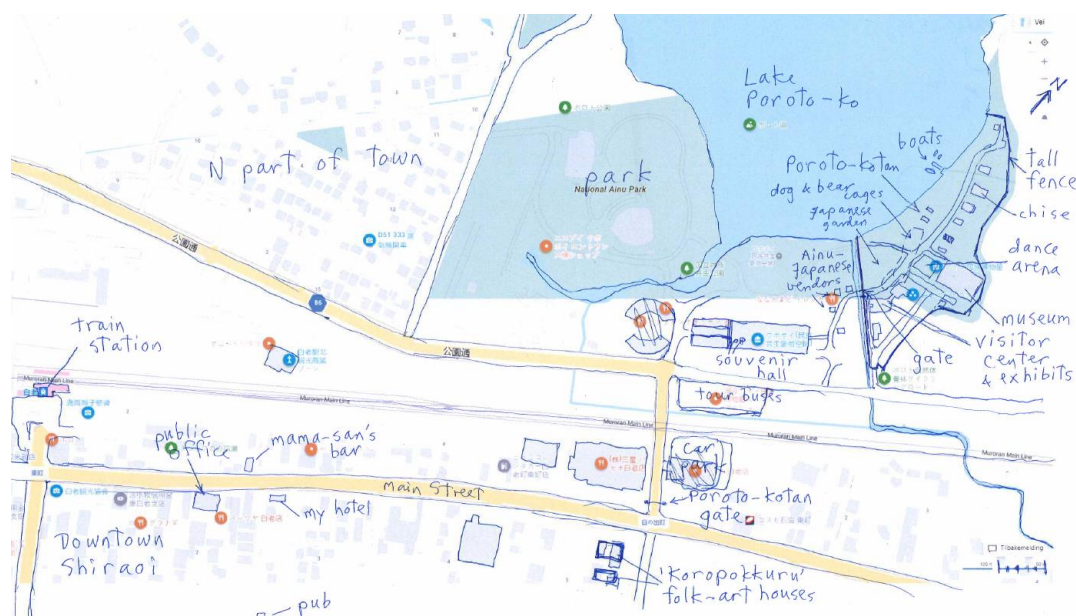
So in a way it was worse than Oklahoma: The Ainu identity is invisible or muted; a question of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, where ‘inside’ is really ‘outside’, from a Japanese viewpoint. The Ainu are behind a fence, on exhibit in costumes; while the Japanese will always see themselves as the ‘inside’ group, to the exclusion of others. The woman earlier in the museum hall said something like ‘it’s decided’ (kimatte aru), a significant Japanese expression. It’s ‘decided’ that they are ‘Ainu’ at the exhibit, and that nobody are (openly) Ainu outside. Who are and are not Ainu cannot be stated openly, but is only known privately, and then as an ‘untold secret’, an unspoken knowledge; in Japan ‘we are all the same’ (minna onaji).

I was reminded of an anecdote by Richard Zgusta, in which he told of a Russian-Japanese friend who escaped from his Wi’s Japanese relatives in Muroran and went drinking with the Ainu in Shiraoi. They thought he was Ainu, and when he said he was not, they still didn’t believe him, because that’s what they themselves would have said. He stayed drinking with those guys for 2 days, and became good buddies.

There was a sign at Poroto-kotan saying ‘Ainu’ is really pronounced アエイヌ[Aeynu], no doubt to override the discriminatory Japanese connotation with ‘dog’ (inu). Apparently racial slurs were quite common in the tourist area, such as Japanese taking photos in Ainu costume saying ‘I’m a wild Ainu’ while showing the V-sign, Japanese style.

The objects I bought included vols. 2-3 of ‘Shizunai chihoo no densetsu’ (1992), a photo-book called ‘Shiraoi kotan’, a book called ‘Ainu no ashiato’, and in the souvenir hall a carving of an Ainu couple, 2 wooden trays, and two Ainu patterned headbands, paying roughly ¥13,500 (\$113) in all. So I was a good tourist.

It was with sober mind I left the Ainu display areas at 5 PM, when the place closed, and set out to get some food. I had to settle for ‘cutlet lunch’ at ¥1200 (\$10).



Shiraoi. Poroto-kotan = Ainu tourist village; chise = Ainu house(s)

I took about 6-8 pictures of tourists and Ainu attendants in the 'kotan' area. In addition I took a photo of the 'American type street' in Shiraoi; one photo of the 'Koropokkuru' folk-art shop; and 5-6 photos of other houses in Shiraoi. Somehow I had put the film in wrong in my camera, so that the photos I took did not develop. Perhaps it was symbolic that I should lose the only pictures I took of people in Ainu costumes, and of the reconstructed Ainu background, inside the fence. (Though on the 22nd I was able to stop by Shiraoi again and take some photos.)

My ryokan was located in the middle of the 'amusement area' in Shiraoi, in the form of a number of Japanese style bars and pubs nearby. After taking a bath I walked around a bit, E on Main Street and then via back roads to the S side and back. I passed a police box (koban), and sure enough, a little later a police car passed by, scrutinizing me. Cars seem mandatory here (similar to the USA): They have the right of way; when entering a store the engine is left running; and people leave the car unlocked as they enter stores. I passed an old man in a yellow hat, somewhat inebriated, who could have been Ainu. He stopped and looked after me. Then I made the mistake of entering a Japanese bar, a cheap, low class 'drinking place' (nomiya). Here I got talking to the locals and ended up drinking till 3 AM. (For my excuse it temporarily relieved my back pain.) On my left was Masaki, born in 1953, and able to go out because his Wi was away today visiting relatives. He said his Wi was 'scary' and 'dangerous'. On my right was an older woman (ca. 50) and a single woman, Miki (33). Then there was the mama-san (bar lady), Keiko (age ca. 45). At one time a man (age ca. 50) entered, acting strange; he had been in and out several times, and claimed he bought 2 crocodiles (wani) for pets, 'because they are cute'. This developed into a drinking round, where we ended up in a pub closer to the beach. Masaki had been a fisherman, and said he would like to go to Norway and catch whales. There are no whales around here, he said. In Japan they catch them with nets made of nylon. Masaki claimed that the ocean and rivers were 'clean'; then he said they 'keep' them clean, using the artificial production of salmon and trout put into the river as an example. His Wi was from Shizunai, where he used to go fishing, until the catches failed. Now he worked as a house carpenter. He was dark and muscular, and had a So aged 20. Miki (33) was single and looking for someone to marry. Somehow I ended up not paying; they said I could meet them at 3 PM tomorrow, I thought at mama-san's place. Back in the ryokan I puked and passed out. Only later did it occur to me that some of the people I met might be Ainu; though they would deny it.

On Sunday, July 18, I woke up feeling not quite well. There was no cold water in my room, so I drank a few cups of hot water from a pot. At 2 PM I went to get something to drink, ate some bread, and at 3 I went to mama-san's place. At the public welfare hall across the street there was some kind of event – which I later realized must have been the national election. People were coming and going. One man drove on the sidewalk, barely missing a couple – seemingly as some humorous 'gesture'. Mama-san's place was closed; a gangster-looking young man in a 'shared house' across the lane shouted that it's always closed on Sundays. I tried to locate the other bar. Then I rested till 8 PM. There was only election stuff on TV, except on the NHK education channel. I went to a home ramen place to eat. The other customers included a family (Fa, So, Wi), the Fa a dark 'fisherman' type, drunk and aggressive. He hit his So several times, seemingly for no reason, or possibly because he thought the kid didn't eat enough. The Wi could be a little Ainu. Then he turned to me and asked if I could talk Japanese, but quickly turned away when I said 'hai' (yes). A few more people were there. The place was run by a woman (ca. 55) with a near-senile Fa. After the

meal I had a quiet evening; the TV said there now were 176 dead and 68 missing after the earthquake.

On Monday, July 19, the old lady manager called my room, saying check-out time was at 10 AM. So I packed up my stuff and trotted off, asking to leave my bag for ½ hour while going to mail some stuff. After paying, the old woman asked me what I think about Japan, and I said something like ‘lively’ or ‘busy’ (nigiyaka). She said something about Japanese people working hard or too much; then she used the word ‘komakai’, detailed or minute work, saying that they are concerned with little things, while foreigners are not. She ended by saying that now it seems more and more people are taking both Saturday and Sunday off, which was good. She was reasonably friendly. After going to the post office I took a quick stroll, and just at this time the mama-san from the other day came out from ‘Sam’s Super’; she smiled a big smile and asked if I didn’t recognize her (she was wearing a sweat suit, putting her stuff in a big new car). I said I would pay, but she said it was their treat. She said ‘3 PM’ (Sanji) was the name of her bar, and it was not meant as any appointment for me. Again on my stroll I saw some women who could be Ainu. There are some shack-like houses etc. in the back streets of Shiraoi that might house Ainu residents. The sea line of Shiraoi has been destroyed by the building of a highway right next to it.

I hopped on the train, first to Tomakomai, where I took a 30 minute walk. Here I saw a man who looked ‘un-Japanese’; eyes not Mongolian, beard stubs, dark skin. The train to Shizunai had only one wagon (engine included), and took 1 ½ hours from Tomakomai. On board were 3 men from Indonesia, from a place called Mala on the E coast of Java. They told me they would travel for 6 days, and then return to Morioka for ‘training’ till December. The man I talked to said they’re Indonesian government employees or representatives; that there are ‘many Japanese companies’ in Indonesia, lumber companies. So probably these men were paid by Japanese companies to help facilitate the shipping of lumber or other raw materials from Indonesia. We passed a lumber yard on the way and the man said: ‘We have that in Indonesia’. Again on the train I noted ‘un-Japanese’ faces: broad noses, deep-set and un-Mongolian eyes etc. I (disregarding PC-rules) imagined Ainu people as mixed, some ‘Tungusic’-like, some more ‘Australoid’; there are pronounced cheek bones and flat cheek bones, light and ruddy skin or quite dark skin; but all this mainly was my tired imagination. What I definitely saw was that Ainu people do not display their identity in public.

Then I came to Shizunai and booked in at Hotel Rooreru. Shizunai is perhaps even more dreary than Yakumo or Shiraoi. What is striking is the imitation of southern Japanese towns: compact centers (even though there is lots of space); with virtually uninhabited land outside. And if the Japanese think they keep nature clean, then it’s only in their own mind: some creeks floating through here were mucky. I decided to walk to Shakushain’s place or monument, his ‘last stand’. He was one of the most famous Ainu leaders, resisting Japanese colonization 1669-72. I noted that there were no signs leading to the place (though there were signs for everything else). On the site itself there was a signpost with a map and a text, but I noted that all the monuments at the place were focused on the Japanese. There were Japanese style monuments with inscriptions such as: ‘300-year memorial for conquering the natives’, or a monument for ‘enhancing the national prestige’. This was not in commemoration of the natives, but in gleeful pride over conquering them. One might say the Japanese made a monument insulting the people it commemorated; which can be done only in a highly nationalistic setting. Except for the sign post, no one would know this was a place of historical interest to the Ainu; though the significance would be obvious. In an overgrown place there was a concrete slab with two Ainu grave markers nearby. Here I offered a libation

to the spirit of Shakushain. Further on I saw a fox, and heaps of crows making noise at me; in my tiredness I imagined they were Shakushain's warriors waiting for the final battle to commence.

As I walked past the monument, the path ended near an abandoned light house, and a little further on I met 5 workers from Miyako in Iwate. They were a woman, aged 35, cutting the hair of the men: the boss, 50, man, 35, young man, 21-22, and a retarded young man, ca. 25. They worked for a contractor in Iwate. I talked to them a while, and got some oden from the young man, who had tufts of brown in his black thick hair and side whiskers; also the man of 35 showed strong facial stubs. (I was seeing 'Ainu' everywhere now.) They asked me to come visit them if I go to Iwate. I think the contractor's name was Saitô. I followed the path back, and eventually came to the 'Ainu folk museum', unadvertized and closed, and looked further at the monument. I took photos, but since I put the film in wrong, none developed. It occurred to me that the memorials here are not to Shakushain or to the Ainu, but to the Japanese; what I later termed an ethnic 'alibi' or 'hostage' context. Even the 'Ainu folk museum' would seem to be a tribute to Japanese largesse and mastery.



Visit to Shakushain monument

Back in Shizunai I took a bath, had a meal, and washed my clothes. Shizunai may be dreary, but there is a distinct 'pleasure quarter' here, 2-3 streets and lanes not far from the Hotel. I met an obnoxious Japanese man when I went to eat, who insisted I drink beer, and said he worked as an 'economic consultant' for Japanese companies in Europe: basically as a kind of spy, going to Europe twice a year to look at their economic development. He was high strung and unpleasant, full of nationalistic phrases: 'Look, he's using chopsticks better than a

Japanese!' In town there were no signs of Ainu-ness, as in Shiraoi. Probably the Shakushain park was a cultural 'mistake', as it symbolizes something else than the Japanese intended.

It appeared that the whole center of Shizunai was a Japanese pleasure quarter, filled with 'snack-pubs', 'clubs' and brothels (soopu). There are no convenience stores open after 11 PM, when the bars do all the serving. It is as if the whole town was bought cheap by some mafia group.

At this point I speculated on the relationship of the Japanese to the Ainu as an ethnic group, finding the words 'alibi' and 'hostage'. First, that the Ainu serve as a kind of ethnic 'alibi' for Japan, which does not have much of a record on interethnic relations. Hence the lavish display in certain secluded or fenced-in places made sense. Secondly, that this means the Ainu are kind of held 'hostage' by the Japanese majority: Their identity display is circumscribed by the Japanese. It was not likely that the Ainu could set about displaying their culture on their own terms. In fact, outside the fence in Shiraoi the people selling Ainu souvenirs are ostensibly Japanese. If the Ainu were to vanish, the Japanese could still don their costume and dance to Ainu recordings behind the fence. The Ainu could never get away from them. Contemplating in this way, there was little wonder why Ainu identity is mute: only Japanese are fully accepted. (In an election day TV-program a Russian woman married to a Japanese politician for some 20 years, said she would never take Japanese citizenship.)

On Tuesday, July 20, I got up at 9:30 AM. Took a shower, then went to catch a train at 10:49. I went into a coffee shop and ordered some take-out sando; but the woman spent so much time making it I said I couldn't wait. She said I didn't have to pay. Some Japanese men were there discussing horse races. I went to Atsuga. On the way the train ran over a hawk or buzzard-kite. It was cloudy, a little wind, fairly cold. Once in a while a slight drizzle. At Atsuga I took a stroll toward the beach; it was cased in concrete. A man came out of a rundown house and took a leak by a shed. He looked Ainuish; short, early greying curly hair, deep set eyes, square jaw. A dog near the shed was barking at me. There was a chicken and rabbit coop outside. I left the beach and moved past the station inland.

For some reason I started walking inland, toward Gabari or Kabari. Here began what I would later call my 'crazy walk', without any plan or purpose, except hoping to see Ainu people. The valleys were almost totally composed of farms that breed horses (unlike Yakumo where everyone had 'registered Holsteins'). Here all one would see was European-style horse farms, except at the head of the valley where they had some Holsteins. The walk was longer than I expected. The horse farms have lots of money: whole field were dug up to make pastures and training ground. On the way a car passed me and a Japanese man came out, seemingly to look at the huge dig, but actually to check out who I was, walking alone. He asked me in broken English where I was going. On the other side of the hill I saw a fox in a field. Then horses all the way up the main valley. The older members of the (Japanese) farm families were playing croquet in an open space. Farm workers living in barrack-like houses were behind the farm buildings. Higher up the ground was steeper and there were some cows, such as at 'Iwamoto farm' with 'registered Holsteins'.

Next I came to a birch forest which reminded me of Siberia. A fox started; now I understood why waste bags were kept behind metal netting in Hokkaidô: there are many wild animals, fox, buzzard-hawk, crows and bears. The last farm I came to was shabby looking and had some sheep; the farmer, small and tattered (ca. 45) said he didn't like cows; he was in the old house with his Mo (age ca. 65-70), sitting on the floor. There was a new house nearby, where

I guess his Wi and near-adult offspring stayed out of sight (I could hear rock music). Outside were one brand new car, one small van, and 2 depleted cars. He and his Mo talked some heavy dialect. They said there was a path across the mountain to Toyota, but it was covered with weeds and I would get soaked. There were foxes and snakes in the forest, and it would be dark soon, they warned. This reminded me that foxes are seen as witches in Japan; the Ainu term would be spirit or god, kamuy; also the snake would be a god, kinasut-kamuy. I realized that I had come to the end point of my walk. Precisely why I walked to the end of the valley is not clear; I had some vague notion that I would come to an Ainu homestead if I walked inland; I had a map, but basically did not know where I was going. (In retrospect, the ‘tattered’ man and old woman may have been Ainu, but would never say so.)

So I started back. I got a ride with a young Japanese man and his male friend, out joy-riding. He was from and worked for a company in Hidaka Monbetsu. He was a typical Japanese young fellow, unwed (though 39), eating ice cream and looking for an acquaintance while driving, saying he had ‘free time’ today. Yet he had been to talk to someone about a job. He also said he was on the lookout for girls; he asked if I chased Japanese girls, a question I avoided. If I answered affirmatively, even though he talked very lightly of it, he would consider it negatively. Then he said he was ‘kind’ to boys, apparently gay.

Back at Atsuga I looked around abit, taking photos. Then, feeling tired, I stopped at a food place and home bar near Atsuga station. The old womam was just preparing some salads; she asked if I could eat Japanese food, such as salad! She said the shrine at the port was for the fishermen, ‘the ocean god’. Then she had to ask her Fa upstairs (using the intercom) what god it was: Konpira. Casually I asked about place names: She said ‘Atsuga’ is Japanese, but ‘Appet’ is Ainu. Then I asked if there are any Ainu around here. She said: yes, there are; ‘but they are already 4th generation’, meaning that they had been Japanized for this period. She added that the last Ainu speaker here died about 20 years ago. Then she said somewhat bitterly: that among the Ainu there were people who were bitter or difficult (tsurai), and bad or ill-intentioned (warui); as an afterthought adding: ‘but there also are good people, I suppose’. She said they would get ‘noisy’ (urusai) and complain about discrimination (sabetsu) and racism (jinshuu-sabetsu); adding that: ‘The Ainu can do that, but the Japanese cannot do it in return now, can they’. So, she said, an Ainu might refuse to pay, and accuse the owner of discrimination. She claimed they took advantage of the Japanese ‘indulgence’. She then admitted that discrimination used to be bad (20+ years ago), but not now. ‘Because now everybody became the same’ (minna onaji) – a typical phrase of conformity. But it was clear that there still was a dividing line, with the Ainu feeling left out by the Japanese.

Here the old woman spontaneously began telling her life story. She would meticulously explain about her parents, Hu and Chn. She said she had 3 Chn, all living away from home: Da age 34, Da age 31, and So age 28. She said she had hoped at least her So would stay at home; saying in Japan they used to expect that of a So, to continue the family house. But the So now was in Tokyo, working for an electrical company, where he also did research on electrical supplies; work that he could do only in Tokyo. But he came home every year for New Year and Obon (Buddhist festival). They would have an obon or bon dance in front of her shop. And she would bring out beer from the shop. When I asked the woman why there are so many drinking places in Shizunai, she said that people from all over Hidaka go there for recreation, to ‘play’.

By and by I would find out that Japanese people would speak of the Ainu only reluctantly, and then with a mixture of hate, bitterness and guilt added. The shop lady said the Ainu were

treated severely – not now, but until 20 years ago (for as long as there were people talking Ainu). In the old days one could see people in traditional Ainu clothing on the street. What she also said was that the discrimination continues today, because the Ainu who complain of *sabetsu* are noise-makers; so the Ainu are still a ‘problem’. She said there are only few Ainu left in Atsuga now, mainly old people; but the man I saw earlier was 45-50. It would seem that what some sources refer to as ‘the memory of the Ainu’ is still punished. Even though people have lost their language and costume, they are still discriminated, because the Japanese residents do not like to be reminded there are other people here. The punishment, though hidden, is still ‘severe’, since the Ainu are not expected to make ‘noise’ or tax the Japanese ‘indulgence’.

After 6 PM I was back in Shizunai. After a shower and a meal I went out. I came to a place called ‘Bulldog’, that played reggae music. The Japanese waiter (only person there) said that foreigners would come there, up to 20-30 foreigners would gather on Saturday night. There were men working for the horse farms around Shizunai. I bluntly asked him if Ainu also work for the horse farms, and he said no. He said there used to be discrimination, but not so much now; then reconsidering: ‘now also there is some discrimination’. Ethnic discrimination against the Ainu used to be ‘rough’, 20-50 years ago. ‘There is still some, such as for marriage’. He said that people will not marry an Ainu. This was not everybody, but in many families the parents would forbid their children from seeing an Ainu, saying ‘no way’ (*dame*). Marrying an Ainu was impossible. The waiter looked at me seriously and said: ‘You must not say ‘Ainu’, it is not allowed (*dame*). To say it is dangerous; you do not say it to people; I never say it’. So basically asking people about the Ainu was not good; no-one will refer to themselves as Ainu. This struck me as exaggerated; how can information be shared if people cannot say ‘Ainu’? Yet writing this now (2023) gives me a flash-back to my early years in Finnmark, where I once asked a man in a bar if he was Sami; he became visibly upset, but jokingly said he was a ‘shaman’. I didn’t know what to think, and later when I came outside he was waiting for me with a can of mace, ready to attack me, so I quickly left. My colleagues let me know that as a ‘Southerner’ I thought asking about the Sami was okay, but in Finnmark asking directly about the minority could be dangerous.

Yet the topic of the Ainu presence was constantly on people’s minds in Hokkaidô. The ‘Bulldog’ waiter claimed that he could recognize an Ainu on the street by looking at the face, not the clothes. He basically told me there still is systematic discrimination, at work, for acquaintances, and marriage. The Ainu have to try very hard to ‘pass’ among the Japanese, such as in their closed ‘circle’ going out to bars or karaoke places. Here the waiter said that only 4-5 places including ‘Bulldog’ do not have karaoke in Shizunai; later it appeared that the bar had karaoke upstairs. He also said that the mafia is holed up in Shizunai; actually there are 2 groups, Yamaguchi-gumi and Inagawa-kai (both from the Ôsaka-Kôbe area). About 4 years ago a man was shot to death across the street in a gang quarrel; ‘but now it’s OK’. The waiter (age 27-28) laughed when I said there was no sign at the Highway leading to the Shakushain place; then he immediately asked why I came to Hokkaidô (though I already told him I’m sightseeing). Obviously the Ainu are a sensitive topic. A bar called Murasaki-ya in Bunka Street was empty, but it seemed that the guy working there was Ainu, with an ‘Italian’ moustache, deep-set eyes, dark skin, and thick wavy hair. If the poor attendance was due to his ethnicity I could not tell.

As another bad choice I returned to ‘Bulldog’ and drank with 3 foreign men, aged 22-32. All of them were horse farm employees who helped breed and train horses in the region, at Niikappu, Atsuga and other places. They were from Ireland and Australia, and knew other

horsemen from New Zealand, England and ‘America’ – other Anglophones. These horsemen all meet at this bar; once there were 13 Irish blokes in ‘Bulldog’; cozy. Martin from Ireland worked for a man called ‘Yagi’. He said that 2 Ainu were working at his farm; a couple, with children. He claimed there was no discrimination, but admitted his boss was special, and ‘filthy rich’, as were all the horse farm owners. Apparently some owners lived in the south, even in Tokyo. At the end I nearly got into a fight with the Aussie cowboys, but told them I had a bad back.

On Wednesday, July 2, I got the 10:49 AM train to go to Tomikawa on my way to Biratori. The woman at Tomikawa station, constantly on her phone, gave me wrong directions, and another woman in a store, perhaps part Ainu, sent me all the way across a bridge. Then I had to recross it, but didn’t catch a bus till 12:40 PM, and already I was getting tired. On a couple of new bus sheds on the way was written: ‘The home of ‘yûkara’ (Ainu songs) and lilies: Hiratori’. It should be noted that place names have different Japanese, Ainu and English spellings, such as Hiratori, Biratori, Piratur, etc.

In Biratori I had to change buses for Nibutani. A girl near the bus-stop may have been Ainu, though more likely Philippina; she stood 10 feet away from the Japanese passengers. A noisy Japanese class got on the bus, one student stood next to my seat and continually yelled: ‘good day’, ‘hello’, ‘oi, foreigner’. I ignored him, then moved to the front of the bus.



Ethnic boundary in Biratori

In Nibutani I took some photos, visited the Ainu Culture Museum and the ‘exhibition’ of Kayano Shigeru, a leading Ainu. A part-Ainu woman at a souvenir stand waved at me saying ‘come drink tea’; actually she wanted me to buy souvenirs. There were two women at that small store, quite persistent, almost obnoxious, but eager to make some earnings. I ended up buying a small carving of a bear at ¥2000 (\$17). One thing they said sounded earnest: When I said I was single, one of them said: it was no good to be single; a man should have a Wi. The other one embarrassedly admitted that she was not married; she was near 45 years old.

In the Museum I watched a video. There were 14 videos there for visitors to see, one in both English and Japanese, all about the Ainu. The English-Japanese one was called: ‘Kyoosei e no michi’ (The road to peaceful coexistence). Among the information given in it was: The population of Hokkaido was 110,000 in 1873, and is 6 million today. In 1899 there was a Law to Protect Former Indigenous People. Ainu who wanted to farm were offered 80 hectares of

land, 1/5 of what Japanese settlers were offered, and in locations unsuitable for farming. Then followed a lot of specific information about historical and current names, such as Yae, Oda, a Shirasawa language class, Kayano Shigeru and Akibe, leading up to the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô. Nomura was the Ainu representative at a conference of indigenous people in 1990, when he accused Japan of ethnocide. The Hokkaidô Government census listed 24,381 Ainu in Hokkaidô around 1986. Many ‘hide’ their identity, so there may be as many as 100,000 Ainu in Japan. Another name was Iboshi, who started a movement for native recognition around 1929. He wrote a book called ‘Kotan’. In 1984 a ‘New Law’ was suggested for or by the Ainu, that would reinstate their indigenous status. It was ‘read’ by the Japanese Government in 1992, but not voted into law. The video left a baffling impression – not least the title – since it said little about the social and cultural situation today, such as the discrepancy between ‘100,000’ Ainu and no Ainu speakers.

At Nibutani there was much talk about Kayano Shigeru (1926-2006), who had a godfather-like status among the Ainu. He devoted his life to promoting Ainu affairs in Japan and abroad. He had his distractors and competitors, but there was agreement about his pivotal role in making Ainu culture visible in social life and in tourism.

Yet there were constant indications of a suppressed minority. At the Nibutani displays, the people all looked like they’d rather be somewhere else. The Ainu girl in the window at the ‘exhibition’ seemed rather sullen and defensive, as if afraid I would ask her if she’s Ainu. It seemed as though Ainu people did not want to be reminded of who they were; the ‘kotan’ and exhibits were somehow external to their existence, like fixtures in the landscape.

Across the street bark strips were hanging to dry outside a souvenir shop. A younger woman (35-40) came out when I stopped and called me in: I bought a carved tray from her (¥1200). There was a poster titled ‘Ainu’, with a picture of an elder (ekashi) in native costume, plus a text about nature being destroyed. This poster made an impression on me, because the man seemed at home in the landscape, staring into the hills, with the ocean in the background. I regretted not buying it, since I have looked for the picture later, with no luck. The woman told me that her Da went to Canada to talk with Indians there (Kwakiutl), and brought back some documents. Other structures nearby were a reception or ‘life center’, and a row of cheap barrack-like houses, for Ainu residents.



Nibutani

Next I walked down ‘Manroo-street’ to the Munro residence, now a part of Hokkaidô University’s Cultural Department, a study center of Eurasian peoples. Near the local houses were ‘farm dogs’; such chained dogs are found all around this area, notably where Ainu people live, including at the Shiraoi kotan display.

Going on I started walking to Biratori. A little downhill was another Ainu exhibit, with a chise (house), a bear in a cage, and a conical hut or ‘kucha-chise’; a Japanese sign explained what they were. I passed Shikerepet Creek. Here I took a photo of a new dam, the Saru River Dam, that was under construction. This reminded me of Oklahoma, where dams were built on Indian land, partly to make the natives leave (Selstad 1986). Two km from Biratori a farmer stopped (unmasked) and told me to jump in. When I told him I was going to Biratori, he wanted to take me straight to Tomikawa, as if to take me away from the Ainu area. He commented: ‘In Norway you catch whales. You eat whales; so do we Japanese’; as if invoking a national bond.

One travel book claimed that Biratori is like any other Japanese town. Yet I noticed that parts of Biratori-Nibutani, in particular the NE part of the old town area, resembles the layout of an Ainu settlement. Here was only 1 road, with rows of one house in front (on the side of the river) and 1-3 houses in the back (the side of hills). Also there were the chained dogs outside the houses. Part of the town layout was a continuation of 19th century patterns, the main road bordered by dwellings. Otherwise, signs of a visible Ainu-ness have been removed, excepting road signs for Penriuku and other native names.

In Biratori I walked around and took note of a Yoshitsune shrine with a ‘Penriuku’ monument; a Japanese sanctuary placed over an Ainu location, as in Shizunai. Below Biratori there are rice fields all over the valley, kind of symbolic of its colonial status. It was only after I ate a teishoku that I realized how worn out I was: I almost couldn’t get up from the chair; my back felt as if it was about to split in the lower part. Even so I went to the Biratori Town Office and got two maps and a local folder.

I took a 6:05 PM bus to Tomikawa. At that station I noticed a sign. It was an ‘attraction announcement’ of ‘Biratori Toshimitsu shrine’, ‘Nibutani Life Center’ and the ‘arts and crafts of the Ainu former-natives’. Somebody had blanked out the word ‘Ainu’ on the sign.

Back in Shizunai I took an early night in. Some freakish Japanese sect was dancing and drumming in a house near the hotel. It is possible that shaman-like sects in Japan are drawn towards Hokkaidô through a perceived similarity to Ainu practices; yet they would keep a clear distance to Ainu persons, making sure they were seen as fully Japanese.

On Thursday, July 22, I got up at 8:30 AM. My back is getting worse, I can hardly stand up now; if I sit down, I worry about how to get up. And I begin to worry that I might not be able to carry my bag and backpack around any more. Anyway I walked back to the site of Shakushain’s last stand and re-took some photos there. Two men were fishing with rods in the river – I could see fish jumping, though perhaps artificially introduced.

Back at Hotel Rooreru I packed up my stuff, paid and left just in time for the train at 10:49 AM. Ahead of me was a long and painful journey; with my sore back I could hardly sit straight in my seat. Watching the people on the train, my impression was that the Ainu have been made to leave many small places – or the physical assimilation has been completed. A

girl on the train asked her parents why they speak Korean in Korea. The Mo told her that's what they speak, and she shouldn't worry about it. Apparently the thought of people not speaking Japanese in a neighboring country was frightening.

Next I made a stop at Shiraoui at 1:30 PM and headed straight for Poroto-kotan to re-take the photos that I had lost; but forgot to correct the light sensor. What I wanted was a photo of the short women in their characteristic Ainu dresses amid the crowds of tourists; but couldn't quite get it this time. Anyway the Ainu women recognized me and called me over for a chat; much the same women as last time, aged between 35 and 60. There were some more males now, 3-4 men in the dance session, instead of two. Also the dance lasted a little longer. So I guess after July 20 they reckon it is the peak season and heighten the activity.

At the farthest chise the Ainu women encouraged tourists to take photos of themselves dressed in Ainu costume by the fireside (for ¥300); a few accepted the offer (e.g., a boy, aged 13-15). Besides the tourists, a few Ainu in costume were at the chise; one older woman on the floor was weaving (not for photo); plus a man around 40; and 3-4 more women. Most Japanese wouldn't even take off their shoes and go into the house; only 10-20 tourists went in from the crowd outside. One young woman age 25-35 was told to move away by the Ainu man in not very polite Japanese, so that she wouldn't enter the boy's picture. This was evincing some control by the Ainu in the situation. Apparently they counted on more people taking Ainu-costumed pictures as a part of their income; no matter how demeaning it was.

The Ainu women were friendly and sympathetic towards me; I took an instinctive liking to them. The man giving the presentation to the tourists (same moustachioed Fa as last time), had a kind of 'fake' accent in his Japanese, which he compensated for with formal formulas.

Among the things I talked about with the Ainu women at Poroto-kotan was my experiences in Japan. An elder woman (with a tendency to lip hair) asked me: 'Nihon doo?' (How is Japan?) When I was hesitant to answer, they laughed. I asked them what they thought, and they said it's not so good now. Said the old woman: 'now Japan has hard economic times'. The economy was bad; there was talk of an economic stagnation or recession. She thought this contributed to a bad atmosphere. The 'one country, one rule(r)' thing is gaining ground. She noted that people do not travel or buy as much as before. I asked if it's the 'high yen' (endaka); and she said: 'that also, but not quite the same thing'. The women explained that now there is about 2,000 visitors to the kotan park in one day, which is few; (it seems they kept good track of how many people come; after all it was their living). On a busy day (last year) there would be 5,000 which is a lot. Last year [1992] was good; this year few people come. Last year there was a total of 770,000 visitors, which was many. This year there are few, because of the bad economy: 'Japan has a problem now'. I might add that the women talked to me in a way they didn't seem to talk to any of the other (Japanese) visitors. They were friendly and informal, saying I shouldn't drink too much beer. I should take care of myself, and find myself a Wi. As I was about to leave, one of them followed me outside and looked me in the face, saying: 'Please come back, to play.'

The men and women in Ainu costume cannot be found outside the kotan area. Though their clothing patterns may be copied by Japanese tour guides and businesses; on leaving I saw one lady in an 'Ainu'-patterned kimono (happi) carrying a pennant for leading a bus-load of Japanese tourists through the souvenir shop area. She looked highly self-conscious and uncomfortable. Otherwise, only 'ordinary' clothes are worn in the shop area, even though they also are selling Ainu fabrics.

For some reason the Ainu women in the Shiraoi Poroto-kotan did not seem well informed about Japanese politics. They said Jimintô won the election and won a majority of seats, while actually only gaining 233 out of some 500. They said that Jiminto still retained its dominance, and that people were reluctant to change. Maybe they themselves – or some of them – voted Jimintoo out of this same fear.

I took some more photos around Shiraoi, among other things of the Koropokkuru folk-art factory, and of a farm in the center of town, with a sign nearby for craft sales. This may be an old Ainu land plot or allotment.

That Japanese nationalism thrives in Hokkaidô is easy to verify. As I entered the Shiraoi station I heard some junior high school girls outside exclaiming: ‘What? But he’s Japanese?’ There is a need for a constant reminder and affirmation of this identity. My train left at 5:05 PM. In Noboribetsu I ate a pork outlet lunch which a sullen Japanese housewife prepared. Again I had trouble getting up from the chair; then I called about a room in Tokyo. At 6:10 PM I was on my way to Hakodate. In Hakodate I wanted to look around, in spite of my crippled state.

I took a tram to the Goryokaku area; ate in a place called ‘Italian Tomato’, a sleezy cafeteria copy. Here was a pleasure quarter with institutionalized prostitution. At a place called ABC American Bar a group of Russian men were drinking; the first I had seen this far. The bar ‘master’ was friendly, giving me t-shirts and cheap beer. He claimed that he preferred foreigners over Japanese, a sort of contra-nationalist view. Next I took a tram to Kita and talked to a girl named Keiko (28), who was there with her Si (25). She was born in Tokyo, raised in Yokohama, came with her parents to Hakodate after age 10, and was still single. She went to night school studying law, and wanted to become a judge. She wanted to go to Norway or abroad; now she was a lone woman in a man’s world. In Kita the waiters were markedly unfriendly; one woman kept pouring beer from my bottle into my glass to make me drink up. As I got up she said ‘thank you’ because I left. The presence of the mafia (yakuza) was noticeable. Before 10 PM I went into a pub near the station and the ‘master’ immediately held up his crossed index fingers and said they were closed (kurôsu). The Japanese customers, eating and drinking, looked at in surprise. When I spoke to him in Japanese, he claimed that everything was sold. This kind of discriminatory behavior I had not experienced in a while. Instead I went to Mister Donut and thanked the Yanks for cheap coffee and donuts. Then I limped to the station, just in time for my train to Tokyo at 10:37 PM. All I could manage to do was lay down and try to sleep. In hindsight the presence of Russians buying everything people were willing to sell for a cheap price may explain the heightened prejudice at Hakodate and probably at Wakkanai as well. This might heighten the level of ethnic discrimination in Hokkaidô, including that experienced by the Ainu minority.

So my fieldtrip to Hokkaidô came to an end, as I stumbled off the train on Friday, July 23, around 10:40 AM in Tokyo. From here on I concentrated on wrapping up my work in Japan and preparing to return to Norway on Sunday, July 25, 1993. Back in Alta, Finnmark, in August I was sent to a chiropractor, a firm Romanian woman, and my back slowly stabilized.

One final observation was that Hokkaidô may serve as a refuge for non-mainstream folk in Japan, also foreigners. There were many Koreans listed under Kim in the Shiraoi phone book. On the other hand, there were staunch Japanese nationalists, fascists, sects and mafia met in northern towns. A European style farmhouse would have a miniature Japanese garden outside.

There would be a rice field in the middle of a horse farm. It all goes to say 'This is Japan' in myriad ways, in an area where the Japanese have lived for a little more than 100 years.

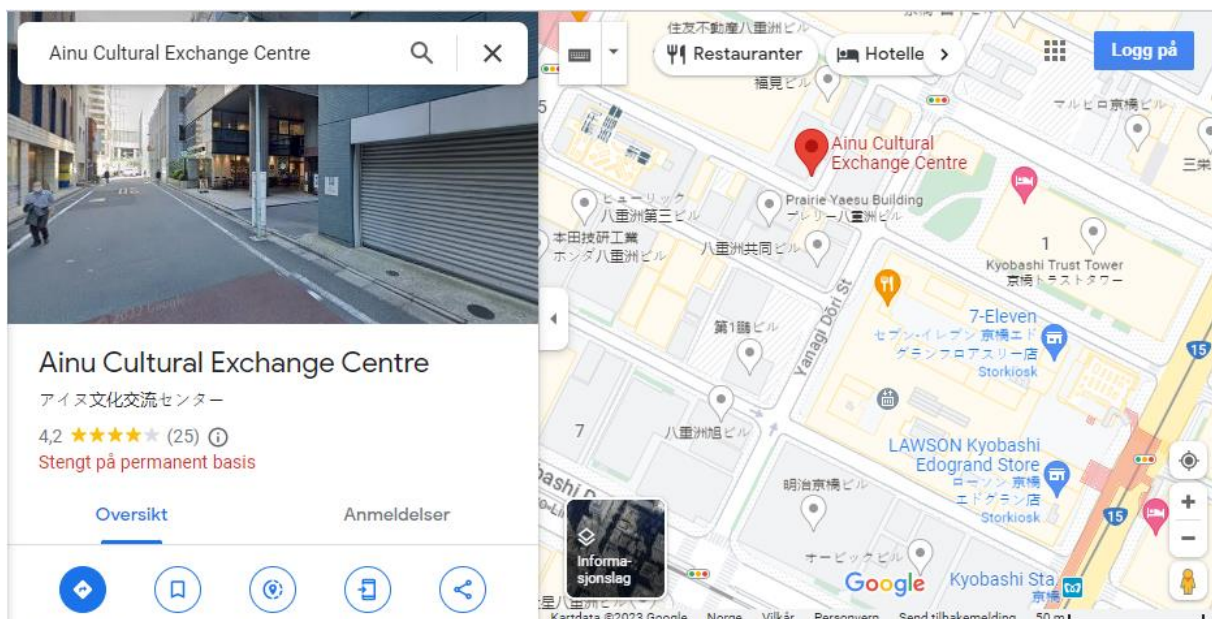
The observant reader may have noted that I saw foxes several times in Hokkaidô, at least four times, more than I have ever done before. And they were not scared of me. Although I never reflected on this at the time, these occurrences become significant. As noted the fox is a god (kamuy), but also a significant totem, and the sightings bear on how totemic impressions are made. If I included all the animals I saw on this trip, fish or salmon, snake (noted), crow, hawk or buzzard, bear, dog, fox, horse, perhaps a deer or hare in passing, then a collection of potential totems will form. This collection, what people see regularly in nature, is what becomes available as emblems when different descent groups try to differentiate and relate to each other in a local community; forming a complement of local totem clans. In this book such a complement of local clans is what is referred to as a totemic organization. While I never had an opportunity to discuss this topic with Ainu informants, except in passing when looking at museum exhibits or artefacts, the presence of animals and natural phenomena would constantly remind me of my interest. Fortunately I had an opportunity to visit an Ainu culture center in Tokyo, where some of these issues could be discussed, and which will be presented next.

Two visits to the Ainu Cultural Center in Tokyo

I first learned that there was an Ainu cultural institution in downtown Tokyo around 1988, while doing fieldwork in an old part of town, Tsukudajima; though time would elapse before I went there. On July 18, 2003, a fellow scholar, Richard Zgusta (RZ), brought me on a visit to the ‘Ainu Culture Center’ near Tokyo Station, that we located after some searching. Our time was limited and the visit was brief, mainly focusing on the strange position of the center in the nation’s capital, at a time when the Ainu were struggling for recognition as an ethnic minority and indigenous people. RZ noted that all references to Kayano Shigeru’s Ainu Museum and Cultural Preservation Center in Hokkaidô was absent from the center’s maps, posters and other information material. RZ thought this was because the Tokyo center is a prefectural (governmental) institution. Kayano has been critical of the government, and so the government is hostile to Kayano’s museum and refuses to promote it. At one point Kayano demanded to have Ainu artifacts released from the government museum, but they refused, and he set up his own museum in competition to the national museum, while openly critical of the government’s treatment of the Ainu and Ainu culture. Among other things Kayano wanted to preserve and promote Ainu culture, such as teaching the Ainu language to children. Whereas the government was lukewarm to Ainu claims and was interested in a passive presentation. The government wanted public promotion, including tourism as a revenue.

This critical stance did not reflect on the few people working at the Tokyo center, who seemed genuinely interested in preserving Ainu culture and promoting knowledge about the people – though they might be referred to as gatekeepers. However our time was short and we merely had time for a short visit. Luckily I would have occasion to revisit this fascinating place at a later time, described below.

It was on Thursday, August 8, 2019, that I finally could visit the Ainu Cultural Center for a more extended visit. From Aoyama 1-chôme near my hotel, ‘Asia Center’, I took the Ginza Line to Kyôbashi and went to find the Ainu center around 1 PM. As before it was difficult to find. I stopped at a Starbucks and asked one of the girl attendants if she knew where it was. She said something like ‘don’t know’, but another girl attendant said it’s in the same building. She showed me next door; it was on the 3rd floor.

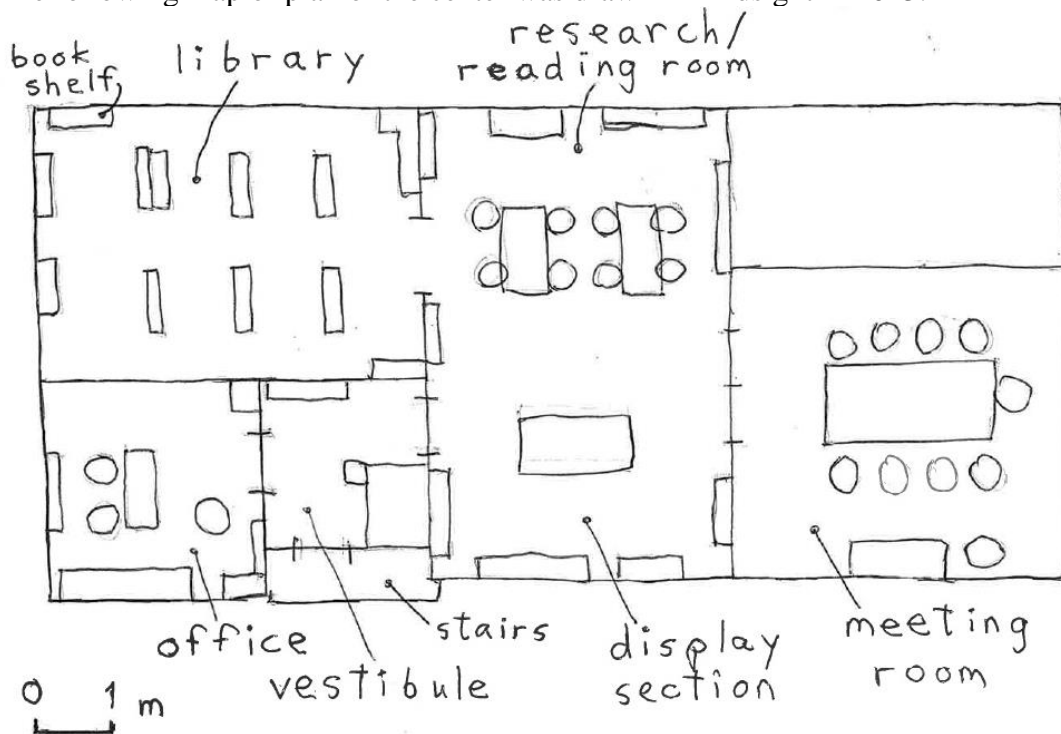


The Ainu Cultural Center (Google Maps)

The place does not appear on a regular map – though it can be located by an online search. Apparently the center exists at the mercy of the house-owner, the Sumitomo Realty corporation. At the same time the center is extremely important, since it is one of few places in which the Ainu presence is visible outside Hokkaidô. Its significance is that it is a location in which knowledge about Ainu culture is preserved and disseminated, including administrative and cultural meetings.

Note that the official designation is ‘Ainu Cultural Exchange Centre’, in Japanese: Ainu bunka kôryû sentâ; the implication being that the center is contingent on an ‘exchange’ or approval from the Japanese authorities. In this description I use variant names freely.

The following map or plan of the center was drawn in hindsight in 2023:



Ainu Cultural Center, Ginza, Tokyo. The proportions will be a little off; the vestibule may be a little longer; the meeting room larger.

For some reason I considered this visit to be important. And for some reason I could not find my field notes until I finally located them after looking for weeks. My office now (2023) is cluttered with books and documents in no particular order; finding one particular document is almost impossible. Being a scientist I should have order in my documents, but shelves, drawers and boxes are full, and at age 67 my time is too limited to sort everything out.

What appealed to me was that the Ainu Culture Center was well laid out. There was an exhibit of artefacts in the vestibule and display sections, a library section, and a conference room, as well as an office and other facilities. There also was a research or reading room where I was allowed to sit. When I first came the attendant was not even sure if she should let me in, asking me my purpose. When I said I was a tourist who wanted to learn about the Ainu she hesitated. She said there was to be a meeting, but in the end let me stay and look around.

When I came only a man, 42-43, Japanese looking but possibly part Ainu, was in the office section. When I told him I was interested in Ainu culture, particularly families and their possible connection with totems, he looked surprised but not unfriendly. I apologized for the bother, but he said 'no problem'. He had some difficulty understanding what I was trying to explain; he thought Ainu families were not connected with animals or had totems. I said I thought it was the case anciently. Presumably he was not taking me quite seriously, thinking that I was just a tourist or random visitor. Yet he tried to help me as best he could.

Looking at the hundreds of books dealing with the Ainu, on topics ranging from northern minorities, politics and history, to culture, art and language, I asked if they maybe had some books on kinship and marriage. He found me: 'Ainu no kon'in' [Ainu marriage] by Segawa Seiko (1972). As I looked at it, he also found another book, in English: 'Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People' by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil (eds.), Smithsonian, 1999. Then he excused himself, saying he had to go to lunch, leaving me alone in the reading section in the library.

What follows are some immediate notes I made from the publications. It has to be added that I could read Japanese in the 1980s, but not so now. I looked first at: 'Ainu no kon'in'. Of interest was a section on the Ainu women's chastity belt, called 'upshor', 'upshor-kut' or 'upshoru kutsu', the last in Japanese spelling. Following this there was mention of the men's personal emblems or totem signs, called 'itoppa' or 'itokpa'. The author thought these female and male signs were part of a 'system', presumably her own Japanese way of looking at Ainu culture. More concrete was an observation that the male and female symbols, upshor and itokpa, play a role in relation to marriage, when the parents' signs put a restriction on their children's marriage choices.

As I was looking at this book, that I have seen before, another attendant, a young woman of 33-35, came over to inquire about my request or interest. At this point things were getting interesting; she may have been Ainu or part Ainu, slim but fairly tall, with a distinctive and good-looking face. She had the air of someone who could speak about Ainu culture with some authority, either from her studies or her background. I explained my interest in family tokens, exogamy and animal symbols or tokens as best I could.

She became intrigued, because, as she said, she thought the Ainu had no such things as totems. Her observation was that they do not have that kind of system; each family is separate; she associated 'totem' with American Indians, where the system existed; but she did not connect it with the Ainu. At the same time she was pensive. It seemed she was reflecting, as far as she knew, whether the Ainu had something like this; if she remembered something from her background or readings that resembled totems. So I saw a chance to expand on the topic. I explained that this was long ago, and that totemism used to be widespread and different from what people think; that it is more complex than simple totem marks.

Somehow my persistence intrigued her. She agreed to look for materials; and she was willing to look at some of the Ainu tokens with me; she even brought a digital pocket translator so that we could talk more easily. This was technology I had not seen before; it worked in simple conversation, but not so well with topics like 'totemism' and descent groups. During our awkward but fascinating discussion, shifting between Japanese, English and Japanese/English digital translations, she proceeded to show me some artefacts and mentioned an exhibit they had where some objects now were elsewhere, perhaps in a museum. She knew the Ainu names of various artefacts: 'Itokpa' and 'pasui' were mentioned; at this point she became

eager and said they have this on display. Then she showed me their collection of carved sticks (pasui) in the exhibition room; a beautiful display. She also knew about the female belt, upshor; she knew that there were several patterns of the upshor, but she did not think it had anything to do with totems; she specified that it was the waft of the belts, the way they were woven, that showed them to be different kinds. The varieties of waft she thought were limited to 15-16 patterns. Somehow the pocket translator helped us at this point.

In this way we worked our way through different kinds of symbols. I tried to find a totemic connection; the exhibited carved sticks (pasui) had stylized images of fish, whale, bird, bear, etc.; while she saw them as conventional but distinct family heirlooms and works of art.

Another term for family tokens mentioned was 'shirushi', meaning 'sign'. She knew this designation as well, and thought it had a relation to other symbols, itokpa, upshor and pasui; without immediately associating them with totems.

Her reasoned skepticism worked on me, and I said it is difficult at the present day, the modern age, to understand totemism. Long time ago people were in close contact with nature, and animal symbols were meaningful, there was a relationship; this was my attempt at poetic prose. Totems were powerful and secret; American Indian people would not tell their names to strangers, but the names were totemic.

This created some resonance with her. She said: 'It's the same among the Ainu. The Ainu do not tell their names, it's a secret.' When she explained this she put her pretty face close to mine. Then she abruptly left me alone to study the books on Ainu culture. A third person in the office, a young woman age 25-28, looked more Japanese, and said nothing.

While I was looking at the Ainu publications, a group of people assembled to listen to a lecture. They registered at a desk behind me. The lecture was first introduced by a representative of the center, female (40); the 20 or so assembled people, age 30-65, clapping when she finished. Then another woman gave the presentation, saying her interest is in cultural anthropology and cultural studies, and that she had become interested in the Ainu. She presumably was Japanese, age 40-47. She talked about her research, her visits to Hokkaidô, the people she talked to and issues that came up, including discrimination. She said she turned to collecting life stories, and one person she interviewed and taped, using her mobile phone video, was the old Ainu mouthpiece in Nibutani who died fairly recently; meaning Kayano Shigeru. She showed some video clips of him, where he talked about his upbringing, losing his parents fairly early, getting a Japanese education, and then his effort to preserve Ainu language and culture; he talked some Ainu and sang a song. One might say the focus was on 'ethnic entrepreneurship', and the contingent Japanese support of such efforts; with Ainu culture as a 'commodity' under Japanese dominance. Interestingly this resonated with an earlier visit, when RZ noted that the center ignored Kayano; now he had passed away, and it was much 'safer' to talk about him without compromising Japanese interests.

By and large I got much more feedback from this visit than I expected. There were 2 other researchers present with me during the time I was there, a Japanese woman around 60 and a man aged 50-55 who may have been Ainu and who looked at me quizzically. But I did not get a chance to talk to him; my visit was too short and focused, trying to get information on totem-like emblems, at the same time trying to get an overview of the books and collections.

In fact my time was too short to really get an overview of the material. I continued noting from the books I had; here my immediate notes continue: The ‘upshor’ is a female sign; while the male ‘shirushi’ are ‘itokpa’, the carved stick (pasui), and ‘inau’ or wood shavings. The language transitions proved difficult, Ainu-Japanese-English. The Japanese phrase: ‘Shirushi o mawari-tsukeru to iu imi de itoppa to iu’, I translated as: ‘Itoppa means a sign placed around’ or a ‘surrounding sign’; whether any of this would make sense in Ainu is unclear.

Some tidbits and phrases included a ritual stand called nusasan or nusa-dana, a nusa-rack or stand of inau-sticks. One Japanese book I glanced at had a photo of a ‘nusa’ or ‘inau-fence’. One source said the ‘itokpa’ is a carved sign (shiroshi); such signs may span 30 generations – though it is unclear what generation (ichidai) means here, it might obliquely refer to kin groups or extended kin. Men sharing the same itokpa were reckoned as close kin, referred to as ‘shine itokpa’, one itokpa; presumably this placed some restrictions on intermarriage.

There was a particular itokpa called ‘matchaitokpa’ that apparently had a bear reference. The same source mentioned ‘fish’ and ‘dog’ as signs, noting that both fish and dog become humans in Ainu lore. This could be extended to the ‘fall-salmon’ and a fish written in kanji, possibly ‘trout’, that could ‘become human’, hinting at totemic descent. Here there were direct references to itokpa representing animals: fish, salmon, trout, bear, dog. Most references merely noted that itokpa are signs, without specifying what they represent. (As in Russia, Japanese scholars have hangups about identifying people with animals.)

I wanted to show the animal emblems to the female attendant who had gone so far into the issue with me, though skeptical. She simply said she would copy the pages I needed, and proceeded to copy 2 pages only, the ones I were looking at. I had asked to take copies myself, but they did not have a coin copier. Apparently my time of grace was up.

While waiting for the copies I moved on to another book: ‘Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People’. Today (2023) this book is available online, since the Smithsonian digitizes most of their old reports; something that remains amazing to me who used to copy books by hand in the 1970s. Items mentioned were carved ‘ikupasuy’ or ‘pasui’ with images of salmon, whale, bear, etc. (p. 224-5); a simplified mention of Ainu settlements counting 5-10 houses and 25-50 people (p. 227); a note on male and female ‘lineages’ (p. 230); and a reference to the male ‘family mark’, itokpa, and the women’s ‘woven belt’, upshor.

Animals and beings noted by stories (kamuy-yukar) and signs included: fish, salmon, whale, snake, cicada, bird, carrion-crow (kararat), owl, bear, raccoon-dog (moyuk), dog, fox, deer, hare, sun, etc. (passim). Many nature references would be oblique, such as ‘spirit figures’ at burials (p. 271) and depictions of parts of animals or stylized creatures, legs, fins, flippers, ‘fish’, ‘bird’, ‘animal’ etc. The book noted that the Ainu started making ‘totem poles’ around 1979 (p. 342). Overall this book was a collation of sources with scant analysis of Ainu life.

I briefly looked at ‘Saruunkuru monogatari’ [Saru person’s story] by Kawakami Yûji (1976), and noted a mention of decorated head bands used by men, sapaunpe (p. 141). Such head bands were used during ceremonies; there were no specifics or analysis. At this point my time ran out; I was getting unfocused and it was time to break up.

My visit to the Ainu Culture Center felt a little intrusive, but I was glad I had the opportunity to visit. Even at such a crucial institution many questions remain unasked, such as the social signification of the many symbols the Ainu use – and their specific natural references. Yet the

willingness of people to discuss the topic was refreshing. I went away realizing that there was more to find out about Ainu totemism.

To wind down I went into Starbucks downstairs and had a coffee. As often on my travels my stomach was restless, so I needed a pit-stop. Outside the temperature was 32° C, cooler than the day before. In no time I was back in the bustle of Ginza – a different world.

In spite of my fleeting and momentary survey at the culture center, it will be noted that a plethora of Ainu emblems can be found in different sources and displays, many with a nature-oriented or totem-like reference. What is missing from the many books and exhibits is a presentation of the social context in which emblems occur. In order to investigate totemism it is not the various signs and symbols that are significant, but the social organization they relate to. It is this latter aspect, the social system of totemism among the Ainu, that will be considered next.

Ainu

Aka: Aino, Kui, Kugi, Ezo, Yezo, etc. (Zgusta 2015).

It is evident that the Ainu have lived in present Japan for millennia and constitute a stable area culture. Historically their closest ties have been with the Japanese people and with the Tungusic, Nivkh and Paleosiberian peoples to the North. The Ainu forebears may once have occupied most of Japan, but were gradually pushed North until today the people's main residence is in Hokkaido. It can be assumed that the people had a stable existence in Hokkaido for a thousand years or more; at least until recently. This stable existence enabled them to develop a cultural way of life in close proximity to nature.

After 1400 Ainu existence was increasingly threatened by Japanese expansion from the South. On top of this epidemics started spreading across Eurasia after ca. 1300 AD. To what extent they affected the Ainu is not known. Perhaps they got off somewhat more lightly due to their insular situation. Taken together, external impacts after 1400 would threaten Ainu society. In this connection an ethnographic present between 1250 and 1500 AD seems apposite.

The Ainu population around 1250 AD can be set at ca. 42,000+ people; possibly as high as 50,000. This population would reach a low of ca. 17,000 people around the year 1880; <40%. General population estimates include: 26,000+ (1804); 23,000+ (1822); 18,500+ (1854); 17,500+ (1873); 17,827+ (1884); 18,543+ (1913); 1994: 23,830+ in Hokkaido, 35,000+ in total; etc. (Hammel 1988).

Some regional population figures are: Kurile Islands: 500-1000 (1900); etc.; Sakhalin: 1,443-2,000 (1897); etc.

The general word for a community, settlement or village is 'kotan'. This word can refer both to a residential area and a territorial group, a local community. Other words for settlements include 'people', e.g., 'Naitai un utar', 'people of Naitai'. Settlements or villages are typically named for the river near which they are situated. The village is generally built on a terrace above the river or shore.

Ainu communities ca. 1250 AD are here listed from South to North: ('p.' = people, 'c' = coast, 'i' = inland):

(I-A) North Honshû: (not computed): ca. 7000 p. (c+i)

(I-B) Oshima: (1) Ottobe 240 p. (c), (2) Assap 250 p. (c), (3) Esashi-Shiofuki 250 p. (c), (4) Shiriuchi-Oyobe 270 p. (c), (5) Moheni-Kikonai 240 p. (c), (6) Iso-Nepets 280 p. (c), (7) Hakodate 300 p. (c), (8) Shikabets 240 p. (c), (9) Mori-Otoshibe 260 p. (c), total: 2330 p.

(II) Shiribeshi: (1) Benten 370 km² 230 p. (c), Tushibets 720 km² 255 p. (c), (3) Barabuta-Shiuzo 400 km² 240 p. (c), (4) Ushoro 400 km² 250 p. (c), (5) Shiribets 260 (c), (6) Iwanai 255 p. (c), (7) Hurupira-Shakotan 230 p. (c), (8) Yoichi-Otaru 250 p. (c), (9) Kutchan 230 p. (i), total: 2200 p.

(III) Ishikari: (1) Raishats: 250 p. (c), (2) Ishikari 230 p. (c), (3) Toobets 240 p. (i), (4) Sapporo 240 p. (i), (5) Ebets 250 p. (i), (6) Kuriyama-Yubari 230 p. (i), (7) Otaussinoi-Bibai 210 p. (i), (8) Sorapchi-Takikawa 220 p. (i), Shintotsukawa, (9) Ashibets 770 km² 200 p. (i), Furano 1500 km² 235 p. (i), (11) Otoitake-Moseushi 210 p. (i), (12) Nemata-Horokanai 220 p. (i), (13) Kagura 900 km² 190 p. (i), (14) Asahikawa 400 km² 180 p. (i), (15) Chupets 800 km² 160 p. (i), (16) Kamikawa 1080 km² 230+ p. (i), total: 3515 p.

(IV) Ifuri: (1) Yurap-Yakumo 455 km² 250 p. (c), (2) Oshamambe-Repun 330 km² 250 p. (c), (3) Aputa 450 km² 250 p. (c), (4) Mombets 380 km² 240-260 p. (c), (5) Horobets-Mororan 330 km² 240 p. (c), (6) Shiraoui 360 km² 250 p. (c), (7) Tomakomai-Koitoi 410 km² 250 p. (c), (8) Yuhuts 350 km² 260 (c), (9) Atsuma-Funawatshi 410 km² 250 p. (c), (10) Mukawa 470 km² 270 p. (c), (11) Ninatumi 700 km² 240 p. (i), (12) Chitose-Shikot 900 km² 240 p. (i), total: 3010 p.

(V) Hitaka: (1) Sarubuts-Piratori 520 km² 264 p. (c), (2) Porosaru 1215 km² 250+ p. (i), (3) Nukipet 230+ p. (i), (4) Atpets 220+ p. (c), (5) Niikap-Takae 400 km² 260+ p. (c), (6) Shimokebo-Sizunai 743 km² 290-350 p. (c), (7) Ubahu-Mitsuishi 380 km² 260 p. (c), (8) Ikantai-Urabets 260 p. (c), (9) Porobets 270 p. (c), (10) Samani-Poronambets 250 p. (c), (11) Okos 250-290 p. (c), total: 2900+ p.

(VI) Tokapchi: (1) Moyori-Biroo 260 p. (c), (2) Perohune-Taiki 270 p. (c), (3) Otsu-Osaush 250 p. (c), (4) Urahuro-Asahi 260 p. (c), (5-6) Tobuts-Tushipet 240 p. (i), (7) Yammakka-Yamwakkapira 500 km² 240 p. (i), (8) Chiroto-Otopuke 250 p. (i), (9) Obihiro-Satnai 240 p. (i), (10) Frishikobets-Shikaripet 675 km² 210-230 p. (i), (11) Memro 400-500 km² 170-220 p. (i), (12) Nitmap 1100 km² 200-250 p. (i), total: 2710 p.

(VII) Kushiro: (1) Shaubets-Onbets 240 p. (c), (2) Shiranuka 250 p. (c), (3) Charo 250 p. (c), (4) Otanoshike-Piraka 270 p. (c), (5) Kushiro 250+ p. (c), (6) Akkeshi 260+ p. (c), (7) Hammanaka 240 p. (c), (8) Frishikotan-Shibechea 240 p. (i), (9) Kumaushi-Teshkanga-Kucharo 230 p. (i), (10) Ashoro 240 p. (i), total: 2470 p.

(VIII) Nemuro 220 p. (c), (2) Bitskai-Shumbets 260 p. (c), (3) Shibets 240 p. (c), (4) Rubets-Wemets 210 p. (c), (5) Raushi-Rausu 170 p. (c), total: 1100 p.

(IX) Kitami: (1) Shari-Utoro 250 p. (c), (2) Abashiri 250 p. (c), (3) Pihoro-Memanpets 240 p. (i), (4) Tokoro-Tobuts 250 p. (c), (5) Kitami 240 p. (i), (6) Yubets 240 p. (c), (7) Engaru 200 p. (i), (8) Mombets-Shokots 250 p. (c), (9) Okoppe-Sakuru 230 p. (c), (10) Omu-Poronai 240 p. (c), (11) Esashi 220 p. (c), (12) Tombets 200 p. (c), (13) Sarubuts 200 p. (c), (14) Wakkanai 210 p. (c), total: 3300 p.

(X) Teshio: (1) Teshio 270 p. (c), (2) Toinotafu-Ponpira 230 p. (i), (3) Otoinefu-Onnenai 220 p. (i), (4) Nayoro 220 p. (i), (5) Shibets-Kenefuchi 240 p. (i), (6) Wembets-Furenbets 260 p. (c), (7) Chikubets-Tomamai 250 p. (c), (8) Hiramabets-Hamboro 250 p. (c), (9) Rumoi-Mashike 250 p. (c), total: 2200 p.

(XI) Kurile Islands: (1) Shikotan 300 km² 150+ p. (c), (2a-b-c) Kunashiri 1490 km² – South 200 p. – Middle 230 p. – North 180 p. (c), (3) Etorofu-Rubets 250 p. (c), (4) Etorup-Shana 230 p. (c), (4+) Etorofu-Extra 270 p. (c), (5a-b) Urup-Chiripoi 1430 km² 200 p. + 250 p. (c), (6) Shimshiru-Rasawa 120 p. (c), (7) Shashikotan-Onnekotan 200 p. (c), (8) Poromoshiri-Chachakotan-Arumoi 200+ p. (c), (9) Shumushu-South Kamchatka 200+ p; total: 2680+ p.

(XII) Southern Sakhalin: (7) Tofutsu; (8) Tarantomari; (11) Odomari; (13) Ochiho, Shirahama; (14) Odasamu, Shiraura; (not fully computed); ca. 3000+ p.

(XIII) NE Sakhalin: (16) Niitai; (17) Otasu; (18) Taraika; (not fully computed); ca. 2500+ p.

(XIV) NW Sakhalin: (1) Poro-kotan 250 p. (c), (2) Sahkotan 200 p. (c), (3) Nota-sam 250 p. (c), (4) Tooro-Esituri 200 p. (c), (5) Huroochi-Ustomonaypo 250 p. (c), (6) Raychiska 300 p. (c), total: 1450+ p.



Map of Ainu local areas

Coastal settlements were called ‘pish-un kotan’, where ‘pish-un’ means ‘at seashore’. Inland villages were called ‘kim-un kotan’, with reference to mountains and bears. Note that each local area comprises at least one village – sometimes as many as 3. Ainu communities would range in size from 170 to 350+ people; in exceptional cases perhaps 500+ people. One unnamed village around 1850 had ca. 320 people. Each community would have 1-3+ settlements or camps ranging in size from 30 to 270 people. Or rather, there would be one central village and 3+ seasonal camps. Historical villages could have between 6 and 60 houses, though a typical range would be 8-30. The Atsuma community supposedly had 2 villages, one on the coast and one inland, one with perhaps 150+, the other with 100+ people. In the Tokapchi region there were several large villages, such as Nitmap, Memro, Uparpenai, Otopuke and Satnai, all supposedly with one village each counting 200-250+ people. Yet at times a community might split into 2-3 smaller villages with from 60 to 150+ people each. The coastal community of Pirautur was divided into Penke- and Panke-Pirautur, ‘upper’ and ‘lower’, but they were reckoned as one settlement with one chief. In historical times Penakori was divided in two separate areas, but had always been a single village (kotan) politically.

The basic Ainu community can be described as follows: The main residence was a village situated near the sea shore or a main river. The village consisted of houses placed in 1-2-3 parallel rows. The village would control a territory (iworu) of between 100 and 500+ km². In addition most villages would have access to uninhabited areas in the mountains where hunting was fairly free, though locally controlled, with access distributed among local clan groups or phratries. Customary use established rights to a hunting area and, above all, a protection of

natural resources such as game animals from over-exploitation. For instance, bear hunters would protect their hunting grounds. One element in natural conservation was established paths (ru) that indicated who could use the area and which village they came from.

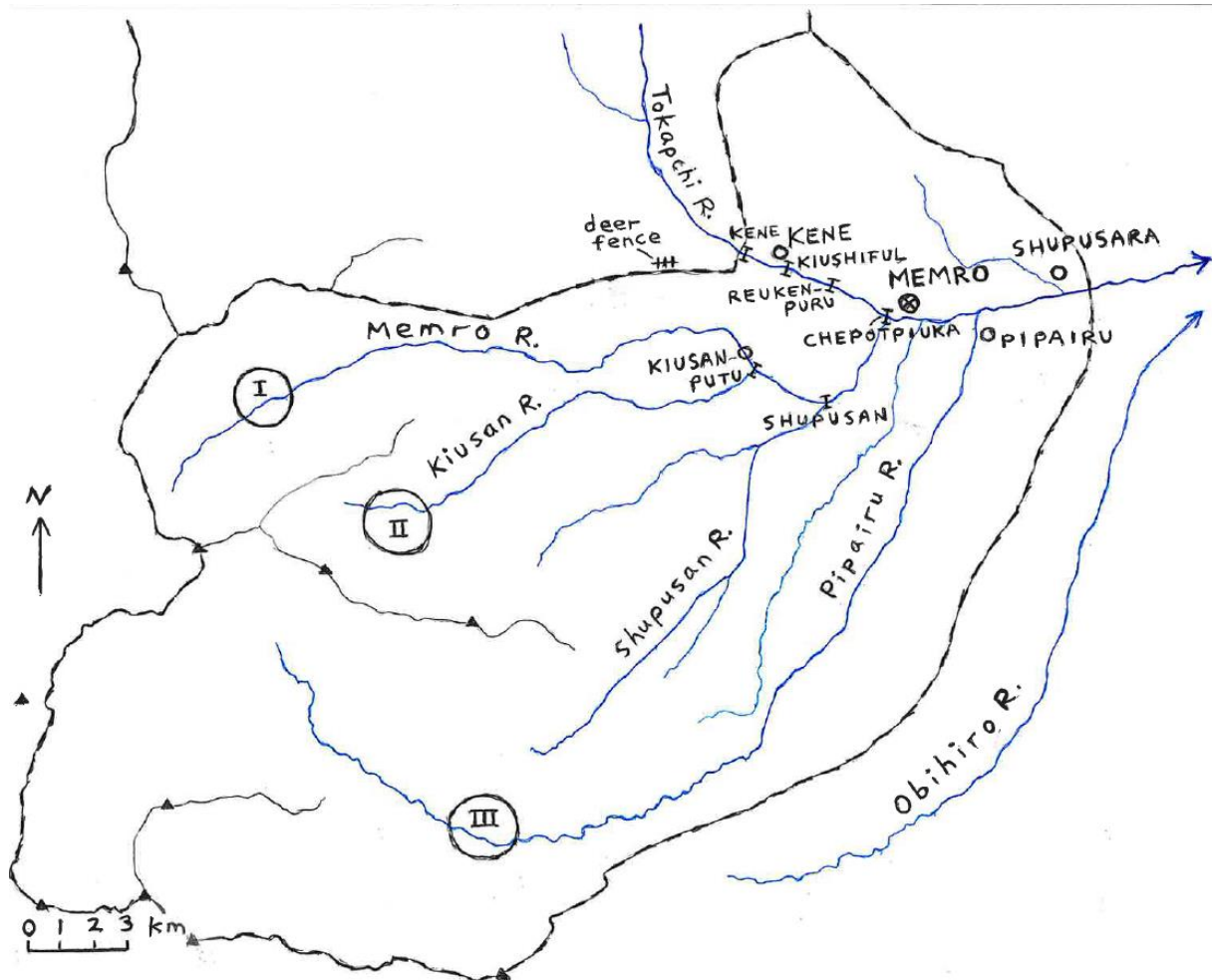
As indicated, an Ainu village generally consisted of a series of houses placed in a row. The village or town (kotan, utar) was mainly occupied in summer. Usually there would be two parallel rows of a similar number of houses. The house rows would be parallel to a river or shore. Houses generally had their main door facing the river or shore, though in some places facing S or in some established direction. At Fushiko the houses stood along the bank of the river, said to be in order from the upper to the lower course, the doors facing the stream, or sometimes downstream. It then becomes apparent that the village had a specific organization, generally divided into an 'upper' and 'lower' moiety, as well as three phratries with 2 or more clans, at least 1 clan in each moiety. This creates a 6-partite system, the 'upper' moiety with 1+ clan in each of 3 phratries, and the 'lower' moiety also with 3+ phratry clans. This would entail a minimum of 6 houses for a viable settlement. The system can be expanded with the houses of chiefs, presumably near the middle, and several more clans in each moiety and phratry, to expand the house rows up to 60+ houses placed in two or more rows.

Special houses or structures in a village included: store house; bear cage; child-bearing house (pookoro chise); and more.

As noted, a village would control most resources within its territory as common property. The territory, usually a stretch of coast or a river valley, was called 'iwor' or 'iworu', vaguely translated as 'life space', referring to a river basin or stretch of delimited land. This land included plains for food gathering and planting, salmon spawning grounds, woods and hunting areas (Peng & Geiser 1977: 42-44). Other communal concerns included village rituals, such as dances and ceremonies. There was a village council; apparently the women had considerable influence, and maintained a council of their own, which represented the female descent groups or totem clans (op. cit.: 78). The female council took care of songs and dances (ibid.). Each village had a headman, or probably an echelon of leaders, including women chiefs (op. cit.: 42).

Local resources were for villagers only, outsiders were not allowed to use them. In historical times the Ainu were decimated by Japanese colonizers and people had to take refuge in distant villages. These newcomers were allowed to use local resources, somewhat grudgingly, but were referred to as 'strangers' ('ussiu' or 'ussio'). They were not allowed to settle permanently for a year or two, and were under supervision of the chief. It was expected that they would establish marriage ties in the village, thus becoming full local members. Chiefs were in charge of maintaining boundaries and preserving local resources. Resources were distributed internally among villagers according to clan, phratry and moiety membership. This included coastal and river fishing, and inland hunting and gathering. In the Saru and Mukawa valleys there were customary divisions of fishing grounds into sections with groups of totem clans attributed to each section. On the coast fishing was near the estuary of large river, divided into two or more totem-based segments. At Mukawa only people from the local village (pish-un-kotan) were allowed to use the fishing ground (tomari), divided among sections called Chin and Imlope, perhaps moieties. For hunting, a village would typically have 3 hunting camps in the hills or mountains, 1 for each phratry. These could be called winter settlements or hunting camps. Each hunting camp could have 3-20+ huts; there would also be temporary lean-tos or hunting tents built in isolated spots during hunts.

Some villages, such as Memro, in early times may have had 2-3 rows of houses placed in a concentric circle. Round villages are a development from stretched-out villages, and found at a few points in the north. Their basic structure hints at totemism, with totem clans placed more or less symmetrically around a central plaza.



Memro village territory (iwor) (adapted from Watanabe 1973)

The Memro village (VI-11) had 3-4 seasonal river camps nearby, presumably phratry based, 4-6 fishing traps in the river, perhaps divided among phratry groups, and 3-4 deer hunting camps near the mountains – here indicated as: I: Memro, II: Kiusan-Kene, and III: Pipairu-Shupusan. Each river-fishing camp could have 7-8+ houses, with room for 4 descent groups or totem clans. A part of the resource use may have been moiety based, the ‘lower’ moiety utilizing parts of the Shupusan-Pipairu valleys, and the ‘upper’ moiety using the Memro-Kiusan valleys. The deer fence to the north apparently was used by a neighboring village, Sanenkoro-Nitmap, though presumably Memro had 2-3+ deer fences of its own, of unknown locations. It is also possible that a part of the area to the north belonged to Memro. The map is tentative, but it indicates the territory that was under the control of a central, totemically organized village (cf. Watanabe 1973).

A coastal village, such as Shiraoi (IV-6), would typically have a village near the mouth of a river, 2-3+ fishing areas along the coast, moiety or phratry based, 3+ fish traps along the rivers, and 3+ deer hunting camps further inland, presumably phratry based. A village would

command 2-4 large boats and 10-24+ smaller boats. The large boats could be phratry or moiety based, while one might be commanded by the chief or chiefs.

Ecology

The Ainu people's habitat was one of temperate forests in river valleys bordered by hills and mountains. The basic adaptation was one of hunting, fishing and gathering. Over an extended period of time between 800 and 1500 AD agriculture was introduced from Japan, and gradually adapted as a simple form of hoe cultivation, without disrupting earlier forms of natural exploitation. Before 1500 AD the population seems to have been stable. People lived in the same place for generations.

History

History and prehistory show that the Ainu are ancient inhabitants of Japan. They are associated with the Jomon culture, that covered most of the Japanese archipelago between 10,000 BC and 0 AD. Jomon villages often are round, with between 14 and 40+ houses placed in a circle around an open space or plaza (Imamura 1996: 94). As noted the more recent Ainu villages generally have houses placed in a row. Both of these village patterns can represent forms of totemic organization. It may be said that in the less spacious conditions along a river bank or shore the circle of houses is opened up, as it were, and placed in a line to accommodate the terrain and geographic conditions. Or conversely, in a wide open space the rows of houses are placed in a circle according to totem clans. That the Ainu have a long history in Japan is evident.

Highly specialized gathering, focused on tree-crops such as walnuts, along with early plant cultivation, allowed the Jomon people to gather in large and prosperous communities (Zgusta 2015: 52). With the arrival of the Yayoi people, ancestral to the Japanese, around 500 BC – 300 AD from Korea, the Jomon ancestors of the Ainu were gradually pushed to the north. The more intensive Yayoi economy, based on rice cultivation, led to the gradual Japanese occupation of all major islands up to northern Honshu over the next millennium. Hokkaido became the mainstay of the Ainu people, with a range from northernmost Honshu to Sakhalin and the Kuriles farthest north.

The intricacies of history are indicated by two Ainu men becoming Buddhist monks in 689 AD: 'Maro and Manawori, sons of Shiriko, of mu-dai-shi rank, Yemishi of Kikafo (Kikap) in the district of Utamu in the province of Michinoku, begged permission to shave off their head and become priests. The empress gave order', saying: 'Maro and the other, although young, are of refined tastes, and their wishes are limited; so much so that they desire nothing but vegetable food and to observe the precepts (of Buddhism). In accordance with their request, let them renounce the world and practice religion' (Aston 1989). They were not the only Ainu who turned to Buddhism at this time, in response to an early Japanese colonization attempt in northern Honshu. This would nuance the image of a hunter-gatherer adaptation; people then as now lead complicated lives. Nor was colonization quietly accepted; in 776 the Ainu stormed a Japanese fort in northern Honshu, and from then on there was a protracted effort by Japanese forces to gain control of the northernmost parts of that island, lasting until 1500 AD.

The period 1250-1600 AD has been described as a high point in Ainu cultural history. The people were in control of a fairly large homeland, and had a stable existence. Yet even this early period was not without external interventions. People such as the Mongols, Chinese,

Manchu and Japanese would invade Sakhalin and Hokkaidô from time to time between 1260 and 1500 and exact 'tribute'. Yet this was not a general colonization, but more a question of trade and affiliation. The Ainu tried to preserve their territory, and formed alliances to oppose intruding colonists, prominently marked by 'Koshamain's Rebellion' of 1456-58 (Zgusta 2015: 41). After 1500 AD the outside pressure began to grow. Japan was racked by civil wars after 1400, and around 1500 they established a fort in extreme southwest Hokkaidô. After this a Japanese expansion to the north went on in stops and starts. By 1600 AD the Japanese were playing a dominant role in trade in Hokkaidô. Instances of mass panics were noted among the Ainu after 1600, probably as a response to external colonization.

By then the Ainu population had begun to dramatically decrease for some time. Around 1250 AD there may have been 40,-50,000 natives. Epidemics may have reduced the population between 1300 and 1750 AD. Around 1643 the Ainu population supposedly had become decimated and was scattered in smaller settlements counting 20-100+ people; 2-3 such settlements could be the remnants of former large villages. Central villages might still survive; but the sources are scarce (Takakura 1960: 16). By 1785 the population may have fallen to 15,-20,000 people, and the scattered settlements had grown even smaller, counting 15-50+ people, though a few larger villages might still remain and consolidate themselves. By this date outside pressure against Ainu areas had greatly increased.

During the period 1500-1900 both totemism and matrilineal systems were weakened among the Ainu. This had nothing to do with social 'evolution', but stemmed from pressure from patriarchal social systems along with epidemic and colonial impacts from outside. Perhaps an indicator of this pressure was the gradual restriction of women's religious exercise, in particular totemic rites. Women were banned from 'praying' before 1850, because they could 'use their prayers against' their 'husbands'. They were allowed, 'even commanded', to offer 'libations' to their ancestors, supposed to be a simple offering of 'wine and food'. During this ritual the men stayed away, returning later to 'have a drinking carouse'. 'The women, however, continued to pray to the souls of the dead'; showing that women maintained their own prayers and beliefs, though gradually restricted over time as Japanese influences grew (Kubodera 1952: 242).

According to one scholar the colonial history and modern developments affecting the Ainu can be subdivided as follows:

'1514-1869: A period of intrusion.

1869-1899: A period of colonization.

1899-1968: A period of assimilation.

1968-: A period of reorganization and revitalization...' (Sjöberg 1993: 7).

This would be one way of many to subdivide the history – basically an external viewpoint.

After 1760 a general colonization of Hokkaidô by Japan got under way. The Ainu gradually began a persistent defense of their homeland against Japanese colonists, starting as early as 1644. There was a general rebellion by the Ainu in 1669-72, led by Shakushain, a famous leader. In some ways this resistance, where Ainu people fought against the Japanese army, resembled the resistance of American Indians to white settlers in North America. The resistance lasted until ca. 1780, when Japan took control in Hokkaidô. After 1850 Japan and Russia would struggle for control on Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, leading to much suffering for the natives. The Kurile Ainu would be practically exterminated by 1945, after being placed in Japanese concentration camps. Ainu people would become increasingly repressed by Japanese and Russian authorities before and after 1875, the population dropping to roughly 38% of the original.

Once the modern Japanese colonization of Hokkaido set in around 1870-73, with settlers and farming colonies, the Ainu minority came under direct threat. By 1899 a law was passed that dismantled Ainu communities and ‘resettled’ them on small plots of land, taking the rest for the Japanese settlers. Yet assimilation efforts began much earlier than 1899. ‘When scientists with an interest in the Ainu began to observe and to write’ after 1875, ‘the old way of life had been practically destroyed’ (Takakura 1960: 12). The impact would become much more strenuous after 1900. By 2000 AD the Ainu language would no longer be spoken, except by textual means. Perhaps the greatest threat to Ainu identity was Japanese nationalism. The Japanese were unwilling to acknowledge the presence of any other people but themselves. Not until 1997 would the Ainu be recognized as an indigenous group and belatedly granted some rights. By then Ainu life was changed forever, but some attempts have been made to preserve the native culture.

Economy

As noted, the basic economy was one of hunting, fishing and gathering, with some agriculture added. The main subsistence activities were fishing, mainly of salmon, and hunting, mostly of deer (Zgusta 2015: 37). This would vary somewhat from district to district, inland bands depending more on hunting, while coastal groups fished more and caught sea mammals. People gathered edible plants, berries and nuts, hunted deer and hare, and fished halibut and salmon. Plants cultivated by the Ainu included millet, deccan grass, turnip and beans. In addition people made use of raw materials such as wood, bone, skins, and newer materials such as metals. There was an extensive trade between villages, both in general products and special items such as carvings and tattooing paint.

Kinship

Relations between Ainu communities were generally friendly, with extensive intermarriage between villages. An average household around 1900 counted ca. 4.7 people. An estimate in 1650 gave 29,000 people in 6,300 household, for an average of 4.6 persons per household. A local descent group consisted of 1-3 households, most commonly in 2 houses. It is assumed that ancient Ainu houses had excavated floors, so-called ‘underground’ or semi-subterranean dwellings (Jochelson 1905: 462).

Ainu kinship has been described as both patrilineal and matrilineal. All such claims are uncertain – yet form a fascinating research topic. It is emphasized that Ainu kinship is basically bilateral in nature. The kinship system resembled the Hawaiian kinship terminology. Houses supposedly were inherited by sons, though this may be a later Japanese influence. A woman’s property was inherited by daughters, which might account for a matrilineal tendency. Such property included pots, loom and jewelry. It is tempting to say that Ainu society originally was matrilineal, that houses were kept and inherited by women. Yet the recently available information is that most property, including houses, was inherited by men. Hunters were connected through patrilineal ties in some cases, such as when hunting bears. But in general, task groups were not patrilineal, and had a varied composition. The flexibility of the descent system will be discussed further below in relation to totem clans.

Marriage restrictions may have been fairly extensive in the old days. Marriages were ‘exogamic’ (Czaplicka 1914: 101). On Sakhalin marriage was not allowed with first cousins, and may have been even more restrictive in the old days. In Hokkaidô the historical situation

is not clear. A man could marry his (classificatory) cross cousins, but only two cases of first cousins marrying were known. Probably these few cases of in-marriage was based on Japanese influences. Most likely in early times marriage was at least as restrictive as on Sakhalin, so that people mostly married outside their settlements. Marriage with related individuals supposedly was preferred, but this may simply mean people of the same age groups, since kin terms such as Br and Si were extended to everybody of similar age.

One authoritative statement was that ‘a woman was prohibited from marrying the son or brother of any female kin having the same type of upshor [belt] as hers’ (Peng & Geiser 1977: 121). This set of relations was called ‘sine-huchi-ikir’, ‘one old woman’s joints’, or a female elder’s relatives (ibid.). One implication would be that a young person’s relatives reaching back 4 generations, or 4th cousins, were off-limits in marriage, as part of a GrMo’s relations. This points to quite extensive forms of exogamy.

Even more telling was a scholar’s observation that a man would have to marry a woman from another village, since local ‘cross-cousins’ were prohibited due to exogamy on the paternal and maternal side (Peng & Geiser 1977: 137-8). The scholar imagined that marriage restrictions could be relaxed by allowing marriage between distant cousins, so that descent group cohesion could be maintained locally. Yet in a totemic organization consisting of a set group of totem clans in each village, such ‘cohesion’ was not necessary, as the totem clans formed a complementary series, all of them practicing extra-local exogamy. There might be other reasons for relaxing marriage restrictions, such as permitting young people some choice when finding a spouse in another village. It was further noted that villages would exchange marriage partners, called ‘hosipire’, ‘giving in return’. There would be lasting alliances based on marriage ties between groups of villages. As stated, ‘the goal was the maintenance of equilibrium between marriageable men and women in each kotan [village]’ (op. cit.: 139). In spite of the mounting evidence, the scholars would staunchly ignore all indications of totemism among the Ainu, a system that would explain both exogamy and marriage restrictions (op. cit.: 119).

People would marry into nearby settlements, which might refer to a fairly large area. Here patriline and matriline come into play, as people are not allowed to marry into either their Fa’s or Mo’s lineages. Considering that these are totemic units, the implication is that children could not marry people with their Fa’s or Mo’s totem, say a bird and a fish, which would limit the field of prospective spouses considerably, down to 1/3 or less. This would greatly increase the propensity to find a spouse outside the home community. Inter-marriage was the only way of obtaining full membership in a local community for outsiders.

It was said that ‘parents usually select wives or husbands for their children’, a further indication of marriage restrictions (Hitchcock 1892: 465). Marriages were usually arranged ‘through a go-between’ (ibid.). One dubious source claimed that ‘young men and women’ did ‘their own courting’ (Bachelor 1927: 195). Presumably both parents, children and matchmakers would be involved in these matters. Couples were said to have few children, ‘usually 3 or 4’ (ibid.). Again this would be fairly typical of a totemic society, in which totem clans exist in relation to other clans in the village, with little room for clan expansion.

Some sources stress the matrilineal tendency of Ainu society (Czaplicka 1914: 104). One scholar somewhat condescendingly noted that: ‘The Ainu ... count their relationships through the mother and are imbued with principles of matrilineity’ (Sternberg 1999: 37). Matrilines are called ‘huchi-ikir’, as well as ‘mat-ikir’, ‘kut’-groups, etc. Women sharing descent were

called 'one ancestress descent' (shine huchi ikiru). They regarded each other as close female relatives or sisters (menoko iriwaki). Female genealogies usually had a depth of 3-4 generations back in time. Yet the mostly male scholars seem biased on this point. One woman could name 35 women of her matriline across six generations. Another woman knew of 20+ living females in her matriline. This would indicate that matrilineal descent stayed relevant during the 20th century, and must have been basic in prehistoric times. The totemic nature of matriline is indicated by such cases as a woman being able to find a clan sister in a distant village, without any demonstrably close kinship. The word 'huchi' or 'fuchi' means 'old woman' or female elder, but also 'grandmother', ancestress and goddess. It is similar to the word for 'fire', which may indicate that this was a general term for local, totemic descent, people sharing a fire and a female ancestors (Peng & Geiser 1977).

As noted, it was said that marriage was prohibited in the matriline for four generations (mat-ikir esap utar). In modern times a woman might evade this prohibition by changing her 'chastity belt', which indicated her totem (ibid.). This tends to underscore the exogamy of matrilineal kin, that her choice of belt would influence the marriage chances. Old women would arrange marriages or investigate the totemic 'belt' inheritance in order that the exogamy ruling should not be transgressed. Old men, by contrast, pretended to know nothing about this, but affirmed the strictness of the female 'belt' exogamy. As noted, exogamy rules might extend as far as 4th cousins.

The matriline was pivotal in implementing marriages. One claim is that the MoBr had more voice in the selection of a woman's Hu than her Fa. A woman usually lived at home when having her first child. There were restrictions on sororate marriages. In some places a man could not marry two sisters, or the Si of his dead Wi. It was forbidden for two brothers to marry two sisters. In other places sororate supposedly was practiced, a widower marrying the Si of his deceased Wi, but this was infrequent. By contrast, marriage on a man's side, e.g., a (classificatory) FaBrDa, was not as strongly sanctioned; again indicating that patriline had less weight. The family ties were stronger on the woman's side than on the man's side. The MoBr was looked upon as the real head of the family, e.g., of the matriline. A Si had, in her household, more privileges than her BrWi (Peng & Geiser 1977).

It is strongly suggested that a child belonged to the Mo's clan. If a couple had no children, they could adopt one from the same clan as the Mo, with the same maternal 'belt' totem. If no such child was found, any child may be adopted and the 'belt' totem must be changed to fit the adoptive Mo.

Sources would note that matrilineal relationships were not so much insisted on by 1900; perhaps indicating that a shift in kinship had occurred, from a matrilineal emphasis to a patrilineal stress, as in Japanese society. An indication that matriline came under pressure is that female 'belt' totems (upshoro-kut) are kept secret from men. Men are supposed to have no knowledge of the belts, and are never allowed to see them. This may be read as a women's resistance against men's growing dominance in kinship matters. After 1900 women stopped making totem belts.

Patrilineal kinship is somewhat more difficult to assess among the Ainu. Masculine descent is tied up with the word 'ekashi', 'old man' or elder, in contrast to 'fuchi', 'old woman'. Unlike the ban on the sororate, levirate marriage was accepted. A widow would usually marry her deceased husband's Br, and if one should not be available, his FaBrSo or other patrilineal kin.

It seems clear that matriliney was weakened among the Ainu in the period 1500-1900, so that a matrilineally related couple could be married, by the girl changing her affiliation. In the same period patriliney seems to have been strengthened, no doubt through Japanese influence. One indication of a Japanese influence is that Ainu men became more concerned with ancestry. It was claimed that some men could trace their male ancestry for fifteen generations. By contrast, women rarely could trace more than 3-4 generations back. In some ways this underscores the prevalence of totemic matriliney, since people who share a totem, say owl, are siblings regardless of genealogy. One indication of the modern advent of patriliney is that men started talking in technical terms about 'blood' relations and 'patrilineal ascent', which would be far from totemic reckoning. All in all it can be assumed that men mostly obtained their totems through their mothers, who carried their identity as a belt around their waist. Once the Japanese took over, the men would come up with some totems and relations of their own. Since we cannot see into the past, this will have to remain a conjecture.

The descent group among the Ainu was like an extended household. Such a household would consist of a married couple, their children, and one or more parents of the couple. Sometimes a grandparent would live in a separate house nearby, but reckoned as a part of the household. As with kin reckoning, residence was bilateral, both virilocal and uxorilocal.

A further indication of a bilateral system is the male and female authority in the household. In some places the Fa was said to hold authority, in other cases the Mo. In Sakhalin the houses were controlled by women; a Mo was said to hold a higher position than her Hu. In Hokkaidô men were said to wield power at home, but this could be due to Japanese influences. A man could punish his family, but it was said that he needed to consult his chiefs and companions in these matters. In other words, as with resources, family life was a communal matter, and one task of the chiefs was to keep domestic matters peaceful.

Differentiation

Let it be clear: Ainu social organization was totemic. People shared old traditions of their descent from animals.

Potential totems include: fish (chep), sunfish, herring (heroki), mackerel, capelin (shishamo), dace, sea-bass, loach (chichira), snapper, sturgeon, cod ('erekus), tuna, seabream, flounder (samanpe, sarpa), stingray, dogfish, stickleback, mullet, puffer, trout ('ichaniw), salmon (chukchep, sipe), cherry-salmon, swordfish, shark (yupe, same), eel (nukuripe, 'okurpe), moray, whale (hunpe), spouting-whale, killer-whale (cf. sea), dolphin (tannu), seal (tukar), fur-seal ('unew), sea-lion (etaspe), shellfish (pipa), spider (ya'oskep), snake (kinasut, tokkoni), worm (kikir), turtle ('echinke), lizard (haram), dragon, frog ('o'owat, 'oponpaki, terkipe), toad, bird (chikap), lark, warbler, swallow (topinpira), martin, bulbul, kinglet, nuthatch, treecreeper, wren, wagtail, dipper (pisakku, kahkum), starling, myna, thrush, redwing, blackbird, robin, flycatcher, waxwing, weaver, sparrow (ushap, amamecir), munia, pipit, finch, bullfinch, bunting, warbler, cardinal, kingfisher, bee-eater, woodpecker, wryneck, oriole, wood-swallow, nightingale (popokechiw), shrike, jay, magpie, jackdaw, rook, crow (taskur), raven, grouse, ptarmigan, pheasant (humiruy), Indian-peafowl, quail, grebe, horned-grebe, pigeon (koysuyep), dove, wood-pigeon, turtle-dove, collared-dove, green-pigeon, sandgrouse, bustard, cuckoo, nightjar, swift, rail, crake, moorhen, coot, waterhen, duck (kopecha), shelduck, Mandarin-duck, teal, mallard-duck, tufted-duck, scaup, eider, harlequin-duck, scoter, merganser, goose (kuytop), snow-goose, swan-goose, Canada-goose, red-breasted-goose, swan, trumpeter-swan, tundra-swan, whooper-swan, crane (sarorun), sandhill-

crane, red-crowned crane, avocet, plover, lapwing, snipe, curlew, sandpiper, dowitcher, woodcock, buttonquail, skua, jaeger, murre, guillemot, auklet, puffin, kittiwake, gull (kapiw), herring-gull, noddy, tern, loon, albatross, storm-petrel, petrel, shearwater, stork, booby, cormorant, pelican, bittern, heron, egret, spoonbill, owl ('eturus, kunnerek, kamuy-chikap), fish-owl, eagle-owl, horned-owl ('ahunrasanpe), Ural-owl, osprey, kite (yatotta), kestrel, falcon, merlin, peregrine-falcon, buzzard, vulture, hawk (sichikap), harrier, sparrowhawk, eagle (kapachir), bald-eagle, sea-eagle, bat (kapap), bear (kimun, 'iso, metoh, siyuk, kuchan), brown-bear, black-bear, raccoon-dog (moyuk), badger, otter ('esaman), sea-otter (rakko), marten (hoynu), weasel, wolf (horkew), dog (seta), red-fox (hurep, chironup, sumari), bobtail-cat, cat (chape), animal (siknap, tusap, chikoykip), deer (yuk, 'apka), sika-deer, horse ('unma), cow (peko), sheep, boar, wild-pig, pig (puta), mouse ('erum), pika, shrew, vole, rat, mole, squirrel (tusunike, ruwop, niueo), flying-squirrel, chipmunk, hare ('isepo), rabbit, macaque, tree (ni), pine, fir (sunku), birch, alder, oak, ash-tree, forest, man, house, boat, stone, earth (moshir), mountain (kimun), fire (ape), sky (kanda), wind (rera), thunder (kanna), water (wakka), sea (rep-un) (cf. whale), rain, river (petor-un), moon (rikoma), sun (chup), etc. What seems obvious is that the Ainu had plenty of totem creatures to choose from! In the list, 26 animals are classed as fish, snake or aquatic, 132+ as birds, 12 as meat-eating animals, 18 as plant-eating animals, and 14+ as trees and other entities. There is a hint here why birds are prominent as totems in the North – they are prevalent in the landscape.

The better known Ainu totems included: fish (chep-atte), sunfish, dace (spun, kamui-chep), flounder (sarpa), salmon (kamui-chep, chep), cherry-salmon, trout (chirai), swordfish (shirikap, pirikap), whale (rep-un, rep-un-kamui), spouting-whale, killer-whale (chôhay-kup, rep-un), dolphin, grampus-dolphin (rep-un), seal (tokri, chep-atte, atui-kor), turtle (echinke), snake (kinashut, hoyau, okokko, tokkoni, paskuru), bullhead, lizard, dragon (kanna-kamuy), shellfish (pipa), hornet, spider (yôshkep), bird, kingfisher (satchini), dipper (katken, kahkum, pisakku), sparrow, thrush, starling, ousel, woodpecker, grouse, jay (metot-eyami), crow (pashkuru, kararat), carrion-crow (pashkur), raven, duck, goose, gull (shiratki), albatross, swan, crane, snipe, owl (eturus, kamui-chikap, kotan-kor, humse), eagle-owl, great-owl (humse), kite, hawk, fish-hawk, falcon, eagle (kapachiri), bear (iso, metot-ush, kim-un, kim-un-kamui), brown-bear, badger (moyuk), otter, marten, weasel, ermine, raccoon-dog (moyuk), tiger, wolf (korokey, horokeu, korokey-kamui), dog (seta, riep), fox (sumari, chiron-up, chironup-kamui, shitumbe-kamui), red-fox, black-fox (shitumpe, chiron-up), deer (yuk-atte), rabbit, hare (isepo, osukep, isepo-kamui, isepo-kut), tree (chikuni), woods (shirampa), house (chisei-kor), door (apasam), boat, woman (huchi, kamui-fuchi), man, culture-hero (♀/♂) (aoina, a-e-oina-kamui), earth, land, ground (moshir-huchi, yaun), mountain (chishitu-konuye, kimun), sky (kanto-kor, kanda, aoina, aeoina), north-wind (matnau), water (wakka-ush, wakka-ush-kamui), river (petor-un), sea (rep-un), thunder (kanna), fire (ape, fuchi, huchi), hearth (huchi), sun (chup, rikoma), moon (rikoma, kunne-chup), etc.

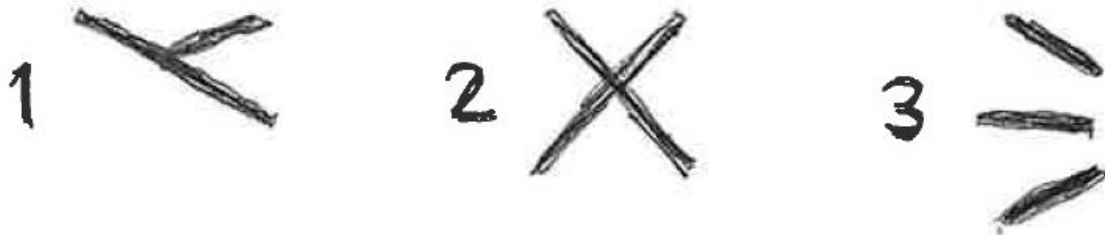
Among this wide array of natural progenitors, the following are among the most common: fish, seal, whale, snake, bird, crow, snipe, owl, hawk, bear, raccoon-dog, wolf, fox, deer, hare, fire and water. These in turn can be divided into 4 phratries: fish-snake, bird-owl, bear-wolf, and fire-water. Each phratry would have at least 2 totems, divided into 1+ for each moiety or side of the village.

There are indications that the culture hero is female or bisexual, since s/he is taught how to make 'chastity belts', which only women can see or wear. Due to the secrecy, precisely which totems are prevalent in a local community will be a matter of discovery. Unfortunately the situation is no longer directly observable, since local totemic systems have disintegrated long

time ago. Even the female belts have disappeared (as far as is known). What is left are numerous vestiges of totemic groups and hints at local forms of totemic organization.

First of all there is the rich array of totemic symbols among the Ainu, almost countless. Below an attempt is made to list the various forms of symbols used by people to indicate a totem. As will be seen there are different symbols for men and women. The presentation will start with some signs for totems in general.

Totems, like animals, may be referred to as 'deities' (kamui, kamuy). Some totemic symbols of note include: fish, sunfish, salmon, whale, killer-whale, dolphin, owl, bear, wolf, animal, deer, etc. (Kôno 1936). This is just one contribution among the many partial descriptions of Ainu totemism. A general word for a totemic emblem is 'shirushi', 'shiroshi' or 'sirosi', translated as 'mark' or 'sign'; this seems to be a Japanese word (Hattori 1964).



Ainu phratry totems (shirushi): 1: sea, whale or fish; 2: mountain, bear or animal; 3: sky or bird (Kôno 1936: 49).

Clothing patterns (moreu) supposedly carry a totemic significance, such as whale, owl, bear, etc., highly stylized (op. cit.: 86f). Most sources simply note the beautiful clothing patterns without analyzing them, at least not in any totemic sense.

For men there are a wealth of totemic and clan signs, or personal emblems, of 5-8 different kinds. The most prominent male emblem is called: 'itokpa', 'itoppa' or 'ekashi itokpa', the 'elder's mark' = an engraving on a stick or wood made 'for deities' or animals; this is also called a male ancestor mark and totemic mark. An 'itokpa' could be received from a Wi or WiFa by a man marrying into the woman's group; called 'matchama itokpa', 'itokpa of a woman's side'. This man had to observe the rituals associated with the WiFa's descent group, e.g., at the Bear Ceremony (Peng & Geiser 1977). The itokpa had some qualities of being a 'secret' symbol. Its engravings would show only a part of an animal, such as the footprint of a bear or a bird, or the fin of a grampus-dolphin. It served as a kind of property mark or personal mark, also engraved on sticks with shavings (inau).

The next type of symbols are decorated men's hair-bands or head-gear. The most general term was: 'sapa-un-pe', 'thing on the head', denoting a type of headgear worn by men, with different forms for the young and old. Its ornaments included: salmon, owl, bear, wolf, animal, etc. A special type was called: 'inauru' or 'shavings fetish' = the younger men's crowns; supposedly they had no totem marks – though this may have varied. More distinct was the: 'ekashpa-umbe' or 'elder's crown'; this would have carved images of totems: salmon, dolphin-grampus, sparrow, jay, kite, falcon, eagle, owl, bear, wolf, fox, etc. Some scholars do not consider these carvings to be totems. This would depend on which family they represented, the man's or the Wi's patriline or matriline – and what it would signify to the people involved. Here it almost seems that the latter is the case, this is not the man's totem, but the matriline he represents, one of the descent groups occupying the village. This would then indicate that patrilines did not really become established until well into the 19th century,

since the nature of the totemic carvings was not clear. Men might also content themselves with taking a few ‘masculine’ totems, regardless of kinship, such as bear, whale and fox. Once colonization gave men prominence, these could then become family marks, though perhaps not properly totemic.

By far the most artistic tokens were the ornately carved ‘prayer-sticks’, ‘iki-pasui’ or ‘iku-pasuy’; these often included totemic symbols. The carved sticks were sometimes referred to as ‘moustache lifters’, somewhat disrespectfully. They were used by elders when making ablutions of wine. The ‘iku-pasui’ carvings included: fish, carp, flounder, salmon, swordfish, shark, whale, killer-whale, narwhale, dolphin, seal, walrus, snake, lizard, bird, sparrow, hen, gull, swan, owl, kite, eagle, bear, dog, fox, tiger, animal, deer, hare, arrow, boat, tree, oak, flower, fire, water, sun, etc. Three patterns, water or whale, bird or owl, and animal or bear, may represent basic phratry distinctions. The totem carvings on the prayer-sticks were sometimes referred to as family ‘marks’ (shirushi). Each totem clan may have had its own mark, today poorly known. For instance, the fish or whale sign could be modified by adding lines for fins, a mouth or other embellishment to indicate a certain kind of sea creature. This would be up to the person making the carving, and usually the provenience of collected objects is unknown.

Another prominent type of male-manufactured signs were: ‘inau’ sticks – which are sticks with wood shavings attached. These were incised with totemic (itokpa) signs such as: fish, whale, grampus, snake, turtle, bird, kingfisher, eagle-owl, bear, deer, hare, tree, man, fire, earth, mountain, water, wind, sky, thunder, sun, etc. Some of these are not clan totems but village totems. Inau were seen as the guardian spirits of houses; a house is considered a female deity, but the inau were not gender specific. Inau also would protect people, villages, animals and the environment. These symbols may have been originally clan or totemic signs. In the old days the elders may have been the local representatives of matrilineal totemic clans. The badges (itokpa) they used on carvings and sticks would correspond to the totem of their respective clans. Only after 1600 AD, with Japanese contact, may it have become imperative for men to have their ‘own’ totems, though these may largely have been personal. One curious way of stating this in the sources, is that one patriline could have different totems, while the same totem animal could be found in distinct patrilines. This would fit well if men took the totems of their Mos or Wis.

What is striking is that the male symbols get infinitely more attention in the scholarly sources than female symbols, which are basically unknown. That there is a male bias in Ainu research seems clear (cf. Ardener 1972). Basically only one form of female symbol with a totemic significance is known, that may well be the most prominent sign of all, even though hardly noted by scholars in any extended way – perhaps not paradoxically. This is what is known as: ‘kut’, ‘upshoro kut’ or ‘upshor-kut’ = a ‘chastity belt’ or woman’s belt. This was a woven and decorated belt worn by women under their clothes; it was also called the ‘most hidden thing’ (a-eshimukep). The form of the belt was passed on from Mo to Da. Women who wore the same belt pattern were said to be of ‘one belt’ (shine upshor), and sharing the same totem. It was prohibited to show the belt ‘to other people’, making the study of this artefact difficult (Segawa 1952: 246).

Each belt design was supposed to represent a matrilineal group or totem clan. This led one scholar to doubt if that many different forms existed, thinking that there are many groups of female relatives. Yet the main distinction is between the totemic groups found locally, the totem clans that together form the local community. If there are 6 basic totems in each village,

only 6 designs are needed, and these would cover every Ainu community where the same totems are found, as a kind of minimum. In the literature some 14-16+ belt designs have been reported; perhaps as many as 20+. Each belt is characterized by a unique pattern or waft, as well as other elements, such as the end clasp; but the waft ensured distinctiveness (Segawa 1952). The scholars did not grasp what this meant. They thought the design was too limited, that it had to be different everywhere, and failed to see the local significance of clans. So they noted repeatedly that 'chastity belts' were symbols of totemic, matrilineal descent groups, but almost never examined what totem each belt represented. In addition, women as noted were unwilling to reveal their totems, since this was a well-hidden secret, highly private. In this collision of misunderstandings and secrecy, the meaning of the belts was never clarified.

More or less by accident several of the totems held by women are known: whale, snake, bird, snipe, crane, eagle, bear, badger, raccoon-dog, wolf, fox, deer, hare, water, etc. (Batchelor 1927). It is noteworthy that this information was gathered by foreign travelers and missionaries, not by ethnographic scholars. The female 'belt' totems are generally referred to as 'gods' (kamui). This would indicate a well-established reference. The women knew precisely what totems the belts are referring to.

There are clear stories of the origin of female totem clans. One is that the mother goddess taught the culture hero, perhaps female, how to make totem belts, which s/he then taught to women. Another is that the mother goddess gave instructions to various female gods who then assumed animal form and became the totem animals found in each village. The belts were given by the mother goddess as a token of people's descent from particular totem animals. No woman could approach the fireplace unless she was wearing her belt (Segawa 1952).

Of the female hare totem (isepo kamui) it was said that its members were protected from the occurrence of harelip. One view was that members of the hare clan were of lower status than other 'belt' totems, because a beautiful hare maiden was seen by a hunter while weaving her belt, and she became the 'hare god', the ancestress of the hare clan (ibid.). This would be an example of what is usually referred to as a clan story or animal story. In this case there is a twist. The original story no doubt was that a hunter saw a beautiful hare maiden, married her, and their offspring became the hare clan. The somewhat malicious twist is that he saw her belt, a shockingly immoral claim, which was a way to put down the hare clan. This becomes an instance of what is known as 'clan joking'. People with different totems will tell jokes about each other, and the moral is that those who are joked about should answer with jokes of their own. That the hare clan had a low status probably is completely wrong. In many northern cultures the hare has a high status. So what has happened is not quite clear. This may be a bit of malicious joking, or it may be that historical events, such as Japanese colonization, did not fare well with the hare clan or other leading clans. In North America the hare or rabbit clan represented peace, and once American settlers started attacking the Indians this clan tended to lose prevalence.

What seems clear is that the female 'belt' totems strongly suggest the presence of matrilineal totemic clans, at least in the former, more peaceful days. Sadly the story behind each belt is not known; in fact, women staunchly refused to discuss the belts with the prying Japanese inquirer (Segawa 1952). Other female symbols are practically unknown; there are vague references to 'trophies' and 'charms', the latter perhaps a variant term for the women's belts (kut), though possibly indicating personal decorations of some sort. Yet the women's symbols may be the key to unlocking the plethora of totemic references among the Ainu.

Finally mention may be made of a ritual called 'pase onkami', said to be a cult of a common principal deity, considered totemic. This is an ancestor ritual held on a family or clan level. Little information is available on this practice, which is significant since it would combine male and female totemic references in a descent group or totem clan; perhaps similar to a Shawnee ghost feast, in which a family invites members of other clans to a feast commemorating its ancestors.

Ainu words for a clan or descent groups were gender differentiated, including a patriline or patrilineal kinfolk, 'ekashi-ikir', and a matriline or matrilineal descent, 'huchi-ikir'. The word 'ikir' or 'ikiru' has been translated as 'joint', indicating an ancestral line or descent, perhaps bilateral, in the sense of descendants. An 'ekashi-ikiru' usually was scattered in different local groups; there were no 'localized' clans. As noted, the 'chastity belt' (kut) was the main indicator of matrilineal descent.

The debate as to whether the Ainu have 'clans' is curious, because most scholars have no clear understanding on the subject. They get confused by patrilineal, matrilineal and bilateral tendencies, and how this 'mix' goes against their ideas of clanship. The scholars' idea is that a 'clan' should be identifiable in formal terms through kinship and property.

By contrast, a local, totemic clan is a residential group settled in a village together with a series of other, complementary clans. Scholars did not study clanship on the ground, e.g., the distribution of totems in a village, but thought of an abstract incorporated group that existed independently of a place through principles of kinship or descent. So they did not examine the full range of totem clans found in a village – down to the level of each resident's emblems and name.

One book has a curious juxtaposition of matrilineal and patrilineal descent among the Ainu (Peng & Geiser 1977: 102-117). The idea was that men had one form of descent and women another, parallel to each other. That this notion is misconstrued and fails to consider the changing historical situation of the Ainu seems clear. The different forms of descent relate to historical events going back more than 500 years. The so-called patrilineal lines are based on Japanese influences since before 1500 AD, becoming dominant after 1870. The matrilineal descent forms, on the other hand, go much farther back, and have continued until recent times as local and poorly investigated social relations. Comparing patrilineal and matrilineal lines is like juxtaposing apples and bicycles: the contexts and implications are different.

One way of looking at the 'juxtaposed' or 'dual' lineage system would be to consider male and female lines as occupying different positions in the early historical village. There would be a 'front' of male (ekashi) descent and a 'back' of persisting female (huchi-ikir) descent over a period of time around 1750-1900. One might ask how this would work in practice. Obviously there could not be both female and male descent at the same time in one location. A house would have to be inherited or taken over by either a So or Da. And houses were arranged according to totems, salmon, owl, bear, fox and so on. At the 'front' would be a man (ekashi) representing the totem clan, say owl. At the 'back' would be descent in the female line (huchi-ikir), such as a line of female owls.

Residence could be patri-, matri- or bi-local. In the patrilocal or virilocal case a So would represent the clan, an owl elder (ekashi). His Wi would then represent the same clan as an in-married member (huchi-ikir by marriage). In the matrilocal or uxori-local case there would be a continuing line of owl women (huchi-ikir) as a Da took over the house. Her Hu would then

represent the clan externally, as an adopted or acting owl clan representative and elder (ekashi). In a bi-local or quasi-neolocal case a new couple would take over the house. Say the old couple did not have Chn – the new couple would then be their adopted or foster Chn, perhaps just one, an adopted So or Da, who then married. If the house belonged to the owl clan, then the new couple would represent that clan, as did the old couple.

Significantly the bi-local practice of receiving a new couple to perpetuate the descent group or totem clan, may account for the rapid genetic ‘Japanization’ of the Ainu. An old couple would adopt or ‘receive’ a Japanese child, usually a girl, to continue their household. This child would then marry a Japanese spouse, and their successor would be considered to be Ainu, but would be of Japanese parentage (Peng & Geiser 1977: 21, 140-1, 146-153). The apparent ease with which Ainu couples received Japanese children in lieu of their own became a tool in the government’s assimilation of the Ainu during the 19th century, that did not investigate why people received outside children freely, or what bi-local descent entailed, but saw it as a quick manner of genetic ‘cleansing’ – better known as eugenics; a dark ethnic chapter.

The totemic organization would continue whether succession was patri-, matri- or bi-‘lineal’. A totem clan, say owl, would continue as a part of the local set of complementary clans, regardless of the form of descent. There would always be an ‘ekashi’ and a ‘huchi-ikir’ representing the owl clan as well as every other clan in the village. And the descent would not be an ‘illusion’; those who represented the clan would identify with its totem, e.g., as owl people. A somewhat fraught comparison would be a modern family firm, say Baker B, where family members represented the firm for generations, regardless of which child took over or if a new family moved in; the firm would persist as long as somebody filled the family position and ran the company.

Yet among the Ainu what really persisted was the female line (huchi-ikir); this would never be a ‘front’ representation but always a ‘back’ group of women who saw themselves as related, and who would persist in this knowledge into the 20th century – in spite of Ainu society being destroyed by Japanese colonizers. Mos and Das would continue to share their secret totem, e.g., as ‘owl’ women. If occasionally – or more and more frequently – a So would take over and a DaLa moved in from another village and clan, say bear or fox, she then would come to represent the ‘owl’ clan. And if one or more Das had to move out, perhaps settling in another village and marrying into other clans such as bear or fox, they would be owl women representing the bear, fox or any other clan. The wafts of their belts (upshor) would be different, but that would be their secret, and when they wove the belts for their Das the waft would keep the secret. One day a DaDaDaDa might return to the same village and the same clan, e.g., owl, and her belt would remain intact. Or the female line might constitute the same household in the village and represent the owl totem for generations – in either case the belt would stay the same, with minor variations over time.

The male elder (ekashi) on the other hand would select his own emblem (itokpa), and no-one would question its significance. He might say it represented his totem 30 generations back, but he still represented the owl clan in a house filled with owl women, who firmly reckoned their bond through the relations between women across the generations. Each woman had her secret belt, and each of them would be acutely aware of the persisting bond between female relations.

It was the real ties that counted, the here and now of being in a village with a set of totem clans and residing in a house that represented one of those clans, such as owl. All of this may

sound highly tentative and speculative. It would take a detailed analysis of local descent and residence in every Ainu village before 1899 AD, by whatever information that is available, to determine which form of descent persisted and was practiced over time. But that Sos or Das took over residences and continued living in the villages is a baseline occurrence – until all the villages were destroyed by the Japanese and people were forced to relocate. And that both male and female lines persisted is a baseline set-up, the female lines more definite than the male, through the secret belts handed down from Mo to Da, a bond that could never be broken. A man would carve his symbol (itokpa) as he wanted, ostensibly the same as his forebears, but perhaps that of his FaLa or BrLa, and with countless variants and personal embellishments over time. Simply assuming that a man who carved a bear on his ‘moustache lifter’ (pasui) was a ‘bear’, could be a serious mistake. Only the man himself would know what totem he considered to be his own. And the knowledge of what it was would be shared in confidence, not revealed to a stranger who had no business knowing about it.

As will be noted I made some faux pas in this regard when visiting Hokkaidô, on the ethnic level. Simply assuming that people were Ainu, turned out not to be an acceptable approach. Social relations have to be learned from the inside, and it takes time to establish what kind of relationship people had – time I unfortunately did not have. Yet it always pays to listen and to pay attention to what people say. As will also be noted I have made the same mistake more than once, putting my foot in my mouth, which is how my mind works, yet is something I keep trying to overcome. Sometimes assumptions or presumptions are difficult to avoid, but inside or ‘deep’ knowledge is the insight that is strived for.

So scholars would claim that Ainu clanship was handed down patrilineally from Fa to So, or matrilineally from Mo to Da. There would then be two opposite principles that could not be reconciled, since people would either live with their Mo’s or Fa’s kin. The only way to sort this out would be to trace the residence of people back in time, to get an idea about rules of residence and local belonging. One reason why this could not be done, was that Ainu society had been devastated by Japanese colonization before ethnologists arrived. Also, census material was usually lacking. Yet an effort should still be made to get detailed information.

Each community would consist of a certain number of clans. As indicated, 6 would be a minimum number of clans, divided into 3 phratries and 2 moieties or village sides. In larger communities there would be 12+ clans. Each clan would constitute an extended household, or 1-4 close households. It would occupy 1-3+ houses. The largest villages would have 30+ clans, with totems distinguished by qualifiers such as ‘big’ and ‘little’ owl.

The idea that a clan had a territorial unity was a commonly held misconception by scholars. It was assumed that clans could aggregate into larger groups, and that all descended from a common male ancestor. Such was not the case. What was found on the ground was a mixture of totemic clans that together made up the local community. Each group would have a different totemic symbol (‘itokpa’ or ‘kut’). What caused extra confusion was that not only clans, but also phratries and whole villages could have totemic symbols (‘shirushi’). Scholars guessed that settlements formerly had one totem, with shared patrilineal descent, which is a basic misunderstanding. As noted elsewhere, the level of organization has to be considered when studying totemism. There are personal, clan, phratry, moiety, village and tribal totems. That a whole nation shares an animal symbol, does not mean that every person has the same totem. Totems only gain meaning when contrasted with other totems, and the main social level at which this occurs on a daily basis is between the different descent groups or totemic clans in a village.

Scholars often are unable to fathom this complexity. In one case it was thought the whole settlement (kotan) had the same totem (itokpa), but instead of representing a lineage this totem served to consolidate the community as a territorial group. So people would still have their clan totems, distinct from that of the village as a whole. More perceptive scholars would note that each family had its own totem. A major problem in studies of Ainu totemism, as also found around the world, is that scholars turn totemism into an intellectual problem, speculating about the concept of 'totem', without describing actual totems or trying to identify the distribution of totems. They may mention that totems are animals, but without describing what specific totem each person and each family carries, fish, whale, owl, eagle, bear, fox, and so on. This should actually be the starting point, to identify the distribution of every totem in a community. One mitigating factor is that people resist stating their totem to a stranger, since it is private and in many ways secret. Yet without obtaining a list of totems the description of totemism will be mostly speculative – like describing a fabric without threads!

There is a striking similarity between Japanese and Russian scholarship on the topic of totemism. Scholars will write volumes discussing totems, whether there is one, two or more totems in a community. Yet they hardly ever try to identify the totems by name, or distinguish one totem from another. Hence the reading becomes opaque and intellectual, with no reference to conditions on the ground. In particular it seems that both Japanese and Russian scholars have an aversion to identifying people with animals, which is what totemism 'is': 'I am a wolf'. Even mentioning animals as a part of social life seems aversive to some scholars, like bringing a snake into your home. In spite of modern qualms, it should be noted that traces of totemism survive in Japan, a topic that cannot be entered further into here, though it may have some relevance to the Ainu case, as historically related people.

An Ainu village not only included 6-30+ totem clans, patri-, matri- or bi-linear, but the clans were divided into 2 sides or moieties and 3-4 clan groups or phratries. Starting with the latter unit, a phratry is usually considered to be a group of closely related clans, such as those with similar totems, like salmon, swordfish and dolphin, all being sea or water creatures. Phratry is a problematic term, because it has a gender aspect. When groups are matrilineal, there should be a female alternative, such as 'matry' or 'sororatty', but such terms are not generally used and can be confusing when kin relations are bilateral. Hence 'phratry' will be used as a conventional reference both to matrilineal and patrilineal groups of clans. One Atsuma location was described as having 3 local groups, probably phratries that were part of a large community.

An Ainu community would usually have 3 phratries, though possibly 2-4+. Phratries were generally identified with totems. One phratry headed by 'bear' also had: raccoon-dog, wolf, fox, deer, hare, etc. Another phratry had 'owl' and: eagle, jay, crow, snipe, kingfisher, etc. A third had 'whale' with: swordfish, seal, salmon, spider, snake, etc. In addition, a fourth unit termed 'water', 'fire' or 'earth' also had: woods, fire, sun, thunder, sky, etc. The groupings suggested here are only tentative. As noted there could also be more general terms for phratries, 'sea', 'mountain', 'sky' and perhaps 'water', 'fire' or 'earth'. Unfortunately little is known about Ainu phratries, apart from the marks (shirushi) that identify them.

The topic of moieties is better known; that villages are divided into sides such as 'upper' and 'lower' or 'north' and 'south'. A village or town (kotan, utar) generally was divided into two moieties. The two sides had a varied relevance, but mainly they mirrored each other. Moieties were active in terms of trade, political alliances and warfare. Moieties can be distinguished as

‘water’ and ‘fire’, two prominent totems that both are considered female. Other designations are ‘upper’ and ‘lower’, as noted, and ‘air’ or ‘land’ as well as ‘earth’ and ‘sea’. The ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ distinction is complicated by the more or less frequent occurrence of a ‘middle’ village area. Words for the ‘upper’ half include ‘penke’ and ‘peni’, as in ‘peni un utaru’, ‘people above’. The ‘lower’ section is called ‘panke’ and ‘pana’, e.g., ‘pana un utaru’, ‘people below’. The term ‘petom-un utaru’ may refer either to the lower or middle sections of a settlement. Possible recorded names for moieties include Imoppe and Chin.

In Ainu culture, 6 was used as a symbolic number for a group, the number of prayer-sticks (inau) often being 6. This may relate to the number of clans found in each moiety, 6 on each side of the village, in addition to chiefly clans. The number could be easily doubled, to 12+, depending on the size of the village.

The local totemic organization

One major obstacle in trying to outline the totemic outlook of villages, is that no local analyses exist. The topic of totems is usually mentioned in passing. A typical example is a reference to the ‘guardian deity’ of families, ‘bear, owl, fox, dolphin, etc.’ (Sugiura & Befu 1962: 291). The authors make no attempt to describe the animal ‘emblem or crest’ of each family, instead curiously dismissing the topic as non-totemic (*ibid.*). The topic of totemism is dismissed even before it is studied, something the Japanese scholars have in common with their Russian colleagues and other modern investigators; e.g., ‘animals’ do not ‘share flesh and blood in common with’ human ‘ancestors’ (*ibid.*). With such a biased approach any study of totemism is inconceivable. Apart from a brief and negative mention, the scholars strenuously avoid any references to ‘animals’ when discussing ‘descent’ (*op. cit.*: 291f).

This entails that, as in other parts of North Asia, data on totemism and local totemic organizations have to be gleaned from countless sources, sifted from the more or less reluctant accounts of ethnographers, missionaries, travelers and others, and related to poorly understood and little investigated local social life.

In spite of such shortcomings and obstacles it becomes clear that in the not too distant past the Ainu had a full-fledged and complex system of local totemic organizations. What follows is an attempt to synthesize what the author has learned about local totemic units.

The following are attempts to reconstruct the clan distribution in villages (with variations):

(Uppermost part of village:)

(moiety A: upper)

(phratry I: bear)

- | | | |
|---------|-------------|-----|
| 1. bear | deer | |
| 2. wolf | *hare | fox |
| | raccoon-dog | |

(phratry II: owl)

- | | | |
|---------|---------|--------------------|
| 3. owl | sparrow | dipper (messenger) |
| 4. crow | jay | crow |
| | snipe | eagle |

(phratry III: fish or whale)

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|------------------------|
| 5. whale | grampus, whale | dolphin, spider, white |
| 6. salmon | seal | salmon, fish |
| | | swordfish |

(phratry IV: water) (moiety chief: air)		
7. fire	thunder	thunder, red, sky, air (messenger)
	sun	house (sub-chief)
		earth, sea (priest, holy chief, 'peace chief')
(moiety B: lower)		
(phratry IV: water) (moiety chief: earth)		
8. water	water	woods, blue, land (messenger)
	ground	fire (sub-chief)
		water (chief, principal chief, 'war chief')
(phratry I: bear)		
9. deer	bear	(phratry III) (alternative order of phratries)
10. fox	wolf	snake, black
	fox	seal, raccoon-dog
		whale (chief)
(phratry II: owl)		
11. kingfisher	owl	(phratry II)
12. eagle	hawk	kingfisher
	eagle	jay
		owl (holy chief)
(phratry III: fish)		
13. seal	salmon	(phratry I)
14. swordfish	snake	hare
	trout	wolf
		bear (holy chief)
(Lowermost part of village)		

The 'upper' part of the village may also be referred to as 'west' or 'south', the 'lower' as 'east' or 'north'. Apparently having the rows of houses facing a shore to the west or north was avoided, or the layout was modified in some way, such as reversing the order of totem clans. The direction of the village facing the shore was called 'front', 'sea' or 'south' side, and the opposite was the 'back', 'mountain' or 'north' side. At the uppermost corner was a 'shrine' thought to be male, and at the lowermost corner a female 'shrine' or monument; possibly this was based on Japanese influences.

Needless to say countless local permutations are possible in the local distribution of clans. As a simple case, a hawk could take the place of an eagle as a totem. In more complex cases, totemic units can shift and be distributed in different ways.

Some totems available for permutations include:

fish, marine-fish, salmon, trout,
whale, killer-whale, seal, swordfish, shark
bird, kingfisher, jay, snipe
eagle, hawk, owl (with varieties)
bear, raccoon-dog, wolf, fox, tiger
deer, hare, squirrel
house, white, black, red, blue
sea, water, river
earth, mountain, sky, thunder, fire, sun

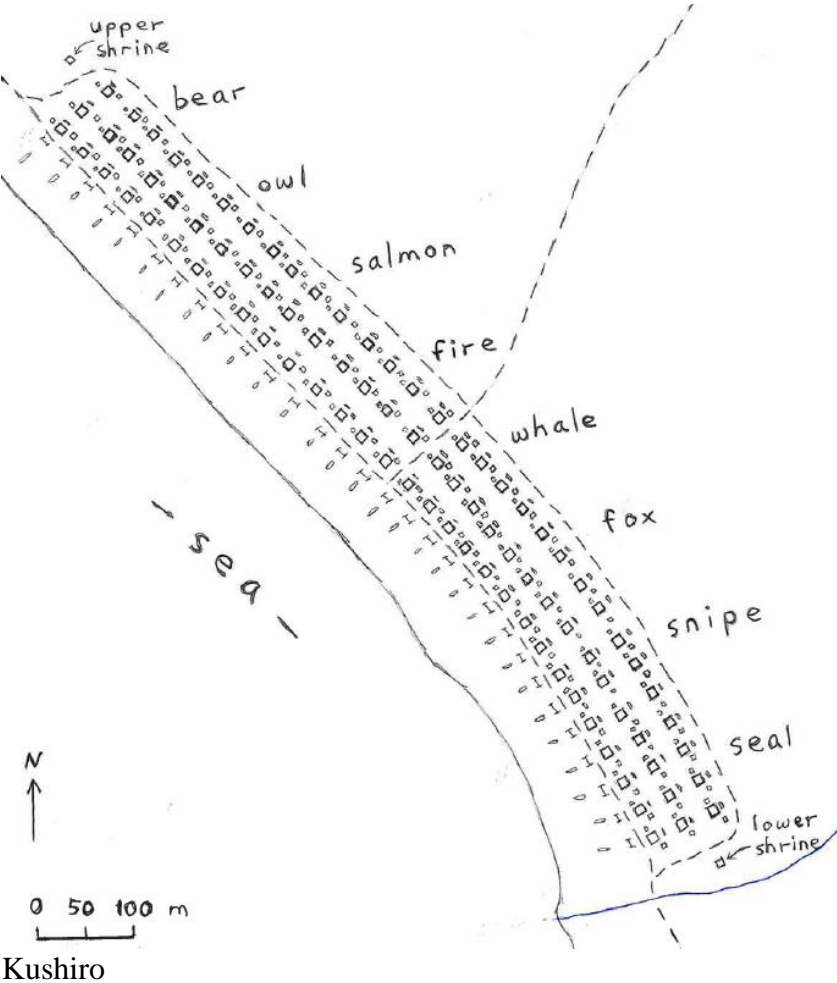
This list is meant to indicate or demonstrate that for each totemic position there are at least 3 pertinent totems to choose from. The system can be expanded from 6-7+ totem clans to 14-30+ clans in each village community.

In the simplest system there would only be 6 clans, 2 for each phratry, each associated with 1+ house, for a minimum of 6 houses. There might even be a partial village with only 3-4 houses from time to time. In the most complex village layout there would be 14+ clans, perhaps with a few partner clans, occupying up to 60+ houses. The size and make-up of the local clan system would depend on the extent of the community's territory and resources. In a small valley a simple village with 6 or so clans may be found, while in a major area with coastal and inland stretches some of the largest villages would reach a high degree of complexity, while still based on a system of totemic clans that served to distribute and manage rights in land and resources.

Villages with 6 clans may have included Taraika on Sakhalin, where 6 'men' attacked an Orok village, killing several people, leading to retaliations. Probably the number of men was greater, representing 6 clan groups. It must be kept in mind that historical villages had lost many people and were much smaller than prehistoric villages.

In the old days, a village with 14-16 clans, 25-35 houses and 160-200 people could be considered 'small'. At the same time, a village with 24+ clans in 4 phratries, 50-60 houses and 250-300+ people would be considered 'large'. This would contrast with modern times when an Ainu village with 10 houses would be considered 'big'.

At Kushiro there may have been a village with 50+ houses or 250+ people. It would cover a stretch of roughly 800 m along the shore. As late as 1939 there were 4 totems (ekashi-itokpa) kept by Kushiro people, then a Japanese city.



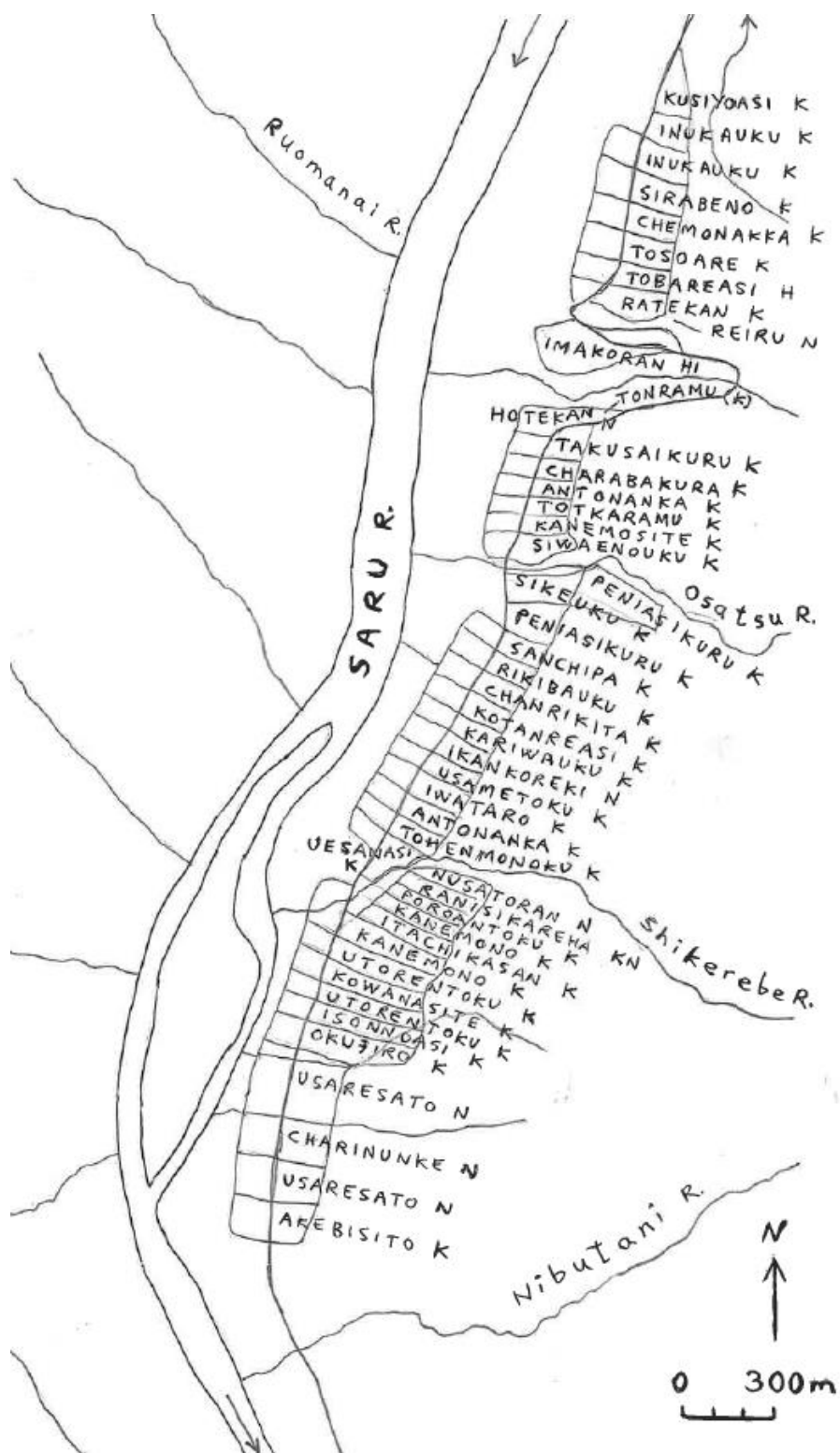
A tentative map of Kushiro ca. 1250 AD. There may have been 2-3+ rows of houses. The number of houses in each row may have varied. It is thought that each house had a couple of store houses and a ritual stand or 'sacred hedge' (nusa) in the rear. A hypothetical and partial totemic distribution has been included. Curiously some of the house lots seem to correlate to today's city layout. The upper and lower 'shrine' may be based on Japanese influences. There may have been a communal area at the rear of the village, roughly where Chûô Elementary School is today.

Compare the following description of a somewhat reduced village in 1873: 'Urapú [Yurap] is an Aino village of some fifty houses... [It] consists of three lines of huts with each a store which is erected on stilts, each hut with its store being placed about thirty or forty yards from its neighbours' (Bridgford 1874: 90-91).

Memro may have had 12-16 clans, 23-30+ houses and 170+ people in 1250 AD. The clans were divided into 3 phratries and 2 moieties. This organization ensured an intricate and sustainable exploitation of local resources. For instance, the hunting area was divided fairly equally into 3 sections, one for each phratry. There would be 4 fish weirs in the river, one for each phratry plus an extra one for the chiefs' clans. As noted from the map, the situation might be a little more complicated, with at least 6 fish traps, though all need not have been used at the same time. And one area of hunting cabins may have housed 2 phratries, while the other two hunting sections might be held by a third phratry and the chiefly clans. The aim is simply to show that resource areas were managed, utilized and preserved, based on the village's totemic organization. This organization ensured ample resources for all. Each family would find enough resources for their needs. In addition, the chiefs would lay aside a store of food that could be offered to visitors and people in need; a form of redistribution.

Historical Nibutani would retain the form of earlier Ainu villages while serving as a refuge and reorganization area for people from decimated areas. This not only concerns Nibutani, but the Saru valley and the neighboring Hidaka district in general. Displaced Ainu tried to recover their community life by resettling in this outlying area. The added population strength made it possible for people to retain parts of earlier village patterns. After 1890 Japanese colonization would disrupt local villages everywhere through resettlement, while people continued to attempt rescuing their community life.

In another case one village, Fushikopet, was forcibly resettled and renamed Nisshin by the Japanese, suffering a gradual decreased in population from 50 households in 1899, via 40 in 1923 and 48 in 1931 to 36 household by 1964, at which time 116-120 people remained, partly Japanese (Peng & Geiser 1977: 63-66). By the latter date some 28 traditional families remained, possibly representing an earlier organization of 12-14 totem clans (op. cit.: 74).



Nibutani-Piratori 1902 (after forced relocation) (based on Ôbuya 1941: 105-7). People were given Japanese surnames: H = Hikawa; HI = Hiramura; K = Kaizawa; KN = Kawanano; N = Nibutani.

The resettlement practice resembled the so-called allotment policy in USA, where Indians were resettled on small plots of land called ‘allotments’, while settlers took over most of the land; soon the allotted areas also would be taken by settlers. In similar manner the Ainu came under pressure from Japanese settlers once the colonization of Hokkaido started in earnest

around 1890. The Ainu would try to retain their local areas and communities, but their social system was broken up by the relentless pressure from outside. An awareness of the ancient totemic organization would linger on into the 21st century.

In the old days Ainu society was basically egalitarian. In later and modern times social differences would enter from the outside. An early distinction was between ‘chiefs’ and ‘commoners’, that at the outset were closely united. The chief was the first among equals. Under Japanese rule this distinction became unequal, as chiefs could be used as henchmen to control local people; somewhat resembling Russian conditions. Mention of a third group, ‘servants’ or ‘slaves’, would be mainly due to Japanese influences. Whatever the nature of Ainu social differences, the main element was the totemic system that held the old society together – up until the total takeover by the Japanese.

Leadership and politics

It is significant that, parallel to totemism, the political organization of the Ainu is ignored by scholars. Supposedly there was an ‘internal weakness of the Ainu’s political organization’ (Peng & Geiser 1977: 2). There even is a claim that the Ainu had no chiefs, in spite of the people’s heroic resistance to Japanese colonization between 1450 and 1780 – dating back to the 10th century, with prominent chiefs.

In historic times each village (kotan) had a hereditary chief (kotan kor kur). ‘Each village had its chief’; or rather, 2-3 leaders such as a first, second and assistant chief (Takakura 1960: 17). In addition there was an echelon of leaders called elders, referred to as an elder’s group, ekashi-utar. There was a corresponding group of old women, huchi-utar, and presumably women chiefs as well. Male elders were associated with carved emblems (itokpa), female elders with woven belts (upshor-kut), closely associated with totemism. Together these would represent the social makeup of the village.

Some chiefly titles included ‘otona’, ‘bankinne-nishippa’, and ‘shibankinne’ or ‘sub-chief’; other terms were ‘topake’, ‘ikiripake’, ‘utara-pa’, ‘sapaneguru’, ‘paunguru’ and more, indicating a complex leadership structure (ibid.). More generally there were a variety of leadership, representative and specialized chief’s roles. Each moiety had its own leader, one who would be ‘head chief’, the other ‘second chief’. Each chief apparently had an associated ‘sub-chief’. There also would be other official and ritual roles in the community, though these are poorly known.

The distinctions between people would not be great. Wealth was fairly evenly distributed. It has been observed that when starvation threatened few people would succumb, because resources would be shared equally among the inhabitants. On the community level the Ainu were all basically equal, which is seen most clearly in that matters of importance were decided in public council meetings, open to men and women.

After periods of resistance between 1600 and 1780 AD, the Japanese effectively culled the influence of Ainu chiefs. In many ways the chiefs were done away with, and for a long time the Ainu would have few chances to voice their views vis-à-vis the colonizers or to establish representatives who could negotiate for them. The Japanese were in full control, and the chief might not even be allowed to talk to them. He stayed at home in the village, supervising his people.

The contrast is great to how conditions were before colonization set in. Then the Ainu were highly organized. Villages had a head chief and second chief, as well as sub-chiefs, honorary chiefs, messengers and elders. Traditionally the chief would lead expeditions to the outside world, and he would obtain prestige from the wealth obtained there. The village was democratic, with people taking part in meetings and councils. The formal gathering was called a village assembly (*ukoramkoru*). There also was an assembly of the headman and local house-heads, '*ukosanio*', that decided such matters as the distribution of fishing and hunting grounds among local clans, phratries and moieties.

Then there was the wider polity – the Ainu nation. The Ainu once were a great people, known from Siberia to China and Japan. Chiefs had contact with each other, and a district such as Hitaka could be seen as an area for political affiliation, a loose confederacy. All this was demolished when the last chiefs surrendered after 1780. Yet the Ainu pride in their nation lingers on.

Religion

Ainu beliefs were closely tied up with their community life. The universe, *moshir*, was focused on their 'territory' or environment (Sjöberg 1993: 56). Gods included the Female Goddess, the Culture Hero (*Aeonia*), and gods of nature, tree, bear, earth, bird, owl, water, sea, river, salmon, fish, sun, moon, fire, wolf, fox, mountain, seal, killer whale, trout, snake, thunder, and more.

Clans, phratries and moieties had religious and ritual obligations toward each other. One example is a kind of phratry feast. In one story a sparrow prepares a feast and invites her sisters, eagles, jays, crows, water-ousels, fish-hawks, ravens and other birds. This would then be an indication of phratry solidarity, that similar animals, in this case birds, are close and reckon each other as sisters and brothers. In the story the party ends in chaos, because the raven spoils the food, leading to a fight where the raven was killed. One interpretation would be that this is a recent story in which the solidarity of matrilineal groups is disparaged. It may also be referred to as a clan story, where totemic groups make fun of each other. There may also be a moiety dimension in this, in that some birds are in the 'upper' moiety and other birds in the 'lower'. This relative distance may create animosities that have to be worked out in stories.

The annual cycle of Ainu ceremonies or festivals is not well known. Rituals were usually directed towards animals and nature. The fall and winter ceremonies were directed towards the hunting season. The bear festival or bear ceremony (*kamui iomante*) was a major religious event. It took place in winter and brought the whole village together for a celebration, at a time when they usually resided dispersed in hunting camps. In another source, the 'bear feast' was a 'great Aino festival celebrated 'in September or October' (Hitchcock 1892: 474). The bear ceremony involved the whole community and activated every clan. In winter there also was a fox ceremony. Around the same time there was a 'harvest festival' in 'November' (Hitchcock 1892: 482). In mid-winter there was a New Year ceremony, perhaps based on a Japanese model, though poorly known.

In spring there supposedly was a festival directed towards gathering plant foods and planting seeds. Information about this celebration is scarce. Supposedly the spring and fall celebrations were conducted on a large scale, for a whole community.

During the spring and summer there would be ceremonies directed towards fishing and catching sea mammals. The first catch and spirit-sending ceremonies for salmon, marlin, seal and other animals was celebrated. There were rituals held at different times of the year for creatures such as dog salmon, trout and spun. There were dances named for animals, such as a 'crane dance' and 'bear dance' (Hitchcock 1892: 482). The whale dance is still performed at Shiraoi. Other dances could include owl, sword or war dance, and more. Dances and ceremonies tended to strengthen people's ties with their surroundings and with nature. They also could have a totemic significance. Near each village there would be bone piles for different species of animals, to help their souls travel to the spirit world. Animal bones deposited included: fish, sea-mammals, gulls, bear, marten, fox, reindeer (in the north), hare, etc.

One basic belief was that pregnancy was not caused by sexual intercourse. Instead it is due to the return of a spirit to earth at an opportune moment when a woman becomes pregnant. This is yet another indication of the matrilineal preponderance in Ainu clans. A man would play no role in the generation of a child, except contributing to the 'opportune moment'. A possible indication of Japanese influence is that women used to take part in religious ceremonies, but in modern times they were not allowed to do so. In one version it was claimed that the leaders forbade the women to take part, because it was thought they might use their prayers against the men. This sounds mean, but it may indicate that there really was a struggle when the formerly powerful matrilineal lines were superseded by attempts at forming patrilineal lines. Yet the women's social and spiritual solidarity continued, as they quietly continued with their own ancestral rituals at home, celebrating their female lines.

Culture

Ainu culture is much too rich to be fully described in a limited chapter. It can be noted that boats were a part of the totemic universe. Kurile boats were decorated with totem marks, such as killer-whale, duck, bear, etc. Other artistic expressions will be found in earlier notes on symbols and emblems, with the added note that crafts and artistry remain a basic attraction for tourists and visitors in Hokkaidô.

Ainu culture contains an amazing wealth of animal stories (Philippi 1979). Stories about nature, humans and animals become mixed in a rich and creative view of the surroundings. 'The subjects of their tales are mostly beasts and birds' (Hitchcock 1892: 483). Some protagonists in Ainu myths are: fish, swordfish, dragon, spider, killer-whale, bird, cardinal, crow, owl, eagle, bear, wolf, dog, fox, deer, hare, woman, man, village, boat, fire, water, sky, north-wind, thunder, mountain, and more (Philippi 1979). Most of these beings tie in with a totemic universe.

The richness – and modern strain – of Ainu lives will only be hinted at here. The naming of children is poorly known; secrecy about names is noted. It can be assumed that Ainu names were totemic, but they are difficult to analyze.

Some male names organized by endings are: -tuk: Tokontuk; Kapkotuk; Setkotek; Zarukotuk; Ranketuk; Utoentoku; Arukatek; -kare: Tekkokara; Tononkare; Shitokari; Shuwantekore; Ishikore; -site: Kowanaside; Akebisite; -san: Tupasan; -ran: Nusatoran; Imakroan; -uk: Panauk; Kariwauku; Kanzauk; Sikeuku; Siwaenouku; Rikibauku; Arayok; Inukauku; -asi: Peniasi-kuru; Tobareasi; Kotan-reasi; Kusiyoasi; Isonnoasi; Uesanasi; -ure: Sokochiure. Some

female names noted are: Topasotai-mat; Kaneyanki-mat; Kwarotroto-mat; Metakoroso-mat; Iwanchekonoi-mai; etc. The significance of names must remain a topic for future students.

There are indications that children's haircuts had a totemic significance, similar to that found among the Osage Indians. Tufts of hair left on the head can represent legs, wings or tails of animals and birds, including water-creature, turtle, bird, crow, bear, hare, etc. (Kodama & Itô 1941: 193f).

The puberty rites of girls, when they received their first tattoos and later received the woman's belt (kut), will only be noted in passing here, as representing a totemic anchoring. Similarly the marriage customs and elaborate funeral arrangements must be left for other studies. It would be interesting to know if totem clans served each other on these occasions, but specific information is lacking. What can be suggested is that totemic relations entered into every aspect of Ainu social life.

Summary

It would seem that the Ainu, along with other people in North Asia, originally (1250 AD) were matrilineal. Only recently, under the influence of colonizing people such as the Japanese and Chinese, have kin reckoning changed to become patrilineal. This has rendered the native societies somewhat conflicted in terms of kinship, with a mixture of matrilineal, patrilineal and bilateral traditions. In turn scholars have become confused, but the mostly male researchers have supported a patrilineal model for these generally egalitarian northern peoples. The idea that male oriented clans had earlier been female oriented was something the scholars hesitated to comment. Marxist scholars might dutifully posit an earlier matriarchal organization, but then as a mythical and primitive form that would not show up in actual relations. For the Ainu, however, there is a clear indication that matrilineal clans existed, and that they still had a relevance in the 20th century. Still they were given second place to a conceived patrilineal organization, that made more sense to Japanese and Western investigators.

The picture that is presented around 1250-1500 AD is of fairly large villages of 20-60+ houses placed in one, two or three rows along a shoreline or riverbank. A village would be comprised of 12-28+ matrilineal and totemic clans. The village possessed a secure and extensive territory in which it controlled the resources. Hunting and fishing rights were distributed among the village units, its clans, phratries and moieties. This would give the Ainu a stable and widely distributed existence all over Hokkaido and in neighboring areas.

The organizing principle that held this extensive society together was totemism. Each village or local community consisted of a certain number of local clans or descent groups, that were distinguished through separate and complementary totems. Most likely the totem clans were matrilineal around 1250 and up to the 20th century – a contributing factor to local stability and belonging.

From this prehistoric and historical starting point it is possible to envisage a gradual development and crisis in Ainu society, brought about by the Japanese expansion. The population went into decline, villages were depopulated, and the organizing principles of totemism and descent became less clear and more ambiguous. Over time a male intervention and an incipient form of patrilineal descent, spurred on by outside influences, would take the place of the rich and flourishing matrilineal society. Yet the rich and valuable totemic history

of the Ainu people remains visible. They still maintain their closeness to nature and respect for the living environment. The divinity of nature is preserved in their totemic symbols and myths. And it is reflected in the attachment they show to their land and culture – even in situations circumscribed by tourism and visitors.

North-Eastern Asia

In this section the peoples in the northeasternmost part of North Asia are presented. They include the Yukaghir, Itelmen, Kerek, Koryak and Chukchi, with some notes on the Aleut and Eskimo-Inuit as well, straddling the Bering Strait. The Yakut are noted in connection with the Yukaghir. These fascinating and varied cultures carry links to northwestern Eurasia and to North America, while being firmly situated in the rich natural landscape they occupy. Without further ado the presentation starts here.

The Yukaghir and regionally related peoples

Aka: Yukagir, Iukagiry, Odul, Anil, Anaul, etc. The ancestral Yukaghir and related groups at one time must have spanned most of North Asia from the Central Siberian Plateau to the Kolyma drainage. Yukaghiric tribes extended as far west as the Taymyr Peninsula. Over time they have been gradually and fairly rapidly pushed eastward, losing most of their people in the process, until only two bands remain in the Indigirka and Kolyma basins.

Ancient ethnonyms and regional names include: Yana, Khodyntsi, Omok, Chuvan and Anaul. Chuvan synonyms are: Chuvantsy, Chuwan, Etel, Shelgas, etc. Also: Khodyntsy, Anyuy (for Anaul), etc.

The ethnic groups to be considered in association with the Yukaghir are: Yakut – aka Jakut, Sakha, Urangkhay-sakha, etc. The Dolgans, Yakut-speaking Tungus, were considered to be part Yukaghir.

The Turkic-speaking Yakut may contain many people of old Yukaghir descent. As a regional cultural group they will here be included with the description of the Yukaghir, perhaps not ethnographically correct. On the other hand, the Yukaghir are so reduced ethnically and culturally that information on their social organization may be supplemented by some notes on the Yakut, a people that is in part culturally related. Since both groups are found in the same extended region, the drainages of the Lena and Kolyma rivers and adjacent areas, they will be combined in a sort of regional analysis.

On the surface this vast area of more than 4,500,000 km² should give room to at least 600,000 people. But the climate is so severe, with the lowest mainland temperatures in the world, that the figure can be lowered to <500,000 people. This still constitutes a sizeable population, far above what was found in early historic times.

Various population estimates are: ca. 70,000-120,000+ people before 1350 AD; 1650: 10,000-30,000+; ca. 1740: 5000+; 1859: 2350+, perhaps 3000-4000+; 1890: 2000-3000, of which 1000 Yukaghir, 800 Chuvan and 600 Omok; 1890: 2,000+; 1897: 2200-2500+, including 1000/ 754+ Yukaghir, 700/ 453+ Chuvan and 500+ Omok; 1900: 1003+ Yukaghir, 453+ Chuvantsy and 500+ Omok; 1927: 1700-2000+, of which 443 or 500-800 Yukaghir, with 450-600 speakers, 704 Chuvantsy, with 0 speakers, and 500 Omok, with 100 speakers; 1950: ca. 400-450 Yukaghiric speakers; 1959: 400+, 240-400 speakers; 1970: 600+, 250-350 speakers; 1979: officially 835; 1989: officially 1142 Yukaghir and 1,511 Chuvan, with 100-150 Yukaghir speakers. By 2020 the Yukaghiric languages were considered extinct.

By comparison the Turkic-speaking Yakut far outnumber the Yukaghir and surpass them on every quantitative parameter. The Yakut population has been reported as: 1640: 150,000+; 1682: 50,000+; 1800: 100,000+; 1897: 226,739+; 1900: 200,000+; 1926: 235,926; 1959: 233,000; 1970: 296,000; 1979: 328,000; 1980: 330,000, 316,000 speakers; 1989: 382,000; 2010: 478,085, 450,000 speakers. It will be seen that the population has increased consistently in historic times, except for an epidemic period 1642-1682, when the numbers fell 70%.

The Dolgan people, including Tungusized Yukaghir, were: 1980: 5,500, with 4000 Tungusic speakers; etc.

Scholars dramatically compared the 1926 population of '443 Yukagirs' with the 1630s, when the Yukaghir 'occupied wide expanses' from the Lena drainage in the W 'to the Anadyr' Basin' in the E (Stepanova et al. 1964: 788).

Yukaghir national bands and related groups included:

Western Yukaghir.

Near Sashiversk, ca. 430+ (1740).

Central-Eastern Yukaghir.

Mountain Yukaghir aka Dutki or Ilkonbei, Khroma-Yana rivers, 'Tungusized', 359+ (1859), 191+ (1897), etc.

Buyaksir Clan or band, 'Lamut', 61+ (1850), etc.

Two Kungur bands, and Tuguessir, all 'Tungusized', 400+ (1859), etc.

Verkhoyansk-Indigirka Yukaghir: 5 bands.

Omoloi Clan or band, Yana-Omoloi rivers, 'Yakutized', 238+ (1859), 191+ (1897), etc. Khroma.

Indigirka, ca. 500+ (1740).

Lower Indigirka.

Middle-Lower Indigirka.

Middle-Upper Indigirka.

Alaseya River, ca. 250+ (1740)

First Alaseya Clan or band aka Alayi Omok, 99+ (1850), 86+ (1859), 33+ (1897), etc.

Second Alaseya Clan or band aka Erbetken Omok (goose clan) or Mountain Yukaghir, 58+ (1850), 13+ (1897), etc.

Yukaghirized Tungus aka Betil Clan or band, Xañai or Vahaharil, 287+ (1850), 48+ (1897), etc.

Second Mountain-Lamut Clan or band aka Xodeijil-omok, 151+ (1850).

On Kolyma River, ca. 500+ (1740).

Omolon.

First Omolon Clan or band; later amalgamated from First Omolon and First, Second and Third Omok clans or bands; 119+ (1859), 16+ (1897); amalgamated 79+ (1897), etc.

First Omok Clan or band, 92+ (1859), 30+ (1897), etc.

Second Omok Clan or band, 54+ (1859), 7+ (1897), etc.

Third Omok Clan or band, 72+ (1859), 26+ (1897), etc.

Second Omolon Clan or Band, 'Lamutized', at Karboshan, 59+ (1859), 20+ (1897), perished 1897-99.

Yassachna aka Yassachnaya. Nelemnoye ('Bright Life'), 90 p (1929).

Upper-Kolyma Yukaghir, 180+ (1900).

Korkodon ('Bright Life' collective (1930)). Balgychan (near Seymchan) (1950).

Fish Clan or band aka Anid-omok or Rubij-rod, near Korkodon River, 20+ (1897), etc.

Sledge Clan aka Mejid-omok or Nartennij, on Popova River, 15+ (1897).

Hare Clan or band aka Cholgorod-omok, Ushkanskij or Sayachi, on Yassachna River, 50+ (1897); combined with Fish and Sledge clans: 112+ (1859), 79+ (1897); etc.
Second Mountain-Delian Clan or band, 'Yukaghirized Lamut', 80+ (1897).
Anadyr district or area, ca. 160+ (1740).
Anadyr-Yukaghir, 'Russianized', 81+ (1897), etc.; of which 43 (1897) at Markova.
Chuvan aka Chuvantsy or Shelgas.
Settled-Chuvantzy, in Anadyr district, 262+ (1897), etc.; of which 147 (1897) in Markova, inhabitants mostly Russians.
Other Settled Chuvantzy at Yeropol, Oselkina, Soldatovo etc.
Russianized Chuvantzy, at Nishne-Kolymsk etc., 13+ (1897).
Reindeer-Chuvantzy aka Khodynski Clan or band, 253+ (1859), 177+ (1897), etc.
Anaul band.

Yakut divisions include: Baturusti-Batulina-Betun, Borogon, Tumat, Khorin, Western and Eastern Khangalasti, Megin, Nam, Ergit, Olekmin, and more. So-called native 'foot-tribes' included: Kokui, Kirik-Kyrgydaj, Ospeti-Osekui, Orgot, Ontul, and so on. More than 900 local groups have been identified for the Yakut people alone.

Yukaghir settlements developed over a long time period. Hunting camps near the Lena River are known from the older stone age forwards. The Yukaghir lived in camps or settlements along the forest edge of major rivers and tributaries. This they combined with seasonal nomadization in mountainous and tundra areas. The classical Yukaghir village consisted of 1-2+ rows of 'earthen huts on the banks of rivers' (Jochelson 1928: 55).

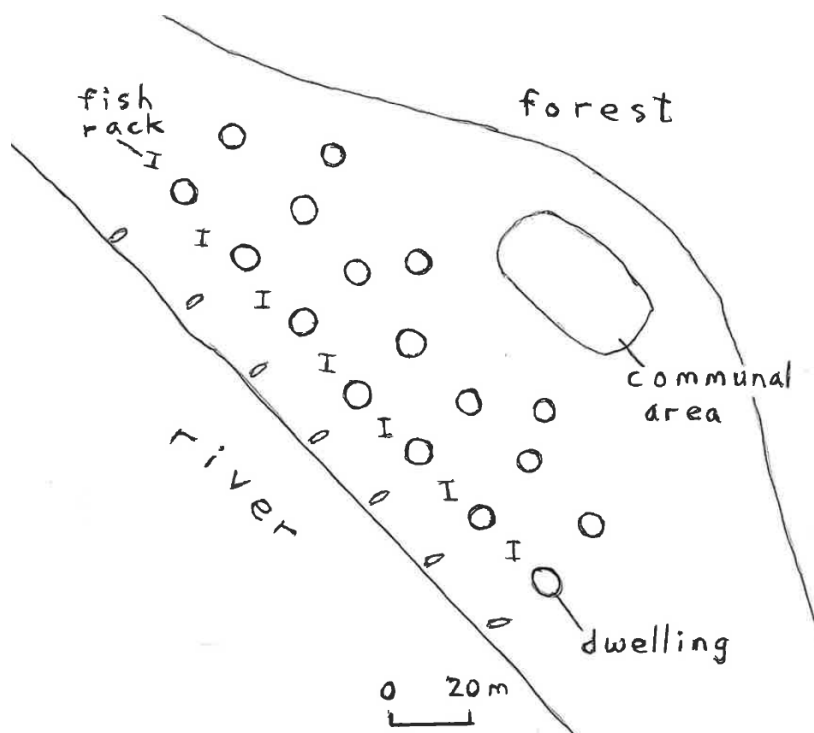
A local group or river group could have several hundred members. At Upper Kolyma around 1900, the Yukaghir group had 180 members. They formed a local group or band, but they were the survivors of numerous old Yukaghir bands and tribes, interspersed with some Even families.

The historical river group was divided into camps consisting of several families who lived in permanent houses during the winter and had summer camps near a river. Such a summer camp or river camp could have 5-10 houses or camps in historic times. The occupants of a camp did not have to be directly related to each other. Spring and autumn were spent hunting and moving in smaller family groups.

The historical settlement type, though much reduced, in some ways may reflect old practices. That is, even though much reduced in population, people would try to gather or reassemble in fairly large local communities or settlements. A range of 6-30+ houses in a village-type community seems reasonable. Bark drawings around 1890 showed villages, including 4+1+4 houses at the Yassachnaya-Nelemnaya confluence, indicating a possible moiety configuration in a reduced form (Jochelson 1910: 443).

Scholars would note that ancient villages had 'numerous yurtas' or house (Jochelson 1910: 347). These were located near the mouth and at the confluence of rivers (ibid.). At the side of a village was a communal area used for village meetings, dances and games, such as shooting contests (Jochelson 1910: 345).

As a comparison, Yakut communities were called 'ulus'. Their historic summer camps had 5-10+ houses.



Conceptual early historic Yukaghir summer village (uncertain scale)



Part of a modern summer village (Jochelson 1910: pl. 19)

There are indications that Yukaghir local communities or villages held ca. 150-200+ people. Before 1850 there were 3 'clan' groups on the upper Kolyma, called the Fish, Sledge and Hare bands. By 1897 they had been reduced so much in numbers due to epidemics that they were incorporated into one group, the Hare 'clan' (cholgorod-omok, 'hare people'). The word 'clan' here means a local community, since Russian scholars would call all native groups 'clans', regardless of their composition (Jochelson 1910: 53).

On occasion the village houses may have been set up in a circle, 6-12 houses on either side of an open space. One drawing has 3+3+1 houses in a Yassachnaya village, where the single house at the upper end might belong to the Russian-appointed 'elder'; another drawing has 4+4+1 houses, 9 winter houses on Yassachnaya River (Jochelson 1910: 438).

Originally the 3 recent communities had been independent bands, but gradually they were reduced to local communities of 100-150 people each. By 1859 the population had been reduced to one local community of 112 people. By 1879 the Hare 'clan' in turn had been reduced to 79 people, and had to unite with a group of Even-Yukaghir called Delian, to form a

community of 159 people. This reconstructed village lived in dugout houses during the winter and in tipis during the summer (Jochelson 1910: *ibid.*).

The information that can be extracted from this is that Yukaghir communities had a minimal size of 60-80 people and an optimal size of 150+ people. When the population fell below the minimal level, due to epidemics, starvation and external interference, two or more communities would find it necessary to combine to keep up the local organization and integration. This in turn would indicate that each community consisted of a number of distinct descent groups, here reckoned as totem clans, numbering 6-14+ in each community.

The Hare people on the Upper Kolyma would divide into hunting groups in the Yassachna, Popova and Korkodon valleys. As a tragic aftermath it was noted that many community members starved to death in 1904. Some survivors were arrested by the Russians and charged with cannibalism. One embarrassed scholar noted that the Russians charged taxes from the Yukaghir, but did not help them when they were starving. The Yukaghir depended on keeping a distance to the Russians and maintaining their communities as best they could.

Ecology

The area is taiga, tundra-taiga and tundra, with valleys, hills, mountains and vast tundra plains in the north. There also are mountain ranges with an Arctic climate. The area is a virtually endless Arctic region reaching from the Taymyr and Khatanga valleys in the west to the Chukchi Peninsula in the east. There is tundra in the north and taiga in the south. The northern boundary is the Arctic Sea. The winter season is from October to May, the summer season from June to September.

The Yukaghir were catastrophically displaced and reduced in population in the period 1200-1930 AD. Their land area was gradually narrowed through colonization to the northeastern part of the territory, specifically the tributaries of the Indigirka, Kolyma and Anadyr rivers. Wild reindeer were the main prey. People lived by hunting, fishing and gathering, more recently also by reindeer herding (Stepanova et al. 1964: 791).

History

Yukaghir history can hardly be described in other terms than tragic. What should be a rich and living historical journey ends up in decimation and language loss. From Neolithic times roughly 3000-1000 BC dugout houses and ceramics are known from the area. Many people lived throughout the Lena valley. Other population centers were in the Indigirka and Kolyma valleys (Stepanova et al. 1964: 789).

Scholars would not hesitate to posit that the Yukaghir included many small ethnic groups with related languages and dialects, who have inhabited eastern Siberia and northern North Asia since the end of the Ice Age. Hence their residence covers a period of 12,000 years.

According to native legends, the Yukaghirs were once as numerous as the stars of the polar night, and the smoke from all the fires so thick that the birds were lost in it (Stepanova et al. 1964: 788).

As early as the Stone Age the Yukaghir had contact with other people in southern Siberia. The contact was particularly productive in the Bronze Age ca. 1500-300 BC. At that time people

in the Lena valley mined and processed bronze which they exchanged with people further south. If so, the Golden Age of the Yukaghir was during this prehistoric period. With the Iron Age came new relations, and matters became more complicated.

Reindeer herding Tungus and migrating Yakut entered the area in the period 1200-1650, and over time displaced and assimilated the natives on the Lena. From areas to the west and south the Yukaghirs were partly pushed north and east, and partly assimilated by incoming Tungus and Turkic speakers (Stepanova et al. 1964: 789). Supposedly many Yukaghiric groups continued living on the Lena, and made a living from fishing. They included bands called Kokui, Osekui and Ontul. The latter, as Odul, may have become Yakut speakers, as might other groups as well.

At this point the history of the Yakut people can be noted, since they incorporated many Yukaghirs. The Yakut language is the result of a massive Turkic-speaking expansion after 3000 BC, when people obtained horses and became mobile. From the region of present Turkmenistan, Usbekistan and adjacent areas they moved west to the Black Sea, and north and east into Siberia. These movements would stretch out in time until modern times. The linguistic forebears of the Yakut supposedly moved from Turkistan, east of Usbekistan, after 3000 BC. By 800 AD they were around the present Uryankhay region west of Lake Bajkal. From here they reached the middle Lena ca. 1280 AD. En route they mixed with Mongols and Buryat around Lake Bajkal. On the Lena they incorporated native people supposed to be Tungus and Yukaghir. The Yukaghir incorporation was important, since this was part of that people's ancient homeland. The Yakuts occupied the region of the middle Lena, Olekma, Aldan and Viljuj rivers. This whole area presumably was occupied in earlier times by people speaking a language related to Yukaghir. The natives apparently were partly displaced, exterminated in wars and epidemics, or assimilated with the Yakut. The Yakut nation then emerged as a mixture of ethnic groups in the north, but with a uniform Turkic language. This mixture also involved a varied adaptation ranging from hunting and fishing to husbandry and agriculture.

When the Russians arrived and annexed the area in 1620, the Yakut were still expanding to the north and east. The Yakut rebelled against Russian oppression and tax demands in 1634, 1636-37, 1639-40 and 1642. After this the Russians tried to bind the loyalty of Yakut chiefs by giving them overseer and tax-collecting privileges. The remaining options for the population were sporadic resistance and flight to isolated areas. The Yakut region, Yakutia, became a Russian military, colonial and administrative base after 1700. A Russian peasant colonization started around 1773 and would last to the 20th century. After 1780 the Yakut began to spread to new areas, to avoid Russian control. They scattered as far east as the Chukchi Peninsula, to Anabar, Olenek, Kolyma, Indigirka and Yana rivers, and north to Khatanga and the Polar Sea. A late uprising against Russian rule took place under a Yakut hero, Vasilij Manchara, 1830-50. After 1905 the Russian immigration was not so great, but prison camps, gulag, were set up. A final Yakut uprising occurred in 1906. Since then Russian rule has been strengthened in the area.

Here the Yukaghir story is returned to. It seems likely that epidemics such as the plague, represented by the Black Death, and subsequent epidemics over the period 1350-1550 reduced the Yukaghiric population drastically. This period could be extended to the years 1200-1930. Pandemics, coupled with other cataclysmic events, ranging from natural disaster to outside invasions, may have disastrously diminished the native population from 150,000 to 2,000

people. Needless to say this would cause massive changes in the social organization, here assumed to be totemic.

The Russian colonization of Yukaghiric territories is a history of its own that could fill volumes (Willerslev 2007). Yukaghir people still lived over most of their vast territory when the first Russians arrived in 1633. From this time onwards, through armed attacks, epidemics of influenza, measles, smallpox, famine and displacements the Yukaghir peoples experienced a drastic population decline and near extinction. Russian divide-and-rule led to bloody conflicts over trade between the retiring Yukaghir and Evenk, Even and Chukchi groups in the period 1650-1800. The Russians exploited these quarrels to their own advantage, demanding more tax and higher payments for goods. Since the Yukaghir paid taxes to Russia, this became a pretext for the Russians to invoke the entire area as their tax land and raid people who would not pay tribute. The Yukaghir thus came between the Russians and other Siberian peoples, and was squeezed from both sides. To escape enemies in the west and east, many Yukaghir settled near Russian camps and over time became Russified (Stepanova et al. 1964: 789-790).

Conditions worsened even more in the period 1800-1850, with drastic declines in wild reindeer and salmon stocks at Kolyma. Starvation would also affect the Russian settlers, but hit the natives harder (op. cit.: 790). One outrageous Russian practice was to 'tax' the diminishing Yukaghir tribe based on earlier population estimates. Thus the 43 men in the Omolon band in 1897 had to pay 'tax' or tribute for 93 men counted in 1859! When they were struck with starvation, the Russians offered no assistance (Jochelson 1910: 56-57).

The external strain on the Yukaghir continued in the 20th century, with new epidemics and Russian encroachments. The same disasters would befall outlying Yukaghiric groups, such as people on the Yana River, and the Chuvan and Omok people to the east. The Chuvan language died out around 1920, while the Omok language was gone in 1945. Yukaghir-Chuvantsy who assimilated with the Chukchi called themselves Etel (Stepanova et al. 1964: 789).

After the Revolution, Yukaghir speakers were found on the upper branches of the Kolyma, such as on the Korkodon, Balygychan and Yasachnaya. Further north Yukaghir were found between the Kolyma and Indigirka Rivers, especially on the Chukochej River. Scattered groups were at the lower Kolyma and on the Chukchi Peninsula, assimilated with the Even people. A few families from the Anyuy River had become residents at the village of Omolon.

Economy

The traditional native adaptation was one of hunting, fishing and gathering. A mainstay was the collective hunting of wild reindeer. During the reindeer migrations of spring and autumn people organized a collective hunt of reindeer crossing rivers and in other favorable locations. Several family groups collaborated in building fences for capturing the animals. Other fauna caught included geese, ducks, birds, salmon, various fish and more (Stepanova et al. 1964: 791-2).

A basic river-inland adaptation would appear in the practice of catching reindeer with nets and boats. A whole village could engage in this, killing 'hundreds' of reindeer (Jochelson 1910: 378). Fishing was a significant part of the economy, mainly conducted during summer. Fishing could be moiety, phratry or clan based, in some cases village based. Each family was

assigned or claimed their own fishing spots. A fish weir could be operated by the whole village; other technology, such as nets and seines, could be operated by smaller groups or by individuals. The fish caught included varieties of salmon (op. cit.: 792).

Animals hunted included elk-moose, reindeer, bear and smaller animals. Hunting presumably was phratry based, each phratry having its own hunting district. Areas could be subdivided for clans or pairs of clans. Only major hunts such as the reindeer drives would be village based (op. cit.: 791). The game caught 'was distributed among all the residents' of the 'encampment or village' (op. cit.: 796).

In addition to hunting and fishing, the gathering of plants and berries was quite extensive. This would mainly be done by women, who may have operated on the basis of pairs of clans. The resources included blueberries, cloudberries, roots, leek, fresh shoots, bark, and more. The favorite berries, blueberries, were called 'Yukaghir berries' (odun-leeveydi) (op. cit.: 791-2).

Hunters switched from bow and arrow to guns after 1800 (op. cit.: 792). This would allow them to continue their hunting adaptation, in a rapidly diminishing territory. A cooperative unit consisted of 1-2 extended families of about 3 households who shared nets and hunting equipment. This may hint at a phratry style of cooperation.

Reindeer husbandry was taken over from the Even-Tungus. Subsequently the capture of fur animals became important for paying taxes and tribute to the Russians (op. cit.: 791). This in turn might strengthen the commitment to hunting even more. Yukaghir were involved in trade, and also picked up simple blacksmithing and other handcrafts. Pot making was an ancient practice (op. cit.: 789, 794).

It was the hunting adaptation that would allow the Yukaghir to hold their own the longest. As noted, the Yakut introduced agriculture and husbandry, a trend that was strengthened under Russian rule. The Yukaghir speakers would avoid this domesticated adaptation, and remained in their areas as hunters.

Kinship

By the year 1900 Yukaghir kinship and family relations were dominated by Russian intervention (Jochelson 1910: 61). This would complicate any efforts to reconstruct the earlier kinship system. A further complication would be a Russian scholarly bias or prejudice about 'group marriage' and other myths.

What is known is that villages consisted of wooden houses occupied by families. A recent winter house or permanent house was a Yakut-type yurt, hence called a 'Yakut-house' (yanakh-numeu). The flat timber roof was covered with bark and earth. There were benches along the walls. The summer tent was a tipi covered with skin or bark. The tundra Yukaghirs used Chukchi- or Even-type houses. In front of the winter houses stood storehouses on stilts, and storage scaffolding was also set up at the summer tents. The diet was fish, meat, and vegetable foods (Stepanova et al. 1964: 793-4). It can be assumed that the prehistoric permanent house was a wooden structure with a partly dugout floor.

By comparison, Yakut households or descent groups occupied 1-3 houses. Houses were 5-10 m wide. A 'sacred corner' was in the back to the left from the door. In winter people lived in

winter houses and lived off fish stocks etc. In the spring, smaller family groups moved up the rivers in search of elk-moose and deer. Then the families gathered in boats that sailed down to summer camps of tents at Kolyma, where they hunted and fished. In the autumn they then went up to the mountains to catch squirrels, etc., before gathering in the winter camp again. This annual cycle lasted until the 1900s. The Yukaghir had comparatively fewer dogs, 6-7 per family. Family members would help in moving tents and equipment (Stepanova et al. 1964: 793).

For the Yukaghir the Russian scholars would note that matrilocality was widespread, adding that it often occurred in a mixture with patrilocality. This would be common to most native peoples, though Russians often emphasized patrilocality. Hence it can be argued that there was a distinctive matrilineal tendency among the Yukaghir. Among the related Dolgan people 'traces of matriarchy' were found, such as a woman being in charge of the family and its 'sacred relics' (Popov 1964a: 661-3). By contrast scholars would claim that the tundra Yukaghir were patrilocal, probably a bias.

Marriage was established through courtship envoys followed by a wedding ceremony. The scholars thought this was based on an influence from neighboring peoples such as the Yakut. In one group no wedding ceremony was required. The practice of bride service was common, but not bride-price. By comparison, bride price was mandatory among the Yakut. A husband worked for the wife's family as part of his marriage obligations. Sex before marriage was common, and girls enjoyed sexual freedom before marriage. When the in-laws gave permission for the marriage, the man brought his hunting equipment to their house and lived there. The SoLa was subordinate to his wife's older relatives. Scholars assumed that in ancient times the Yukaghir probably had a matrilineal descent system. The eldest son and daughter of the family remained with the mother's group to ensure offspring and continuity. According to the legends, the eldest son and daughter lived with the clan of their mother, while younger siblings moved out and might be affiliated with their father's clan. There are indications that children belonged to the family of the mother (Jochelson 1910: 79).

In the old days, marriage restrictions extended as far as second cousins; 'the fourth generation are no longer relatives' and can marry (Jochelson 1910: 116). The exclusion may have gone farther, however: 'the prohibition of sexual intercourse between members of the same generation related by blood' or in any other way, created 'a pronounced exogamic tendency' (op. cit.: 69). This would amount to a high degree of village exogamy. The Yakut, related to the Yukaghir, share a similar view, that members of a community (nasleg) 'must take their wives from other naslegs' (op. cit.: 80). Russian scholars, by contrast, would eagerly look for cases of endogamy, since that was their view of marriage. Yet scholars would correctly infer that exogamy had broken down due to the 'sharp decline' in the native population (Stepanova et al. 1964: 796). As late as 1780 Yukaghir marriages 'were as a rule between representatives of different clans' or villages (ibid.).

Though not stated clearly in the sources, women had a strong position among the Yukaghir, and the tendency was towards matriliney and matrilocality. By comparison, Russian ethnographers saw men as household heads among the Yakut. At the same time women had considerable influence in the household.

The kinship terminology of the Yukaghir is partly known. There were 3 words for 'kin', for people's 'own clan', 'collaterals' and '(other) kinfolk' (Jochelson 1910: 68). This may

indicate a system of totemic exogamy that could comprise an entire village, since most local people would be 'kin'.

Some kinship terms were: xaxa (GrFa, old male relatives), epie (GrMo, old female relatives), ečie (Fa), emei (Mo), čomočie (FaeBr, 'father's elder cousin', e.g., 'big father'), ečidie (FayBr, 'father's younger cousin', e.g., 'little father'), čemmei (MoeSi, 'mother's elder female cousins', e.g., 'big mother'), nimdietek (MoySi, 'mother's younger cousin', e.g., 'little mother'), xoža (MoyBr, 'mother's younger male cousins'), emjuodie (FaySi, 'father's female cousin'), emjepul (Br, Si, 1st, 2nd 'cousin', etc.), tatja (eBr, 'elder male cousin'), abuža (eSi, 'elder female cousin'), emje (yBr, ySi, 'younger cousin'), aduo (So), mapxiduo (Da), etc.

Differentiation

Some potential totems are: fish* (anid, anil), salmon, whitefish (čomodani), sturgeon, sterlet, pike (umuyen), greyling (ugurciye), snake, whale, bird (nodo), sparrow, ptarmigan (natlebie), cuckoo (kukunodo), raven (čomoparana), diver (calgen), snipe (čirmidie), gull, swamp-fowl, grebe (shalgan), duck (yerchibe), goose* (jangde), swan, crane, stork* (udil), owl*, hawk, mouse-hawk (mojolopka), eagle (xanil), bear* (xaičitege, inlichebon), wolverine (arnumoya), sable (noxco), ermine (chullol), weasel, otter (mudjen), wolf* (kodiell, eureye-rukun), dog* (toboke), fox* (caxale, nietle, nodo), arctic-fox (nyaunikliye), lynx (ponxo-nodo, 'white beast'), animal (nodo), deer, musk-deer, reindeer* (ate, olu, tolobo-moye), *elk-moose (pieje), sheep, mountain-sheep (monogo), mammoth (xolhut), mouse (cadil), lemming, marmot, squirrel (yodo-djube, lerchiyen), flying-squirrel, ground-squirrel, hare* (sjolgoro, cholgorod, tabuckan), tree, wood-forest*, larch, alder, grass, berry, sledge (mejid), house (numo), fire, smoke, water, sea (čowud-iwa), river (ununek), earth, stone (ceul), mountain (anan), sky*, northern-lights, star, moon (kinije), sun (pugu, yerpeyen), etc.

As with other northern people, the list of potential clans would be long. For comparison, some totems found among the Yakut included: fish, cuckoo, raven, gull, swan, crane, goose, hawk, eagle, owl, bear, wolf, dog, lynx, deer, stag, elk-moose, horse, ox, squirrel, etc. Yakut totems were called 'mother animals' (ije-kyyl). Whether this hints at matrilineal descent is not quite clear.

There are many reasons why totems are not better known. It is noteworthy that the Russians made fun of Yukaghir totems (Jochelson 1910: 117). This would be one more reason for people to be reticent about this private and socially significant topic.

Scholars would note that at one point in time a clan was associated with maternal lines and matrilocality (Stepanova et al. 1964: 976). Yet they would note that this was combined with the circumstance that both the eldest daughter and eldest son had residency rights in the maternal clan, while younger siblings moved out and were counted under the father's lineage (ibid.). Somehow this was thought to obscure the existence of matrilineal descent. Actually, the presence of a So and Da in a descent group is an insurance against a loss of descendants. In traditional Shawnee society a totem clan, in this case patrilineal, would include a married So and Da. If the So had no So, a DaSo could be adopted into the clan and assigned its totem, thus ensuring continuity. Among the Yukaghir this was the same, except that here it was a matrilineal clan that was perpetuated.

Scholars would have no clue about totemic clans, even if they tried to define the word 'clan' (Jochelson 1910: 115). Precisely what the Yukaghir called a 'clan' is a little mysterious, confounded by the scholar's confusion. The suggested words for clan include: 'aimak',

‘omek’ or ‘omok’ (‘people’, ‘tribe’), ‘kudeje’ or ‘omo-kudeye’ (‘origin’), and ‘miibe’ (‘custom’, ‘clan’). From Yakut and others they picked up words such as ‘törüt’, ‘ûs’ (clan), and ‘ijä-usa’ (mother-clan). Perhaps ‘kudeye’, ‘becoming’ or origin, was the term used for a totem clan. The plurality of terms would indicate that an intricate organization was involved, but the scholars would stick to their non-concept of ‘clan’, Russian ‘rod’ or ‘kind’, for all local groups.

The use of random names to indicate ‘clans’ by Russian scholars in this case is very revealing. Everything from a nuclear family to the Yukaghir ethnic group is called a ‘clan’ or ‘rod’. So a number of tribal and band designations appear as ‘clans’, without being clearly related to social organization or the level and scale of group names: (T = Tungus; Y = Yakut)

Betil, Betun, Batulin (T)

Podshiver

Buyaksir

Tabuckan (hare)

Dutki

Tuguessir

Tumat (Y)

Khodejil

Kolgel-Konghini, Kurykan (Y) (larch)

Khorin (Y)

Kungur

Kohime-Khangai

Chakhaden

Chagachibair (T)

Cholgorod (hare)

Chanzhin (T)

Mejid (sledge)

Valharil (T)

Edel, Atal, Odul (wolf)

Erbetken (goose)

Ergit (Y)

Alayi-Alasey

Omolon

Anid (fish)

Anaul

Uyadin

etc.

In English some ‘clans’ are:

fish (Anid-omok, Anin-omok, Anil-kudeye)

ptarmigan

raven

goose (Erbetken-omok)

stork (Erbetken-omok)

bear

wolf

fox

deer

reindeer

elk-moose
squirrel
hare (Čolgorod-omok, Čolgoro-kudeye, Čolgoro-miibe, Hare Clan)
sledge
stone
moon (Nace-Kiniĵe, cf. hare)
sun
etc.

Only some of the groups have recognizable totemic designations: fish, goose, wolf, hare, larch, sledge, etc. Quite possibly all group names have a totemic or natural reference, but these are not ordinary totem clans, they appear at a much higher level of organization, such as a district or tribe. Yet all totems used on a tribal level probably were found on a local level as well.

When people met, they may have greeted each other on the basis of totemic membership. There are greetings that refer to fish, ptarmigan, bear, fox, deer, squirrel, hare, etc. Common to all of these greetings is that the totem animals are not referred to directly, for instance, the fish is referred to as 'river-mother' (uund-emei), the bear as 'animal's trail' (yennodo-čugogi), the squirrel is referred to as 'running on wood' (calgen-petnul), the hare as 'running near willows' (nanmadihilgen-petnul), etc. (Jochelson 1910: 131-2). There are hints here at matriarchy, and at names referring to the actions of animals, running, walking, etc. This is strongly suggestive of a totemic naming tradition, since such names often refer to an animal quality or activity.

Scholars would attribute 'clan' membership to a form of genealogical kinship, as in Russia, but such was not the case. Membership in totemic clans was not based on descriptive kinship, but on shared symbols or totems: 'Families which have lost all trace of their blood-relationship still continue to believe in a common ancestor' (Jochelson 1910: 116). This ancestry would be the shared totem, such as a hare.

Based on the limited number of totemic group names that appear in the sources, the following may occur in a local totemic organization: fish (anid, anil), pike, goose (jangde), owl, bear, sable, fox, lynx, reindeer (olu), elk-moose, mouse, hare (sjolgoro, cholgorod, tabuckan), tree, sky.

The Yakut had local clans or descent groups ('uus' or 'uuha') living in 1-2+ houses. These local clans could be totemic. Significantly, among the Yakut it was common to speak of a 'mother-clan' (ijä-usa) or 'mother-animal' (ijä-kyl), with reference to a totem. Once again this may indicate a matrilineal or bilateral descent system, while Russian ethnographers spoke of patrilineal descent among the Yakut. And it may further underline the matrilineal tendency among the Yukaghir and their neighbors.

As a point of confusion, Russian scholars would introduce untranslated, native names as those of 'clans'. An example was Chanzhin. The Chanzhin group supposedly became Even. This may actually be a band name rather than a clan, where the population was so reduced that it was incorporated among the Even as an extended kin group.

'Now that the original social structure of the Yukaghir has been completely destroyed, it is difficult to understand ... the territorial element of the clan' (Jochelson 1910: 118). This element was a scholarly bias. It is clearly shown that resources were allocated on a

community basis, and that families or totemic descent groups distributed themselves in various hunting and fishing locations based on a local consensus. This allocation would partly be along the lines of moieties and phratries, and extend down to the resource use of each totem clan.

Clan members among the Yakut avoided killing their totem animal or mentioning it by name. This may indicate a fairly well established totemic system in parts of Yakut society, since secrecy about one's totemic affiliation is common where much social life relates to this organization.

Exogamy among the Yukaghir is little known. Yet indications are that it was strict, extending to second cousins. Due to an extreme decline in population in the 1800s it seems that clan exogamy was abandoned. Before the decline began, there were probably exogamous kin groups among the Yukaghir such as among neighboring people. In the 1700s it was known that people from distant kin groups were preferable in marriage.

There supposedly were chiefly clans among the Yakut in which the ancestors were reckoned as 'gods', possibly with totems such as wind and sky.

Phratries

There are indications of an ancient tripartite division in Yukaghir communities, a kind of phratry structure. The Hare band had 3 constituent groups, 'fish', 'sledge' and 'hare'. 'Sledge' may carry a reference to dogs or reindeer. One Omok group had 3 'clans', that might originally have been distinct bands or tribes that diminished over time, forming one group. Yet the 3-way local organization seems significant. The 'Hare' band on Upper Kolyma could divide into 3 groups during hunting seasons, on the Yassachna, Popova and Korkodon. The extensive territory allowed them to divide even further, down to the family level. In summer and winter people would unite in permanent village localtions.

From a survey of totems the following phratries can be suggested: 1) fish (anid, anil), pike, goose (jangde), owl; 2) bear, sable, fox, lynx; 3) reindeer (olu), elk-moose, mouse, hare (sjolgoro, cholgorod, tabuckan); with the following as a possible 4th group: tree, sky, etc.

Moieties

Unlike many other native peoples the historic Yukaghir seem to have placed more emphasis on phratries, a 3-way division of totem clans, than on moieties, a 2-way split of the local community. Presumably this has to do with population loss. The phratries, consisting of closely related clans, were easier to maintain in a strained situation, than moieties, that were composed of different clans and were linked to wider ritual and political activities. This distinction between a phratry and moiety emphasis in different societies will be discussed more closely later. That the Yukaghir originally had moieties as well as phratries seems clear.

Villages

An image appears of prehistoric, permanent Yukaghir villages consisting of totem clans, phratries and moieties. Based on the phratry model, the village layout could be as follows: fish, goose, bear, fox, reindeer, mouse, sky, tree, pike, owl, sable, lynx, elk-moose, and hare.

In historic times everything would change. As elsewhere in the north Russian traders and colonizers would manipulate local clans and leaders in order to exploit native producers. A basic 3-class system developed, of poor people, ordinary people with some cattle, and rich people with many animals. The system of exploitation led to considerable suffering, such as starvation in parts of the Yukaghir population.

Politics

There are indications of an early historic and prehistoric political system among the Yukaghir, based on local leaders and extending up to bands and tribes. Each local community would have a head chief, second chief, and elders (lidgeye-coromox) who jointly made up the local council (Jochelson 1910: 118). Here negotiations and decisions could be made, and they could join up with leaders in other communities for wider alliances. A term recorded for the first chief is 'lidgeye coromox' ('old man'), second chief 'tonbeye coromox' ('strong man'), and assistant chief 'xañiče' (hunter) (ibid.). Apparently there also was a woman chief, perhaps seconded by a second and assistant woman chief (op. cit.: 119). Chiefly positions were held for life (op. cit.: 120). The three leading men or chiefs may have been at the head of phratry hunting groups, deciding the hunters' camping places (ibid.: 119).

By comparison, the Yakut had chiefs who could wield considerable power and who even tried to resist the Russian colonizers. This leadership structure could be a tradition found both in the earlier Turkic region and among the incorporated natives. Traditions of 'warrior chiefs' and followers point more to the Turkic and Mongolian traditions of leadership. The village elders, on the other hand, are ubiquitous to native polities. Under Russian control old tribal units would be actively disbanded and dispersed.

Religion

Yukaghir religion was based on their close relation with the environment. The old Yakut religion, like the Yukaghir, was based on nature worship and a nature-oriented cosmology. Deities or spirits included a supreme being or great god, sun, moon, earth, sky, northern-lights, water, sea, river, thunder, fire, etc. (Jochelson 1910: 138f). Spirits associated with animals included fish, salmon, bird, cuckoo, diver, snipe, eagle, bear, sable, wolf, dog, fox, reindeer, elk-moose, hare, squirrel, etc. The religion may have been strongly influenced by an underlying Turkic cosmology, such as nine levels of sky and a 'white lord' ruling the universe, the latter evoking Russian monotheism. The gods took the shape of humans, somehow distancing them from the natural entities they once represented. This would include a female god who brought fertility. There was an underlying level of more basic nature beliefs, where the human-like gods could represent elements such as the sky or wind, and animals like bear, elk-moose and horse. There were taboos against eating certain animals, like wolf, gull or raven, that might be totemic, but which vaguely resembled Middle Eastern beliefs in the animals being considered 'unclean'.

It is difficult to identify what ceremonies were native to the area, and how the annual cycle of celebrations unfolded. There were elements of a bear cult among the Yakut, perhaps performed in fall-winter. The bear was worshipped as a transformed wizard, and it was taboo to say its name. Around the same time there may have been an elk-moose ceremony. Supposedly the elk-moose celebration 'was the most important' of the Yukaghir 'animal cults' (Stepanova et al. 1964: 797).

There was a festival in spring associated with fertility. It was said to be at a time when there was much milk, which may point to a Turkic origin. Part of the ceremony may have been oriented toward the return of fish in the rivers. Of known dances there was one mimicking the love between pairs of swans, a swan dance (Jochelson 1928: 219). Other dances would mimic or refer to sea-mammals, seals, sea-birds, etc. Otherwise, few individual dances are known by name. Games that were played included football (Jochelson 1910: 127).

The Yukaghir had a word for taboo, 'nanich'. For instance, a girl must stay indoors when the men of the house are hunting; if she goes outside she would break the taboo (Jochelson 1910: 77). Here too native and external, Yukaghir and Turkic influences may be at play, such as views on seclusion.

Shamans had a central role in recent Yakut religion, after Russian missions intervened in the more open forms of native worship and ceremonies. Shamans had spirit helpers in the form of animals such as eagle, bear, ox and stallion, with a partly totemic relevance.

Culture

For the Yakut, scholars would note that traditions were culturally mixed. Some had a western origin in Central Asia, while others were native to the northern lands. Of concern to the Yukaghir were people's health problems, which included a range of diseases, tapeworm, trachoma and tuberculosis, but also included so-called 'Arctic hysteria' that particularly affected women (Jochelson 1910). In other domains, clothing would have Central Eastern and North Asian elements, as would decorations, folklore and other traditions. Favored colors were white, black, red and blue.

The Yukaghir were known for wearing chest plates or gorgets. This was a silver or bronze disk called a 'chest sun', inherited 'from generation to generation'. It sometimes was decorated with 'a winged centaur' and plants (Stepanova et al. 1964: 795).

One significant aspect of the Yukaghir culture was picture writings or 'pictographs' (Stepanova et al. 1964: 797). These were drawn on birchbark and depicted routes traveled along with people, animals and natural phenomena. In addition there were love letters and other writings (ibid.). Native pictographic writing is otherwise poorly recorded in the region.

Scholars would note that myths often refer to animals, but few texts are available. Known story protagonists are: 'fish', 'pike', 'snow-bunting', 'ptarmigan', 'raven', 'grebe', 'duck', 'stork', 'owl', 'mouse-hawk', 'eagle', 'bear', 'wolf', 'dog', 'fox', 'reindeer', 'elk-moose', 'mouse', 'hare', 'elk-hunter', 'wood-master', 'alder', 'grass', 'sea-spirit', 'stone', 'sun', etc. (Jochelson 1910: 84; Stepanova et al. 1964: 797). Stories include the origin of the 'Hare Clan', involving a person called 'Moon-Face' (Jochelson, op. cit.). This echoes North American myths associating the hare with the moon.

Life courses were attended with rituals and traditional practices. There are indications that the people practiced infanticide, killing unwanted babies (Jochelson 1910: 98). This may seem strange in view of the rapid decline of the population, but infanticide is a traditional way to manage family demographics, just as abortion is today. In the old days children were not named until they could speak; unfortunately no examples of native names are given (Jochelson 1910: 105). Yukaghir male names that are noted incidentally include: Tabuckan (hare), Kudalas, Kerkin, Sherhak, etc.

Apparently the Yukaghir had initiation ceremonies for girls and boys at puberty (Czaplicka 1914: 90). Such ceremonies are generally little known in the north. Women faced menstruation taboos, such as avoiding hunters during their period (Willerslev 2007: xiv). Burial practices are not well known; Russian practices would override native rituals. Scaffold burials were practiced in early times (Czaplicka 1914:145).

Summary

The Yukaghir would be practically annihilated by their colonizers. ‘Today, the Yukagir do not constitute an ethnic entity’ (Stepanova et al. 1964: 788). Other regional groups would face suppression. The Yakut came under considerable pressure from Russian colonizers as a Turkic-speaking, native minority. Yet their territorial occupation and numbers were so strong that 400 years of Russian rule could not break them. They still speak their Turkic language and have a large and prominent population. By contrast, the once pervasive Yukaghir language is extinct, and the minority’s existence relies on Russian tolerance – or lack thereof.

Russian scholars would take no responsibility for the Yukaghir decline. They happily noted that: ‘Many Yukagirs have a good knowledge of Russian’ (Stepanova et al. 1964: 789). That people would give up their identity and speak Russian seemed pre-ordained. It would then require great effort to maintain a focus on studying Yukaghir culture. The scholars somewhat gleefully added: ‘The history of the Yukagirs has not yet been sufficiently studied’ (ibid.).

Yet studying the Yukaghir is crucial to understanding the history and prehistory of this vast portion of the North. Behind the tragedy there is crucial information about the native societies that once existed, including the pervasive tradition of totemism. Continuing the quest for knowledge may entail a promise for the future preservation of native life and culture.

Itelmen

Name: Itelmen, ‘resident’, ‘living man’; aka: Kamchadal, Kamtsjadal, Camchadal, Khonchalo, etc. (Antropova 1964a: 876).

The Itelmen or Kamchadal were the ancient inhabitants of the great Kamchatka peninsula, formerly also of the northern Kurile Islands. With a territory of roughly 200,000 km² the prehistoric population may have reached 50,000+ people.

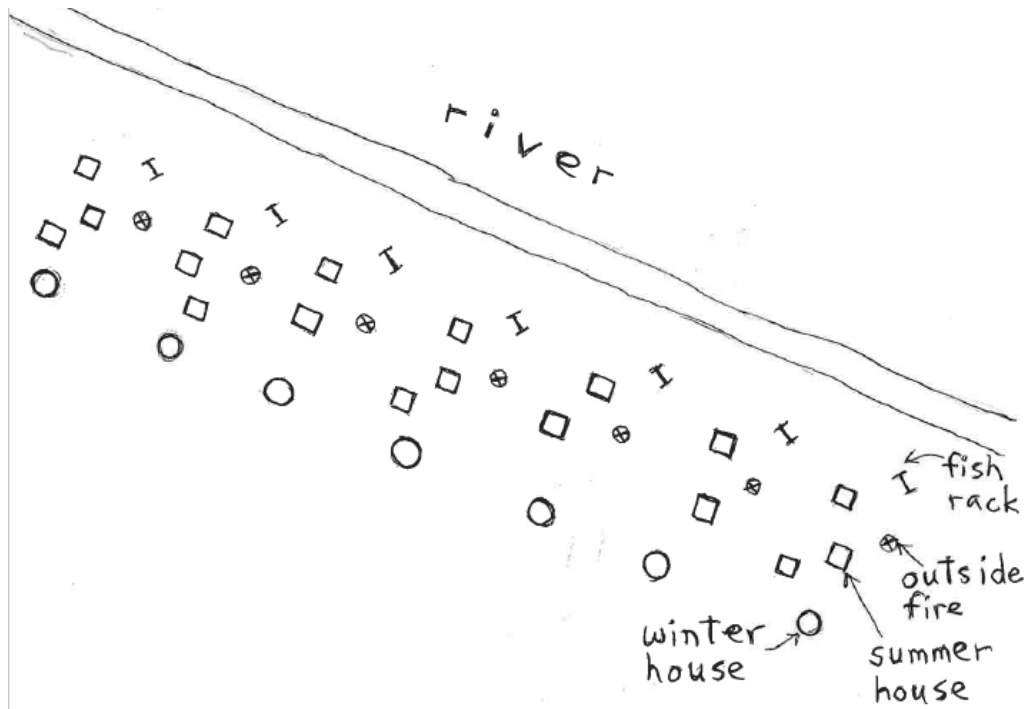
Historic population estimates are: 15,000-30,000 before 1600 AD; 1890: 4000-4500+, with 1181+ speakers; 1897: 3973/ 2805+; 1181 speakers; ca. 1900: 3555+; 1926: 814-1,000, with 769+ speakers; 1959: 1,100+, 400-600 speakers; 1970: 1300+, 350-500 speakers; 1980: 1,370-1,500, ca. 250-400 speakers; 1989: 2,481, <200-300 speakers; 1993: 2,400, <100 speakers; 2010: 3211, <82 speakers; etc. The language is nearly extinct. Many of today’s Kamchadals are ethnically and culturally Russian, similar to whites occupying Indian reservations in the USA (Antropova 1964a: 876).

The Kamchadal were divided into Western, Northern, Eastern and Southern or ‘Near Kurile’ regions, each with its own dialect. Only the Western group has survived linguistically and culturally. The rest were exterminated or assimilated by the Cossack-Russians (op. cit.: 876-7).

A former southern settlement was at Cape Lopatka. Villages and places include: Uka (N+E), Nalchevaya (N+E), etc. Some recent Itelmen villages include: Khayryuzovo, Napana, Utkholok, Kovran, and Sedanka, as well as former collectives such as ‘Red Partisan’ (Antropova 1964a: 876-7, 882-3).

Words related to settlements include: town (atteim); house (kizd); summer house (mem); people (krochoran); name (kharenech).

Ancient Itelmen settlements consisted of permanent villages along the rivers and shores, most prominently on the Kamchatka River. The Russians, in aggressive fashion, would refer to a native village as a ‘small-fort’, ‘ostrozhka’ (Antropova 1964a: 878-9). Villages reportedly contained both summer and winter houses, storage areas, and other structures. Probably it was also common to have separate summer and winter settlements. Historic villages, reduced in size, might hold 4 descent groups, each with own winter house and 1-3 summer houses; though some villages might be larger, with 5-10+ permanent houses (op. cit.: 878-9, 881). A prehistoric village may have held 15+ summer houses placed along a river bank, divided into clusters of 2-3 houses, each cluster occupied by an extended family or totem clan.



Conceptual early historic Itelmen village

Ecology

The original natural environment of Kamchatka was very rich, with plenty of sea creatures, fish, salmon rivers and large amounts of game in the forests. This provided the basis for an adaptation of hunting, fishing and gathering (Antropova 1964a: 877-8). The peninsula is a hidden natural wonder, which may account for the aggressive Cossack-Russian takeover.

History

The Itelmen are linguistically related to the Koryak and Chukchi peoples. They are an ancient population of Kamchatka who possibly moved there from north of the Okhotsk Sea after the Ice Age. On Kamchatka they supposedly absorbed some people who had come from the south via the Kuril Islands, and who in the 1700s still preserved their own 'Near-Kurile' culture. The oldest Neolithic settlements on Kamchatka had excavated houses, stone tools, blubber lamps, carved bone objects and pottery (Antropova 1964a: 877).

The Russian conquest of Kamchatka started in 1696-97, with disastrous results for the natives. A Russian Cossack expedition went along the west coast of Kamchatka from Anadyr in 1697 and demanded 'taxes' in the form of furs from the Itelmen they encountered. With a Russian trade and military presence, the Itelmen existence drastically changed. By 1740 pottery production had ceased, iron pots taking their place. Russians were given trade privileges on Kamchatka after 1700, which took the form of armed looting of the natives. The situation was rapidly approaching genocide when the Russians started confiscating food. People had to pay for 'taxes' and goods by working as slaves for the Russians occupiers. The Itelmen tried to revolt in 1706, 1711 and 1731. After the uprising of 1731, a commission of inquiry was sent to Kamchatka, who had Itelmen leaders executed, while a few Russians were reprimanded (Antropova 1964a: 877, 880).

Epidemics would ravage the native Itelmen population ca. 1350-1930; most of the cataclysms are unrecorded. In 1767-68 Russian ships brought smallpox to Kamchatka, which is believed to have killed 70+% of the natives. The violent colonization, combined with the introduction of epidemic diseases and food deprivation, led the Itelmen population to drop drastically. Whole districts of natives were desolated. There was also a forced relocation of local groups, and a growing Russian colonial population (Antropova 1964a: 876, 880-1).

The 1800s were a critical period for Itelmen culture. The tax tyranny continued. An extensive Russian agrarian colonization set in after 1740, which over time came to dominate the peninsula. Traders of the Russian-American Company in the 1860s claimed to have 150,000 rubles of outstanding debts among the Itelmens. Overfishing and excessive hunting depleted the river and forest resources. By the time of the Revolution a strangely mixed population arose of Russians, Itelmen and others. On the west coast at Tani River 800 'Kamchadal' in 1897 were a mixture of Russians, Yakut, Even, Koryak and Itelmen. On the Kamchatka River there were 2000 'starozhili', a Russian-Itelmen mixed group. Many children of Itelmen mothers and Russian fathers spoke Itelmen interspersed with Russian. In addition, there was a more unmixed Itelmen-speaking population in the Kamchatka Valley and elsewhere (Antropova 1964a: 876-7, 880-883).

Economy

Kamchadal people lived from gathering, fishing and hunting. Later some agriculture was introduced under the Russians. During historic times native men also would get engaged in trapping to pay for Russian demands on trade debts and 'taxes' (Antropova 1964a: 877-880).

The main occupation was fishing, especially during the salmon migration to the rivers. Fishing implements included nets, lines and hooks, fish traps, and more. Fish was dried as yukola, or buried in pits. At sea people caught seals, fur-seals, whales, cod and other fish. They also hunted an animal called 'sea-beaver', perhaps meant for sea-otters. Game hunted on land included deer and fur animals such as sable. Among the hunting implements were arrows poisoned with plant extracts (Antropova 1964a: 877-8).

Itelmen women engaged in extensive gathering of plant food, such as lily roots, sweet grass, arnica leaves, green shoots, some weeds, berries, cedar seeds, nuts, and more. This was considered to be a significant part of the livelihood (op. cit.: 877).

Transportation included boats, dog sleds, snow shoes, and skis. The riverboat (bat) was a hollowed-out poplar, sometimes shaped like a catamaran.

Forms of cooperation included collective fishing, joint seal hunting, sharing of a whale carcass among all local residents, mutual aid, etc. Much of this could be on the basis of a totemic organization, involving totem clans, phratries, moieties and villages or local settlements.

Russians introduced the growing of potatoes, turnip, horse radish, and more. Domesticated livestock also began to appear, cows, pigs, hens and horses. The Russian demand for trade and taxes would dominate native living after 1730. Some village elders or leaders were used as henchman, and got a part of the trade income, while most natives had little income. People would rely on a subsistence economy into the 1900s, plus a modicum of trade goods.

Kinship

Households lived in a summer-house (balagan) which was a pyramidal grass-hut built on a scaffolding platform. The winter house was half excavated, while the roof protruded and was covered with logs, bark and earth. The main entrance was through the smoke hole in the ceiling. An entrance on the side was used only by women and children. The winter house was inhabited by 2-4 or more related families. Sometimes the house could lodge up to 100 visitors, presumably an exception. The diet included salmon dried as yukola or buried in pits. Buried fish heads were a favorite food (Antropova 1964a: 878). From sweet grass people made a fermented 'wine' (op. cit.: 880).

Women had a central place and high status in the house group and otherwise in social life. Residence was matrilineal, i.e., husbands moved into their wives' and in-laws' houses on a temporary or long-term basis. At marriage men had to do bride-service, i.e., work for the wife's parents as a part of their marriage obligations. 'Many features of matriarchy persisted in the Itel'men social system'. This 'matriarchal organization' was broken down by the Cossack-Russian colonizers after 1700 (op. cit.: 879).

The kinship system supposedly had a classificatory genealogical terminology. Some terms were: Fa (epep); Mo (enkacha); Br (tiga); Si (dktoŋ); Ch (pêch).

Differentiation

Potential totems include: fish (echio), salmon, cod, sea-mammal, seal, fur-seal, sea-dog, sea-lion, whale (tenn), white-whale, killer-whale, worm (kepich), crab, snail, fly (khalimlch), spider, bird (diskilt), cuckoo, chicken (kokorok), raven, duck (arshimons, tichimach), goose (ksoaish, kiswis), swan (maskho), bear (kaza), sable (komkom), ermine (teichich), otter (mwishemwish), wolf (kotayom), dog (kossa), fox (chashian), animal (kazit-kengwia), deer, reindeer, sheep (kolem), cow (koya, kezioŋ), bone (kotkamch), mouse (tekolch), hare (mwis'chich), tree (ô), forest (owot), man, axe, spoon (lachpa), fire (panich), water (î, yî), sea (esok), river (kîg), ice (kirvol), rain (chokcho), earth, mountain (inzit), stone (kowal), sand-dust (pesalik, tesich), clay (kitkim), sky (kokhel), wind (tvetvi), star (ezengich), moon (kirch-kirch), sun (kolech), etc.

A number of potential totems are indicated by animal tales and clan stories. These include stories in which people marry or are related to animals and other phenomena. In one story a woman is the sister of a bear, but fails to observe the taboo on eating bear's meat, which might happen in a totemic setting (Jochelson 1961: 6). In another story a hare person is a Russian who drinks, indicating that at least one Russian man was adopted into the Itelmen totemic system (Jochelson 1961: 7). Several stories seem to be about totem clan members, rather than about totem animals as such.

Local totem organization

An Itelmen settlement or village was composed of local descent groups, here called totem clans. That a 'village' was 'inhabited by members of one clan' no doubt it false; perhaps one could say that each person belonged to 'one clan' that together with many other clans constituted 'one' village (Antropova 1964a: 879). Scholars would refer to local clans by a variety of terms, in reference to an extended family, family group, family cooperative unit, and so on. Winter houses could hold such an extended family or totem clan. In summer the

descent group would be split on 2-3 houses, representing grandparents and 1-2 married children with grandchildren.

Russian scholars would emphasize corporative features such as blood vengeance, which presumably was rare. More pertinent are references to 'communal' activities such as the sharing of fish, meat and skins (ibid.). The general impression is that a village would include people and houses from several family groups or clans. These would form a complex and complementary system of totemic clans.

A potential distribution of totem clans in an Itelmen local community or village is as follows: fish, cod, seal, whale, bird, cuckoo, raven, goose, bear, wolf, deer, hare, water, sun. Alternative clan distributions are feasible: fish, seal, raven, goose, bear, sable, wolf, fox, deer, sheep, mouse, hare, water, sky. This would be based on a variety of phratry groups, either comprised of fishes, birds and animals, or with egg-laying animals, carnivores and herbivores.

With historic depopulations, only a few totem clans might survive in each village. Common totems included whale, raven and bear, perhaps pointing to a 3-partite phratry system. One tentative local totemic organization could be: cod, whale, raven, goose, bear, deer, sky; salmon, seal, cuckoo, hawk, fox, hare, earth.

Due to the population reduction, the basic settlement pattern was changed and reconstituted by survivors of many local groups uniting in merged villages in the 17th and 18th centuries. Forced resettlement and Russian colonization would further change and disrupt the social organization. However, remnants of the clan system survived until the 1900s. This continuing union of totem clans from defunct villages was based on economic necessity, and the cultural emphasis on joint production and the sharing of foodstuffs locally.

At the same time personal autonomy characterized relations between people locally. Each person could hold his or her own in the intricate system of totems and social relations (Antropova 1964a: 879). This was related to a fairly high level of political organization.

Politics

Unfortunately the political autonomy of the Itelmen people was severely curtailed after failed rebellion attempts 1706-1731. What little is known is that each settlement or village had its own eschelon of leaders (Antropova 1964a: 879).

They could include a first and second chief, perhaps identified as a 'peace' and 'warrior' chief, along with a council of elders. There may have been a meeting ground near the houses in a village. In the cold season one of the winter houses may have served as a council house. As noted, up to 100 people could assemble in such a house, perhaps for inter-village or inter-band councils.

The Russians designated village elders (toyon) as leaders or henchmen who would collect taxes, supervise people's economic activities, and control local members. These leaders were eventually determined by the villagers themselves by elections approved by the Russians. This was a strikingly liberal move, perhaps caused by the presence of Russian men married among the Itelment.

The position of village leader may have been hereditary. Local decisions were generally made by consensus. The possibilities for deciding over or punishing others were limited among the Itelmen.

Mention of intertribal warfare in the 1700s may be exaggerated, or could be attributed to the severe breakdown of the native society due to Russian colonization. Such warfare focused on obtaining women and prisoners, which would be related to the loss of people and the need to add local members after the colonial depopulation set in. Russians would refer to such prisoners as 'slaves', but they were adopted household members who worked alongside family members. The Russians, by inventing 'slaves', would use this idea to exploit people ruthlessly (Antropova 1964a). The whole way of life was changed in a short period of time.

Religion

Itelmen beliefs were said to resemble those of the Koryak and Chukchi (Antropova 1964a: 879). The word for god (kot) would refer to major deities such as the sun, moon, earth, sky and wind. There were powerful spirits in nature, such as mountain and forest spirits and the sea spirit (mitg). Individuals would have protective spirits. The raven (kutkh) was a creator figure, perhaps connected to an 'earth diver' theme (Jochelson 1905; Antropova 1964a: 879-880).

No doubt the Itelmen had an annual cycle of ceremonies, perhaps directed at the river and sea in summer, and at the forest and animals such as bears in winter. Ritual celebrations spread across the year included feasts focusing on the whale, bear, and other creatures and spirits; they included 'treating' and 'giving gifts' to hunted animals (Antropova 1964a: 879).

Precisely how the annual cycle unfolded is not quite clear. There was an 'exceedingly interesting' fall festival, mostly undescribed (Jochelson 1905: 13). It ended with a 'purification' of 'passing through hoops of birch twigs' (Antropova 1964a: 879). This ceremony may have been directed toward the start of fall hunting. The winter ceremonies may have focused on the bear cult, though possibly including other animals such as deer or reindeer and elk-moose (Antropova 1964a: 879).

A spring festival may have focused on the whale, but possibly on salmon and the return of river fish as well (ibid.). It may have been dedicated to the 'sea-spirit' (mitg), and possibly to other spirits besides (op. cit.: 879-880). In summertime there would have been various ceremonies, focusing on the totem clans and the village as a whole. Dances that were held included those of the sea-dog, partridge, bear, and other performances (Jochelson 1928: 220).

At celebratory feasts, the animals killed in hunting were treated as guests and given gifts. Most important was the autumn festival, which ended with a purification ritual by walking through rings of birch branches. Unfortunately all these religious celebrations would be interrupted by Russian priests and officials by the 1900s.

In historic times the shaman remained as a recourse to meet people's spiritual needs and mental or health issues. Yet he was not very differentiated in terms of costume from the common people, indicating that an emphasis on shamanism was recent. Orthodox Christianity was forcibly introduced after 1750 on Kamchatka, but people continued to hold on to their 'animistic' or nature-based beliefs for as long as possible.

Culture

The Itelmen had a rich material and expressive culture. Their clothing was similar to that of the Koryak and Chukchi (Antropova 1964a: 878). Unfortunately clothing decorations are not well known. Other parts of figurative art are also little known. 'Anthropomorphic images' of nature spirits 'were usually made of wood' (op. cit.: 880). Whether such 'images' were always anthropomorphic, and what they represented, is not recorded; suggested exemplars include: fish, whale, bird, bear, elk-moose, etc.

The folklore and mythology is poorly known. Myths about the creator-raven (kutkh) could be irreverent. Various comical and obscene myths were told about the raven (ibid.). These could be related to animal stories and totemic myths, as a kind of joking relations, in which people joked about each other's totems, which is common in totemic societies. The many animal stories remain little disseminated. Animals and creatures noted include: fish, salmon, seal, ground-seal, whale, crab, bird, bunting, woodpecker, ptarmigan, raven, goose, bear, wolf, fox, ox, mountain-sheep, mouse, wind, thunder, etc.

The life cycle of people was clearly marked. There was some gender-based division of labor, men engaged in hunting and fishing, women in gathering and making nets, as well as shared tasks. Interestingly it was noted that 'preparing food' was 'done by men' (Antropova 1964a: 878). Presumably gender relations and activities were flexible. Burial is said to have taken place by people being laid out for animals to eat. Probably this is misunderstood, based on episodes of epidemics when many people died and could not be buried (op. cit.: 880).

Summary

Scholars would note the tremendous changes that had devastated Itelmen society once the Russian colonization set in around 1700 AD. 'Until its subjection to Russian rule', the natives lived in 'complete freedom' (Antropova 1964a: 879). The Russian colonization in the 17th and 18th centuries led to a total reorganization and near-extinction of Itelmen society. The economy was changed from traditional hunting and fishing to subsistence farming and new economic activities such as fur trapping. Russification affected all areas of life, from metal pots to Russian husbands. Apparently the frequent intermarriage with Russians favored Itelmen survival, but also constituted a threat of suppression. Cossacks, soldiers and peasants who had been forcibly placed as colonizers, married Itelmen women from 1750 onwards. Parts of the Itelmen way of life and culture were preserved in such mixed families. This population spoke Russian but was referred to as 'Kamchadal' locally (Antropova 1964a: 876, 879-883).

On the negative side, Russian paranoia, such as conflicts with the Japanese ca. 1890-1945, would restrict all efforts at cultural survival among the natives. There were forced relocations and collectivization of the Itelmen. The Itelmen were organized primarily in fishing collectives with hunting, trapping and agriculture as a side business. In one collective village there was a health center, welfare club, school, etc., staffed by Russians and partly by Itelmen, no doubt thanks to Russian intermarriage. Repression was a constant factor during the Cold War and into the 1990s, and remains a specter in native-Russian relations. In 1950, the Itelmen language existed only in a few villages on the northwest coast of Kamchatka, in and near Sedanka and Khajrjuzovo. The speakers would be interfered with by local Koryaks and especially Russians. The mixed Russian-Itelmen 'Kamchadal' community was class-divided between people with Itelmen blood at the bottom and 'pure' Cossack-Russians at the top

(Antropova 1964a: 876, 880-3). Yet they constituted a regional group that somehow kept Itelmen identity alive. On Kamchatka there is a large mixed population of 10,000-20,000 people who are partly of Itelmen origin, and who have recently tried to be recognized as indigenous, without reaching their goal.

What shines through this development of hardships and persistence is the vitality and resilience of the ancient way of life of the Itelmen. This can be traced back to a distant but not too distant past when people lived in enduring and well organized settlements or villages. Over time calamities would decimate the population, but people still kept up a remembrance of their totemic organization, including a Russian man who was a hare. Perhaps the Itelmen, with their strong native-Russian ties, have a fairly good opportunity to remember past practices and keep elements of their culture alive.

Kerek

Aka Kereks, Kereky, Kerekit, Nymylan, Chawchuwen; autonoms include Ankalakku or Angqalghakku, ‘coastal’ or ‘seaside people’. The people also call themselves Karakykku or Kerek, but the etymology of the word is unknown. In the 1930s the Kereks were regarded as a Koryak group and their official name was Nymylan, same as Koryaks. The Kereks were classified as a separate people in the 1960s.

The prehistoric territory is not known, but would exceed 10,000 km². A late prehistoric population could be ca. 3,000+ people.

There is little official data on the number of Kereks. Some population estimates include: 1897: 300-600 people. 1901: 300-371+. 1927: 315+. In 1934: 90-200+. 1937: 152-200+. 1966: ca. 70. 1968-1979: ca. 100. 2002: 8! 2010: 4! 2021: 23 people. During the twentieth century, Kereks were assimilated into the Chukchi people. They were completely ignored by Russian officials.

The Kerek had two bands or dialects: Navarin aka Yiulallakku (‘upper’), and Khatyrsk aka Nutylallakku (lower). Around 1780 3 Khatyrka settlements were noted besides 1 near Anadyr, with ‘a multitude of non-paying Koryak’ or Kerek (Leont’ev 2017).

In 1652 Russian Cossacks attacked and destroyed a ‘Koryak’ village near Cape Geka consisting of 14 houses that each held ‘ten families’, probably an exaggeration (Leont’ev 2017). The village population could be 300+ people. This might actually be a Chukchi village. Pithouses in the area are found in groups of 5-8+ pithouses placed in rows or semicircles (Leont’ev 2017: 8).

Tentative Kerek settlements include:

Northern or ‘Tuman’ Kerek:

Nigrin community: Nigrin, Nigrinutetgyn, 14 houses, 300+ people (1652);

Talkapergyrgyn community: Talkapergyrgyn aka Tuman or Tymna Lagoon.

Tapanergyngyn community: Tapanergyngyn, Elkytveem aka Alkatvaam, Cape Gintera.

North Central or ‘Navarin’ Kerek:

Gachgatagyn community:

Hachhatahin aka Gachgatagyn, Gachgatagin, Beringovskij or Ugolnaya Bay, 10-30 pithouses; 1 house, 15-25 people (1901); 2 households, 7 people (1927), 2-3 houses, 9-12 people (1930);

Kaiamamkut, 2 houses, 7 people (1927), Mainamamkut, 1 house, 4 people (1927), Upank aka Upankinmyn or Upanky, 3 houses, 10 people (1927) – supposedly a central village.

Kaniun or Amaam community:

Amaamyn aka Amaam, 20+ pithouses, 2 houses, 9 people (1927),

Keniun aka Kanyiun, Kaniun or Orianda Lagoon, 1 house, 15-25 people (1901).

Middle Central Kerek:

Etchun community: Lake Keypilgyn, Etchun aka Lake Pekulneiskoe – ancient village.

Meinypilgun community: Meinypilgun aka Meinypilgyno, 2+7 houses, 2+34 people (1927), 12 houses, 32+ people (1937), 30-60+ (1959), 15-31+ (mixed) (1970), 5 speakers (1975), 150+ houses (2020), Kueta, Yankinan – old place; area also called Vaamechgyn, Vaamochka River, etc.

South Central or ‘Khatyrka’ Kerek:

Vatyrkan or Khatyrka community: Vatyrkan aka Vatirkan, Khatyrka or Kamakynnot, 3+1+ house (1777), 3 houses, ca. 50 people (1901), 10-40 (1959), 11-35+ (1970), 9 speakers (1975), 60+ houses (2020); Ennuun aka Annon or Annushka, 1 house, 15-25 people (1901). Ketyna community: Myllan aka Mallan, Malan or Cape Rubicon, 1 house, 15-25 people (1901), 2 houses, 15 people (1927), 5 houses, 26 people (1937), Katyn aka Ketyna, Khatyn, Opuka or Apuka, 3 houses, 12 people (1927). Elganyn-Yagnon community: Elganyn, Yagnagynon aka Yagnon or Cape Lagunnyi, 1 house, 15-25 people (1901), etc.

Southern Kerek:

Ukilan, 1 house, 15-25 people (1901); Ilpi, 3 houses, 50 people (1901); 1 house, 5 people (1937);

Mimylgytgyn aka Lake Mimylgytgyn, 2-3 households, 12-14 people (1937);

Southernmost or 'Kovachin' Kerek:

Mechivnyn aka Mechivnen, 1 house, 15-25 people (1901), 2 house, 14 people (1937); Tapan, 1 house, 15-25 people (1901);

Vaimantagin aka Vaimentahin, 1 house, 25 people;

Tapatagin aka Tapahin, 1 house, 15-25 people (1901), 2 houses, 14 people (1937);

Kavasyat aka Kavachat, Kavachin or Kovachin, 21 people (1901); 3 houses, 18 people (1937);

Pokachin, perhaps the same as Opuka; etc.

Population total: 300-371 people (1901).

Some of these places apparently were Koryak, and the population figures are tentative.

Accounts of the communities are confusing (Jochelson 1905; Leont'ev 2017: 612). How many of the settlements were Kerek, and when they existed, is largely unknown.

Kerek settlements or villages were located on terraces near a river or coast line. A viable Kerek community would have 12+ families. There might be 14 descent groups, here called totem clans, each occupying 1-3+ houses. A 'dwelling complex' of 2-3 interconnected houses has been described, each complex or cluster holding a descent group and forming part of a larger village. Houses (kuimaiaana, valkhaan) were 8-10+ m across. A village would split up in summer into fishing camps, possibly phratry based. In winter there might be hunting camps as well (Leont'ev 2017; Selstad 1998a).

Kerek communities had a minimal population level of ca. 70 people. Once people fell below this number communities either dwindled away, or consolidated into larger communities that could survive for some time.

Five local communities or settlements may have become three, those three could become two, and finally all were collected in one local band or community. This reassembly was the only way they could survive as a people. If they split up they would all disappear. The reorganization also bears testimony to the strength of social organization. The Kerek probably were organized into 12 or so families or descent groups to the end. It would be a small miracle, but the descent groups may have remained totemic into the 20th century.

Ecology

The habitat was one of coasts, forests and mountains. 'The Kereks make up a small linguistic enclave near the Gulf of Ugolnaya and Navarin Cape on the coast of the Bering Sea in northeastern Siberia'. 'Their habitat is the Arctic region with its permafrost tundra and harsh

climate'. The main seasons were winter from September-October to May-June, and summer from May-June to September-October (Viires 1993).

History

It may be that the Kerek people once lived at the northwest corner of the Okhotsk Sea. During historical times they were gradually pushed eastward by neighboring people, a great impetus being the Russian-Cossack trade expansion from the west after 1630. Over time the Kerek would be pushed all the way to the Bering Strait, and in the process they would be practically destroyed (Selstad 1998a).

The Kereks were regarded as a Koryak tribe among the Chukchi, but differed from the nomads 'because they led a settled life of fishing and hunting'. Russians would start demanding 'tax' from the Kerek by 1770. By 1800 'Chukotka and Kamchatka were under Russian control and any native resistance had been subdued' (Viires 1993). The Kereks never adopted the Russian Orthodox faith (Wikipedia n.d.). In the 1800s 'Russian merchants expanded their activities into Chukotka'. After selling Alaska in 1867 'Russia hastened to strengthen its positions in northeastern Siberia. Economically, Russia did not gain control over these areas until Soviet rule had been established' behind 'closed borders' (Viires 1993).

After 1923 Soviet rule posed a threat. 'In 1930, the Chukchi national territory was formed and collectivization began. The collectivization of the Kereks was relatively easy because they were already a settled people. The change over to Soviet ways was more than painful. The Soviets introduced new houses, new technology and means of transport, health care and literacy, but they also introduced ideological brainwashing and repression. Militant atheism was strongly opposed to the animistic beliefs and the shamans' who represented the Kerek people. Soviet industries exploited the natural resources. 'The life of the Kereks was regulated by Soviet norms, rules and regulations and these crushed the local people, their natural habitat and their national interests'. The 'local and the ethnic' was suppressed as 'primitive' and 'provincial' (Viires 1993).

Economy

Historically, the Kerek were a settled people who engaged in fishing, hunting and gathering, including hunting wild reindeer and mountain-sheep. The main livelihood was the catching of sea-mammals, birds and fish. Southern Kereks also practiced small-scale reindeer herding. They also kept sled dogs and collected fur from marine mammals (Wikipedia n.d.). Among other things people hunted walrus on spits and capes at the coast. Other animals caught were seals, bearded-seals, sea-lion, whales, etc. The catching of sea mammals took place in summer. Fishing, in the sea, lagoons, rivers and lakes, was important. The fish caught included salmon, capelin, flounder, cod, etc. The main fishing season was in summer, when fish such as salmon was caught, dried and stored. Birds were caught in early summer and summer, and included sea-birds, gull, guillemot, duck, eider-duck, goose, etc. All kinds of land animals were hunted, elk-moose, deer, reindeer, mountain-sheep, marmot, squirrel, ground-squirrel, hare, etc. Hunting was carried out year-round, but mainly in winter. Some people adopted small scale reindeer herding in historic times. Gathering is generally underestimated as an activity by scholars, but in one report it had 'great significance in the lives of the Kerek' (Leont'ev 2017). Resources collected included molluscs, shells, seaweed, roots, berries, green shoots and more. Some plants were collected to be used as raw materials

in net-making, basketry, plaiting, weaving, etc. Moss was used for wadding and in dressing wounds.

Kinship

It seems that the Kerek lived in extended families or descent groups, here called totem clans, with ca. 10-15 people. As noted each house was 8-10+ m across, and 1-3 houses could hold a descent group. Each house would hold up to 5-6+ people (Leont'ev 2017: 45). Otherwise little is known about the kinship organization of the Kerek. Some kinship terms are: GrFa (appapi, appapipil); GrMo (appa, appapil); Mo (ylla, yllapil), etc.

The exogamy rules seem to have been extensive, extending not only to close relatives but to most local residents. In one example people from Gachgatagyn found spouses at Khatyrka, nearly 300 km away! (Leont'ev 2017: 46). Due to the greatly diminished population it would be impossible to find spouses closer at hand. This may explain why people found spouses from other ethnic groups, such as Chukchi and Russians, because they were outside the exogamy rules. That exogamy combined with depopulation forced people to find spouses outside their ethnic group may account for intermarriage with other ethnic groups, not least Russians, in much of North Asia. The Itelmen-Russian blending may be attributed to this predicament, how to find a spouse when most people have died, and you are still not allowed to marry anybody because of totemic exogamy rules. Such a predicament may also help explain why totemism was abandoned in historic times, because if, say, all carnivores are siblings, and all birds are collaterals on the Fa's or Mo's side, then finding a spouse who is not related to Fa or Mo may be impossible. Kerek people dreaded interethnic marriages, because they feared being abused (*ibid.*). Even so there were no other options when intra-ethnic marriage was excluded by exogamy rules. Ignoring restraints such as totemic belonging could loosen the restraints, but still did not solve the issue that there were categories of relatives people were not allowed to marry, and locally everybody would know who the relatives were.

One scholar is flabbergasted: Of 11+ married couples in Meinypilgyno in 1970, in 1 pair both were Kerek, in 9 Chukchi-Kerek, and in (at least) 1 Russian-Kerek (Leont'ev 2017: 47). In view of a resistance to interethnic marriage this seems strange, but once exogamy rules are taken into consideration it makes more sense. The scholar stupidly asks if the Kerek had 'group marriage', and the informants offensively said no. The scholar still insists on 'comrade' marriage, which refers to sororate or levirate (Leont'ov 2017: 47). Polygamy resulted from a man's obligation to marry his deceased Br's Wi, or based on practical or economic considerations (*ibid.*).

Reportedly the Kerek had a 'matriarchal' organization (Leont'ev 2017: 46). The head of a descent group or totem clan was a married woman. 'Supremacy' in an extended family 'belonged to the oldest woman' (*ibid.*). In myths, people would ask permission of the 'grandmother', the oldest woman, to do anything, such as collecting bark for braiding rope (*ibid.*).

Residence was bilateral-matrilateral, but also patrilateral. Women would return to the clan residence of their Mo on the death of a Hu (Leont'ev 2017: 46). The MoBr had authority over his SiChn (*ibid.*). In one case a woman, Ulnavyt, had two sons, and two yBrS living with her, whose Da, Kachykanav, was reckoned as Ulnavyt's GrDa, that is, a part of the female descent group (*ibid.*). The supplies of fish collected were 'collective property and controlled by

Ulnavyt' (ibid.). This was all that remained of the Gachgatagyn community around 1930. Presumably these were the same people, or a large part of the same people, found at Kaiamamkut, Mainamamkut and Upank, though counted separately in each place, as if these were separate communities and not part of the same, badly reduced village. Once this was a village with nearly 300 people, presumably with an organization of 12-14+ totem clans.

Differentiation

With a near total population loss it is almost impossible to reconstruct the native social organization of the Kerek. But a range of potential totems can be suggested: fish, salmon (kitakit), humpback-salmon, seal, walrus, orca or killer-whale, bird (gatile), ptarmigan, gull, puffin, cormorant (nylkak), crow (ukkakkana), raven (kukki, miti), owl (chikylchiki), hawk, bear, polar-bear, wolverine, otter, wolf, dog, fox (iaiuchanakkut), deer, reindeer, elk-moose, mountain-sheep, marmot, mouse, ground-squirrel (sikakana), squirrel, hare, stone, river, sea, sun (pyllan), etc.

While there is considerable information on some aspects of Kerek life, such as settlements and marriage, other areas, such as political leadership and in particular differentiation and totemism, is very poorly recorded.

What becomes clear is the existence of large prior communities, settlements or villages with up to 30+ houses and an extensive local territory with ample natural resources. Later reduced to 0-5+ houses, these former communities would harbor 12-14+ totem clans that severally and collectively controlled the resources within their local territory. This must be the starting-point for an analysis of Kerek totemism, rather than the existence of 20+ almost annihilated settlements after 1900.

The totems of some clans seem fairly certain, the rest may be postulated: salmon, seal, gull or raven, owl or hawk, bear, wolverine or otter, wolf, fox, deer or reindeer, elk-moose or mountain-sheep, mouse or squirrel, hare, sea, sun, etc.

What also can be postulated is that the totem clans can be divided into phratries and moieties. One phratry include water animals and birds, another has carnivores, and a third has plant eaters. Sea and sun would be a chief's phratry, divided among two of the other phratries for practical purposes such as hunting. The moieties would have half of each phratry, one perhaps with fish, gull, bear, wolf, deer, hare and sea, the other with seal, owl, otter, fox, mountain-sheep, hare and sun, or similar. This is the only way to account for the structure of settlements with 12-14+ clans and up to 30+ houses. Needless to say there are many other ways to estimate how such large settlements were organized, but this is a first approach that should be tested against any and all information that can be gathered on personal names, kin relations, excavated and unexcavated pithouses, and any other information that is relevant to social organization, such as 'matriarchy' – a fascinating topic (Leont'ev 2017).

From here a wider organization can be envisaged. The northern, central and southern Kerek apparently had a dialect-based and political connection, such as village chiefs entering into alliances, where one chief and one totem might represent the whole district. Beyond this a tribal or national leadership can be posited, such as a tribal chief, whose totem might be raven or hare. After all the Kerek resisted Russian colonization for at least hundred years, which would suggest a general connection between tribal divisions. This wider organization too is lost in the mist or scraps of history, and will have to be teased out of a careful reading of

Russian and other records. That the Kerek once had a proudly independent existence seems raised above doubt.

Politics

Kereks are among the small people who were broken by Russian colonization, and reconstructing native leadership is difficult. It can be assumed that each settlement or village had a first and second chief or leader. From here the tribe could easily build up a tribal organization, but how this was done is practically unknown. The Russian Cossacks started attacking the people in 1652, and by 1800 they were subjugated and subjected to Russian rule and taxation. The dramatic events that went into this loss of autonomy are poorly known, but a disastrous population loss is at the core of the tribe's demise.

Religion

The Kerek held a nature belief, with deities such as the sun, moon, earth, etc. The raven plays a role in creation myths, making mountains (Leont'ev 2017: 77). Most such beliefs were suppressed or destroyed after Russian colonialism set in. Only shamanism remains as a vestige of former beliefs. It is said that the Kerek erected natural shrines near their villages. Here the bones of whales, walruses, polar-bears and other large animals were placed, a tribute to the wild creatures as a source of food and material resources.

Annual ceremonies comprised a fall festival. This included a ritual which marked the movement into winter-season houses. Presumably there also were spring and summer celebrations, but these are not known. There was a bear festival, possibly in winter (Leont'ev 2017: 52). A part of the spring ceremony, before starting to hunt sea-mammals, was divination by the aid of walrus skulls. The skull was asked for its aid in hunting success, and offered fat in return. There was a ritual of 'giving thanks' (klikkyputtuvak) when game was brought in (ibid.).

Shamanism and animism was strong among the Kerek, with the Kerek never converting to Christianity. The Kerek people held on to traditional religious beliefs. They placated spirits, some of whom they feared, and others were 'guardian spirits'. They relied on shamans to perform sacrifices to these spirits and depended on a shaman for many of their spiritual needs (Leont'ev 2017).

Culture

The Kerek language is no longer spoken. Kerek descendants speak Chukchi and Russian. The closest related language is Koryak, 'though as regards vocabulary the Chukchi displays most similarities. The structure of Kerek is incorporative or polysynthetic' (Leont'ev 2017). Two dialects are distinguishable: Khatyrka and Maino-Pylgen. The latter is spoken by the majority of the Kerek people. The dialectal differences and the dialects themselves have not been studied separately. The Kerek and the Koryak languages supposedly diverged after the Koryak and the Chukchi had separated. The Chukchi influence is strong (ibid.). It is most likely that colonization by the Chukchi has prevented the Kereks and the Koryaks from forming an enclave. All Kereks reportedly were able to use spoken and written forms of the Chukchi language.

The Kerek vocabulary where it concerns the environment and related activities (fishing, sea animal hunting) is quite rich. Chukchi has been a source of loan-words, many deeply ingrained but also many absorbed from Russian via Chukchi during the Soviet period. When Russian came to be spoken more widely, the words were directly borrowed. This was inevitably followed by full-scale usage of Russian. The Kereks faced the prospect of losing their identity and becoming either Chukchi or Russian (Leont'ev 2017).

Kerek had no written language. People would use the Chukchi written language created in 1932. 'Since the 1960s Kerek has been regarded as a separate language', but the 'language for communication is Chukchi or Russian, and the language for education and cultural life is Russian. There no longer exist enough people to maintain a written language' (Leont'ev 2017).

'Research has begun recently into the Kereks'. Some linguistic and ethnographic material was collected around 1900. 'The first linguistic treatment of the Kereks was published in 1968' (Leont'ev 2017). 'The Kereks and their language have not been sufficiently studied. No samples of texts, or dictionaries have been published' (ibid.).

Kerek mythology seems to have abounded with animal stories, though little is known about them. Mention is made of figures such as 'Hare-Man', 'Wolf-Man', 'sea husband', etc., indicating a totemic ideology (Leont'ev 2017: 46). Other creatures or beings include: fish, humpback-salmon, flea, seal, bearded-seal, raven, fox, reindeer, mountain-sheep, mouse, stone, mountain, etc. (op. cit.: 50, 74-79). Stories where animals trick each other, like fox and raven, or hare and seal, resemble clan stories, where people tell stories about other clans in a reciprocal fashion. Unfortunately scholars were more interested in familiar themes such as gods and heroes, paying little attention to animals. A known culture hero was the raven (op. cit.: 78).

Kerek life courses are not well known. What is known is that the Kerek 'cared very much for their children' (Leont'ev 2017: 47). Yet children did not always respect their parents (op. cit.: 49). Male names include: Pia, Tureret, Turylkyt, Tanomryn, Kaakvyrgin, Kezhgynto, Kaavykuinyn, Rultynkavav, Milutkalik (hare), Nutav, Nigrin, Yukavav, Vechikalkin, Apykuia, Upiya or Upynit, Arat, Ivitak, Uvyayat, etc. Female names include: Kachykanav, Kalvichanau, Ulnavyt, Amchiktyna, Omrytvaal, Ankana (sea), etc. In winter people were buried in the sea, in summer they were interred (op. cit.: 53).

Summary

'The fate of the Kereks is a pitiful example of what happens when a minor ethnic group is forced to leap into Communism under the duress of their colonizers. The Russian-language mass culture poses a threat to the Kerek language and cultural identity, and its military-industrial colonial policies are hazardous to the life and health of all' (Viires 1993).

Small people like the Kerek have a strong will to go on as a people. This may be because they have come through incredible hardships together, and they owe it to those who passed away to carry on with their way of life. A similar case could be the Skolt Sami group of 70 people in Neiden, Norway, who in spite of hundreds of years of suppression have a strong will to carry their lifeways and traditions along. Scholars may be surprised at this, since they expect small people to disappear. But they should not be. A people's way of life is much too valuable to be given up even when closely threatened. People always hope for a better life in the end.

If one were to ask why the Kerek are included in this study of North Asian totemism, one answer would be that their situation illustrates – to the extreme – the destruction that has befallen many northern societies, and the difficulties inherent in getting a grip on their native way of life. Yet it can be assumed that the Kerek had roughly the same way of life and a similar social organization to their neighbors, such as the Koryak. In this sense the Kerek constitute a missing piece of the puzzle. The picture may be restored as the details of native life are examined.

Koryak

Aka: Koriak (kor: 'reindeer'), Qorak, Nymylan, Nymylgan, Nemelan, Chavchyv, Chavchuvén, Voyemtivolanu, Ramkbken, own name: Nymy'lan ('inhabitant'), etc. The people included several dialects and regional groups: Chavchuv inland, Kamentsy at Penzhina Bay, Parentsy on the Paren River, Itkantsy or Itkana on Penzhina Bay, Apukintsky on Apuka, Bering Sea band, Kerek on the Bering Sea, Alyutor on the Kamchatka Peninsula, along with Karagintsy and Palantsy (Antropova 1964b: 851-2).

The Koryak occupy an area in Eastern Siberia from 58-65° N. The country is forest and tundra. The total territory is 360,000+ km², which could hold 60,000+ people.

Population estimates are: 25,000-35,000+ around the year 1600; 8,000-8,500+ in 1890; 1897: 7530+; in 1927: 7,434-8,000; 1959: 6,300, 5,700+ speakers; 1970: 7,500, ca. 6,000 speakers; 1980: 7,900-8,300+, with 5,450 speakers; 1989: 9,242, about 5,000 speakers; 2010: 8,000+, 1665+ speakers; etc.

In 1852 some 3720 Koryak were 'assessed for fur-tribute', but these counted less than half the tribal population. The Russians counted only the people they could reach or could force to pay 'tribute'. Apparently the Coastal or Maritime Koryak population fell from 6500+ to 3400+ between 1850 and 1900.

So-called Reindeer Koryak divisions and bands around 1850-1900 were:

In the Gishiga division, 2389+ people: Taigonos, with 250-380 people; First, Second and Third Goshiga, with 152, 167 and 104 people, total 423; Opuka or Apukini, with 250-400 people; Parapol, with 300-500+ people; in addition came small remnant bands of 14+ people (Jochelson 1905: 432-5).

In the Petropavlovsk division, 1284 people: First band, with two sub-bands, 'First' of 272-444 people, 'Second' of 284-312 people, total 556-756; Second band with 528 people; in addition Lesnovskoye with 61 people (op. cit.: 435). In addition there were 75 Anadyr Koryak and 13 'Okhotsk-Tungus' Koryak (op. cit.: 436).

At Anadyr: 75-78+ people. Total Reindeer Koryak: 3748+ people.

The term Chavchuvén may refer to one or all Reindeer Koryak bands.

For the western Maritime Koryak around 1850-1900 the divisions and bands included:

In the Okhotsk District, 244+ people: Yamsk village, with 205+ Koryak, and Tumansk, with 26+ people; total 231-244+. Both villages were controlled by Russians.

In the Gishiga District: 2045+ people.

In the Gishiga-Okhotsk division: Nayakhan or Eigival ('west') village, aka Germanda or Ligichmana ('birch'), of 125 people, reduced to 35 in 1900, Russianized; mouth of Avekona, abandoned by 1900; at Gishiginsk, 17 people, under Russian control

In West Penzhina Bay: Cape Itkana band aka Itkani with 160+ people, including Little Itkana or Neniigichun with 40+ people, Middle Itkana or Osgincho with 30+ people, and Big Itkana or Itkanu with 17 families, 90+ people; the population was decreasing.

The Paren aka Pareni or Parentsi band with 300+ people in 1850, by 1901 reduced to 199, aka First, Second and Third Paren: settlements at Paren aka Poitin or Poitu-veyem (winter), Kuel, 13-15+ houses (permanent), Khaimichi (summer), Tilgovo aka Tilqovo or Tilqai, 1 house (camp).

Kamenski aka Kameni, Kamentsi or Kamenskoye band, with 437 people in 1850, reduced to 317 in 1901, aka First, Second and Third Kamenskoye; settlements Mikino or Mesken, 28+ people, Shestakovo aka Shestokova, Lenlenchan or Egach, 18+, Yagach aka Egach or Third Kamenskoye, 21+, Levatt, Yarnochek, 22+, Kamenskoye aka Vaikenan, Magitkin-veyem or Pensjino, ca. 30 houses, 162-300+ people, Talovka aka Xesxen or Xesxe-veyem, 42+, Mamech, 25+; at Rekinniki, 15+ people. The 'First' group had 191+ people, the 'Second' 81+, and the 'Third' 154+ people; possibly these were phratry-like divisions. It would seem that the main village was Kamenskoye, all the rest were seasonal camps and outlying houses. In the old days, e.g., before 1850, there may have been 2-3 villages in the area, each with 100-300+ inhabitants.

The Pustoretsk band, 150+ people: settlements at Pustoretsk or Ewlewun 54+ people, Rekinniki or Rekinnok with 87+25 people.

The Podkaguir aka Podkaguirnoye or Pitkahen village, 100+ people ca. 1850, reduced to ca. 25 people by 1901.

The eastern Maritime Koryaks around 1850-1900 are listed as:

Near Anadyr: ca. 102+ people.

The Khatyrka-Kovacha group, 66+104 or 170+ people; at Khatyrka aka Khatyrk or Ilpi 44+13 or 57+; at Kovacha or Kavachat 22+91 or 113+ people.

Apparently the 44+ people at Khatyrka and 22+ at Kovacha were Kereks, reckoned as a separate 'clan' or tax group.

The Pokhacha group, 178+ people, at Pokhacha or Poqach, 71+, Poqach River, 1 house (camp), Opuka, 47+, Khailino or Qayilin 60+ people.

The Petropavlovsk District villages, in all 1391+ people:

The Palan aka Pallan or Pallantsi division, 878+ people:

Lesna aka Lesnovskoye or Lesnaya, 180-216+ or 240+ people, 146+ (1901).

Kinkil, 133+, 89+ (1901).

Pallan aka Palan or Palani, 203-226+, 103+20 Russians (1901).

Kakhtana, 235+, 163+ (1901).

Voyampolka aka Ust'-Voyampolka, 17-20+ houses, 127+, 93 (1901).

The Uka aka Ukintsi, Kargini or Karagintsi division:

Karagha aka Qareñin, 20+ houses, 103-168+.

Dranka, 13+ houses, 82-86+.

Ivashka, 6+ houses, 37+.

Khalula aka Khlulinskoye, 3+ houses, 21+.

Uka, 3 houses, 10+ people.

Osernoye aka Oserna, 6+ houses, 43-46+.

Total Maritime Koryak: 3782+ people.

People lived in camps and villages. Settlements or villages (nimnim, nemnem) could be fortified in ancient times with fences and earthen ramparts. A historical village or camp could have 2-20+ houses. Inland camps had 3-4 or more tents. The settlements of the coast were larger, with 10-15+ houses (Antropova 1964b: 858-860). In former times 40-100+ people would live in 1-6 winter houses, each of which could accommodate 12-40 people, later 6-30 people. Population decline meant that, among other things, some Kerek settlements were reduced to only 1-2 houses. It can be assumed that prehistoric Koryak villages held 30+ houses and 150+ residents. Most likely ancient villages could be large, reaching 300+ people in a local territory of 600+ km².

One settlement in 1900, perhaps Kamenskoye, held 30 families (Jochelson 1905: 124). One reindeer settlement gathering or 'fair' of 100+ people at Palpal had 16 tents placed inside a giant tent-like enclosure, 'eight on each side', suggesting a moiety structure (Jochelson 1905: 451). The enclosed space in the middle was 20+ m long. One Irishman claimed to have seen a 'large tent' with 26 inner tents (*ibid.*). For the Maritime Koryak it was pointed out that the house was a 'permanent dwelling-place' (*op. cit.*: 453).

Near one or more houses in each village stood a sacrificial post, also called a guardian spirit (*kamak*) or 'residence' post (*nimyolhin*) (Jochelson 1905: 36). There were one or more carved figures of a stylized human form in each house, but whether these had any totemic significance is not clear. A house guardian cannot be transferred to another family (Jochelson 1905: 43-46).

Ecology

The Koryak territory included coasts, rivers, forest, mountains and tundra. Near the sea there is more shrubs and alpine tundra, and marshes, with temperate deciduous forests in the south. The resources include mammals, seabirds, fish, seals and whales; the area includes the northern coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, northern Kamchatka to the Bering Sea; and inland areas. The winter months are from October to April, when the average temperature is below 0°C, while May-September is above zero, with a high average of 13°C in July (Jochelson 1905: 391). Precipitation is low, 220-280 mm (*op. cit.*: 393).

History

The Koryak probably inhabited originally, before the year 1500, the entire north coast of the Okhotsk Sea to northern Kamchatka. The people were gradually pushed eastward in the 16th and 17th centuries. In the 1700s, the resident Koryaks were pushed by Tungusic reindeer nomads, Even and partly Evenk. The relationship between inland reindeer nomads and the coastal fishermen and hunters was characterized partly by trade, intermarriage, raiding and war. A branch of the Koryak, the Chavchoven, itself took up reindeer herding and exploited parts of the hinterland. The other groups lived closer to the coast and tried to preserve a classic Koryak adaptation with hunting, fishing and gathering (Antropova 1964b: 853).

The Russian colonization after 1640 particularly affected the coastal population, in that prey and fur animals were collected in taxes. This led to armed resistance and Russian retaliations and suppression. Epidemics played a part in the native population decline. In the 1700s, taxation took on a fixed form and the Russians established forts that administered the Koryaks by 'clans', e.g., bands. The Russian rule led to extensive exploitation by traders. The Koryak became dependent on commodities such as iron pots, axes, tobacco, tea, weapons, clothing, etc. For some time American traders competed with the Russians, and the use of alcohol for trade purposes was extensive (Antropova 1964b: 854).

In the 17th and 18th centuries, many Russian towns and villages arose in the Koryak area. When the Koryak tried to rebel around 1710-1760, many were massacred by the Russians – a dreadful period (Jochelson 1905: 786-796). The scholar sarcastically added that the Russians were 'not fit' to live in the 'extreme northeast', they just wanted the conquest (*op. cit.*: 805). Some Koryak began living in Russian wooden houses in the 1800s and took Russian names, especially in the south, and intermarriage took place (Antropova 1964b: 854). In Soviet times, Koryak people were squeezed into smaller local areas, mainly on the Kamchatka Peninsula,

surrounded by Russian settlements that controlled the local economy and development in the area (op. cit.: 870-872).

Epidemics in the period 1300-1930 killed many people. A measles epidemic in 1900 killed many in the Gizhiga district and elsewhere (Jochelson 1905: 28). It must be added that most epidemics have not been properly recorded. External impacts led to a severe depletion of the population, in particular native speakers, by 2010.

Economy

People anciently lived from hunting, fishing and gathering. Historically there was hunting and fishing on the coast, and reindeer husbandry inland. Only the Chavchoven group had extensive reindeer herding, with large herds of up to several thousand animals. Poor nomads herded the owner's animals. In the Alyutor group, the majority held domesticated reindeer, but rarely had more than a few hundred animals, which 4-6 families herded together. The Alyutor also hunted marine mammals and fished. Other Koryak had few domesticated animals (Antropova 1964b: 854-856).

People hunted bears, marmots, wild reindeer, and mountain sheep. Historically, fur animals were caught for tax purposes: martens, foxes, wolverines, hares, etc. Women engaged in the gathering of plant food: berries, lily bulbs, roots, grass-shoots, sorrel, willowherbs, and more. Grass was used for shoe-lining and braiding work (op. cit.: 856-7).

The main fishing took place from June to September, but also in winter. The salmon season was in summer. Tom-cod was caught year-round. Weirs and obstructions in the rivers were used to catch fish, mainly salmon. Several families' nets could be sewn together into large nets to catch salmon at estuaries. Men also fished with smaller nets and other gear. Women made dried fish or yukola on scaffolding. The dried fish was stored in storehouses built on stilts (ibid.).

Hunting of seals and whales took place in autumn and spring. A seal hunting team could consist of 7-8 men, perhaps phratry-based. Whaling could involve the whole village. One drawing shows 3 boats each with 8 men engaged in whaling, perhaps representing 3 phratries (Jochelson 1905: 726). The prey was divided equally among the families in the camp, except for seal skins which the individual trapper kept. In ancient times people caught whales with large nets and boats. Large Koryak boats could hold a crew of 8-10 men and women (Jochelson 1905: 536). There would be 10-20 boats in each village, approximately one for each totem clans (op. cit.: 539).

It was said that the village Kuel had 13-15+ houses, with 7-8 occupied in winter (Jochelson 1905: 467). This would imply that not everybody went to hunting camps in winter.

The local manufacture included pottery. Pottery was replaced with exchanged iron pots in the 1800s. The Koryak gradually adopted blacksmithing using scrap iron to make knives, etc. In ancient times, blubber was used as a medium of exchange with inland people. There was a transition from mutual exchange to trade with the Russians of furs for goods. Individual families owned boats, nets and fishing gear, while large nets could be shared by several families (Antropova 1964b: 856-7).

The Koryak possessed a trade network spanning the region N of the Okhotsk Sea. Transport was provided by boats, sleds, skis etc. (Antropova 1964b: 860-2).

Kinship

Historic depopulation would have an impact on Koryak families and kin groups. Flourishing descent groups were reduced to partial households. This reduction would impact not only kin groups, but the fabric of the society as a whole. Russian 'tax' abuse and colonization would exacerbate the situation.

Details such as dwelling types are fairly well known (Antropova 1964b: 857-860). It was the wider makeup of society that was disrupted. Scholars would describe houses in detail, but never the layout of villages (Jochelson 1905: 447-468). One scholar wanted to illustrate a village with 15 houses, but the photo only shows 3 houses (op. cit.: pl. 23). Another illustration of a village shows some rocks, 'behind which the Kamenskoye settlement is concealed' (op. cit.: 468). The notion seems to be that in order to illustrate a village all that needs to be shown is a house. Ancient houses (yayañi, -yan) used whale bones for rafters. Dwellings had excavated floors, and are referred to as 'underground dwellings', though only partly subterranean (Jochelson 1905: 447). It was noted that the door of village houses faced the same way, toward the coast or a river among the Maritime Koryak (ibid.: 456).

In the inland people lived in a tent (yaranga). In each tent there were 3-4 compartments of skins, each used by a family. The winter house on the coast was an excavated house of octagonal shape. Along 3 of the walls there were benches. Between 2 and 4 families lived in each house, which could sometimes have up to 30-40 residents. In the spring people moved into separate houses built on stilts. There also were storehouses built on stilts that people sometimes stayed in (Antropova 1964b: 858-860).

The marriage customs included bride service, i.e., a man had to work for his in-laws for 1-3 years when getting married. The wedding ceremony included a 'symbolic bride capture', where the man had to capture his future wife inside the house before the wedding (Jochelson 1905: 742). This may be a recent custom originated by Turkic-Yakut influences, and done mostly for the sake of drama and play.

The sororate and levirate was practiced, where a widower should marry a sister or younger female relative of the wife, while a widow was allowed to marry a younger brother or relative of the husband. Polygyny was allowed (Jochelson 1905: 752). The rules of exogamy may have included both first and second cousins, and other relatives as well, such as aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews, and others (Jochelson 1905: 736). Marriage restrictions extended to step-relations and close in-laws (op. cit.: 737). This may indicate exogamy on a clan, phratry, moiety and village level.

In Russian views, kinship was patrilineal and (partly) patrilocal. At the same time scholars would note matrilineal traits, that the children went to the mother upon divorce. This hints at a pre-Russian matrilineal society.

Kinship terms include: GrFa (ačiče, apapel); GrMo (anapel); Fa (apa, tata, enpich); Mo (ella, vava, amma, enpich), FaBr, MoBr (enniw), FaSi, MoSi (itchei), Br (kaitakalnin), eBr (eninelan), yBr (etchani), Si (chakit), eSi (enpich-chakit), ySi (nencha-chakit), 'cousin' (yilalni-tumgin), So (kminin, akik), Da (ñavakik), 'nephew' (illawa), 'niece' (ñau-illawa), etc.

(Jochelson 1905: 759-760). The scholar evoked a kinship system identical to his own! Probably the Russo-Turkic-like terminology hides an older classificatory terminology.

Differentiation

Scholars did not hesitate to impose their own biased view on Koryak society, claiming an 'isolation' of family groups (Jochelson 1905: 761). At the same time it was added that 'the influence of the Russians' had led to a breakdown of Koryak society (*ibid.*). Each family would have its own fire, which could not be shared with other families, indicative of a clan structure, presumed to be totemic (Jochelson 1905:766-7). Also boats belonged to a clan (*ibid.*).

Potential Koryak totems include: fish (innaen, enem, -anan), pike (tutkitut), salmon, dog-salmon (qeta, ligi-anan), humpback-salmon (akallin), red-salmon (wiyuwi), uyok-smelt (hitigyit), salveline (utiwit, qaitiwit), grayling, tom-cod (wegen), herring (ukii), flounder (alpi), wrymouth (ari-naut), eel-pout (walañin), whale (ioni), white-whale (sisisan), seal, ground-seal (memel), spotted-seal (kelilin), ringed-seal (witwit), sea-lion, walrus, crab or lobster (tokoyoto, avvi), shell (kilkak), worm, frog, spider, bird (kalia), swallow, woodpecker, grouse, partridge, ptarmigan (laxlanelan), grebe (yovalan), magpie (vakitha), crow, raven (kutki, valve), gull, sea-gull, cormorant, puffin, duck, goose, swan, owl, hawk, eagle, bear (koiñin), polar-bear, wolverine (kepimtelan), otter, sable, ermine, wolf (egilnin), dog (katan), fox (toleq), red-fox, grey-fox, white-fox, black-fox, arctic-fox, lynx, deer, reindeer, elk-moose, mountain-sheep (kitepimtilan), sheep (kitep), beaver, marmot (ila-naut), mouse, squirrel, hare (milut), plant, grass, root, tree, birch, fire, water (mima), sea (anka), river, rain (ilen), ice, thunder (kihigilan), sky, cloud (yahal), fog, stone, earth, moon, sun (tiyk, teikemtilan), etc.

Some scholars would ignore totems completely. They would record village posts, house guardians, carved figures and amulets without asking if they had any reference to animals or totems. Almost accidentally there are notes, such as: 'It may be remarked here that the hare is an important amulet' (Jochelson 1905: 62). The 'crying of the gull and the hare' causes the sea to ebb and flow (*op. cit.*: 63).

Russian scholars would somewhat ambiguously note that in ancient times clans existed. Each clan had a carved emblem: swallow, duck, and so on. Some totem clans, such as wolf and bear, were said to be 'relatives'. Though no complete list exists, totem emblems could include whale, seal, raven, magpie, grouse, wolf, dog, fox, bear, seal, reindeer, grass, roots, etc. The leader's emblem could be seen as a village totem, called 'numelgen'. This was a wooden pillar with a carved animal, which was worshipped as the village protector. Each family also had a string of attached, carved, seated human figures. The figures represented ancestors, they were dressed in grass clothing, and had a mouth-opening to be fed (Antropova 1964b: 866).

The creator, Kuikinnaku (big-raven), had 12+ children or relatives: Sisisan (white-whale), Ememkut or Emeneut, Kikikichinaku or Keskinaku (big-light), Nanka-kele (painted-belly), Kuthanu or Kaini-vilu (bear-ear), Kitinyaku or Kihichinaxu, Vala, Milputayan, Tnanto (dawn), Deselkut, Yineaneut (sun or star), Chanainaut, Ichimeneut, Anarukchanaut, etc. (Jochelson 1905: 21). These may be the names of old tribal divisions or bands, each with its own totem. Alternately they may refer to star constellations.

Moieties and the local totemic organization

In historic times the Koryak seem to have emphasized their moiety organization. There were nomadic camps and coastal settlements with 2 large communal houses. This would engender both cooperation and competition, as the two halves would compete with each other for prominence and success.

Two totems, 'swallow' and 'duck', may be associated with the moieties, as represented by elders' images (Antropova 1964b: 866). These would then belong to the same phratry, that of birds, but were placed on opposite sides in the village as complementary clans, and thus became symbolic of the two sides. Other animals could amplify this contrast, seal-whale, wolf-dog, bear-otter, reindeer-hare, etc. Precisely why 'swallow' and 'duck' should be chosen as a contrast is not clear, if indeed they were, but this resonates with moiety designations among the Selkup and other people.

A village or settlement may have held 12-14 totem clans. Prominent totems seem to be: fish, seal or whale, bird or swallow, duck or raven, bear, ermine, wolf or dog, fox, deer or reindeer, elk-moose, mouse or marmot, hare, sky or cloud, earth, etc. There is mention of 'Bear-People' and other clan-like units (Jochelson 1905: 738).

Social distinctions

The subsistence economy meant that there were no great differences in household income among the coastal Koryak. In reindeer husbandry, some reindeer owners were richer than others, a distinction that was reinforced by the advent of the Russian trade economy (Antropova 1964b: 865). In either case people would be targets for Russian control or 'collectivization'. What the scholars overlooked was what bound people together. Totems could reach the tribal level. The raven may be seen as a national totem of the Koryak; other major totems could be sun, whale or water (Jochelson 1905: 19-20).

Politics

The pre-Russian political system of the Koryak nation must have been extensive, involving thousands of people. In Russian times this was reduced, suppressed and ignored. Scholars would speak of 'clan'-based leadership, meaning local or regional bands and their representatives, under Russian control (Antropova 1964b: 854). The researchers would admit that the Koryak used to have a wide political system. It was noted that 'clan' or band relations were strong in ancient times. There was an extensive system of chiefs (ayim). Scholars would reduce this to local relations, noting guests seeking out kindred fireplaces. Older men were clan or local band leaders, called a 'place-possessor', 'nymelgen-an'. The leader descended from a local originator and used his own carving emblem, a village totem. The local leader mediated, organized local activities, and preserved traditions and myths. In stereotypical fashion Russians would claim that blood vengeance and feuds were widespread in ancient times (Antropova 1964b: 866).

What is missing is the wider political system. Presumably each settlement or village had a council of totem clan leaders plus a first and second chief, the first chief known as 'nymelgenan'. The chief in turn would have contact with the leaders of other bands and sub-

tribes. These in turn would form a wider alliance or confederacy, integrating the Koryak nation as a whole. A 'chief of the Koriac confederacy' is noted in 1787, roughly 50 years old. He wanted to establish contact with Russian authorities in order to obtain a national recognition and alliance. Needless to say the Russians would not be interested in this, and his later fate is unknown. What is important to note is the potential for political organization engendered by a totemic ideology, that could reach up to a tribal or national level and beyond. The social and geographical reach of a totemic organization is generally ignored or disavowed by scholars and colonials, yet the potential was limitless. That 50,000+ Koryaks might once be integrated in a tribal confederacy seems reasonable. Today the nation is reduced to 1000+ speakers, destitute of rights.

Religion

The Koryak had rich and strong religious beliefs. The creator of the world, Anan or Etyny, created the humans. This was a sky or world god (naininen). The humans were tampered with by an evil spirit who supplied clay hearts, hence people get sick and die early today; clearly a modern viewpoint. Among the creators were raven, known as Big Raven (kutkinnaku), who provided people with prey. In some versions the raven-creator and the sky god (etyny) are the same. Most creatures had spirit masters (etin) associated with them. The sea god (ankaken-etinvilan) was a woman.

Natural elements and beings such as hills and rocks were considered sacred and titled as 'grandfather' (apapel). All beings in nature were seen as spiritual – fishes, birds, raven, animals, bear, ermine, wolf, fox, mouse, plants, rivers, stones, wind, fog, cloud, etc. (Jochelson 1905: 115). At one time animals and other beings could turn into humans and vice versa. Cases mentioned include raven, bear, wolf, dog, etc. People could turn into poisonous mushrooms, fly-agaric (op. cit.: 116). In one story a man married a stone (op. cit.: 118). People could also change gender at will – perhaps in parallel to modern culture (op. cit.: 116). Animals in the wild, such as wolves and bears, were seen as relatives. The wolf was a shamanic animal and should not be killed. Reindeer were created by fire, and new fire is lit when the reindeer appear from the summer pasture, and are thrown at the animals. Disease spirits (kala) came in through the fire or smoke opening. Talismans and magical objects were supposed to prevent this, e.g., a face carved at the top of the ladder, a fire-board carved as a human, and grass figures placed nearby. Such efforts may say something about when epidemics first hit the natives, since such magical practices would be established over a long time period. It can be assumed that the Koryak suffered more or less severe population loss from externally introduced epidemics more or less frequently across the period 1330-1930 and later. This would see the population drop to ca. 14% of its original number.

Scholars habitually conflated totemism with religion (Lévi-Strauss 1963). This was one extra reason why Russian scholars and others would not accept totemism – the other main reason being that descent from animals somehow was inconceivable. That we all descend from one-celled creatures is fine in theory, but not in reality.

Under religion the scholars would critically note that ancestral and totem worship was strong in ancient times. They would note that carved clan emblems (kalak) protected the family; that emblems were given sacrifices, 'fed' and dressed in grass-clothes as carved human-like figures. Clan emblems stood for the underground spirits of the ancestors, who protected the descendants, provided hunting happiness and fertility. Each person had his or her emblem, so that each house had a bunch of emblems (Jochelson 1905).

Women took care of the spirits of the house associated with the hearth. It was also believed that dead people could become evil and man-eating spirits called 'ninvits', who could be appeased with sacrifices. Sacrificial animals were dogs, among nomads also reindeer, that were killed at funerals, to scare away disease spirits, etc. Cult places in nature were special stones, waterfalls, houses, mountains, and more.

The Koryak had an extensive annual cycle of ceremonies. What little is known about the community ceremonies is that in historic times the reindeer-nomads' most important celebration was a 'horn festival' after the reindeer calving in the spring. In the fall they had a slaughter-feast, where a new fire was made to meet the reindeer. The feast stood for purification and fertility. On the coast this was known as the Whale Festival, held in September-October, after a whale hunt. It was said 'that all inhabitants of a given village took part in it', that is, it was a celebration of the local community. The ceremony lasted 'a few days' and was partly held in the largest house of the village (Jochelson 1905: 66). Russian scholars mentioned an 'expiation of sins', perhaps a part of the ceremonial prayer, asking for pity (op. cit.: 65). People prayed for a successful hunt in the fall and a winter 'without sickness' (op. cit.: 66). Unfortunately the Russian observers made fun of this and other festivals. Based on a drawing of the festival there would be 20-24 men and a similar number of women engaged in the ceremony, perhaps representing 10-12 clans (op. cit.: 69). A sketch shows up to 27-30 men sitting along the inner walls in an underground house for the ceremony, 14-15 on each side, with 27-28 women cooking meat in 8 groups near the outer walls, and a shrine with 4 charms, 'attired in grass neckties', near the door, perhaps representing the local phratries (op. cit.: 71). This may hint at the presence of 12-14 totem clans, 3-4 phratries, and 2 moieties. After the fall festival the coastal waters freeze, boats are put away, and inland hunting takes over.

At the end of the fall festival people, in particular women, wore masks. Though in other places they were worn only by men. Such masks were also worn during the first part of winter, to drive away evil spirit. This probably is a circumpolar tradition, found from the Sami in the west to the Eskimo in the east. Winter festivals seem to have included bear and wolf rituals; these were reported to be vaguely totemic (Jochelson 1905: 89). After the autumn hunt there was a whale or seal festival. Here people asked the animals to return to the sea and let themselves be caught again the next year with their relatives. The killed animals were replaced with figures made of seagrass.

In the spring people on the coast celebrated a boat-floating-feast, before the spring hunt. This was called the Boat Launching (menatineyevune). As in other festival dogs were sacrificed. After the feast, the summer door to the excavated houses was opened.

In summer there might be a series of little known ceremonies. Dances included a seal dance (Jochelson 1928: 219). There were many other dances named after or celebrating animals and beings, including dances and songs of the walrus, whale, white-whale, sandpiper, duck, goose, swan, raven, bear, wolf, fox, deer or fawn, reindeer, hare, etc. (op. cit.: 220, 222-3). In some performances men wore wolf and bear skins in a pantomime (Czaplicka 1914: 295). This would lead up to a new cycle of annual ceremonies.

With forced Russian Christianization and a curtailment of native ceremonies, the shaman became important in conveying a link to the spiritual world. He would perform a spirit journey, which he undertook with drumming in complete darkness, influenced by mushroom

intoxication. On the journey he could communicate with dead relatives. In 1897, 44% of the Koryak were nominally Christian. This would indicate that up until then they had resisted the Orthodox indoctrination.

Culture

The Koryak possessed an extensive hunting technology, with sleds, boats, etc. They wore leather clothes decorated with fur trimming and decorated leather bands. On their heads they wore hooded leather hats (Antropova 1964b: 862-864).

The musical instruments were hand drums and 'tooth drums' held in the mouth. Koryak dances were seasonal and often imitated the movements of animals such as seals, bears, reindeer, ravens, and more. During the celebrations the dancers were mainly women. Along with the ceremonies there were various sports and games such as wrestling, racing, and throwing people into the air with sealskins. Hospitality to strangers was a rule among the Koryak, as among most native peoples (Jochelson 1905: 425; Antropova 1964b: 869).

Scholars noted that the Koryak celebrated 'zoomorphic' images, unfortunately without specifying what their images were. Based on mixed sources the decorations and carvings included geometric and figurative images (kali, kele) of beings and phenomena such as: fish, salmon, flounder, seal, sea-lion, walrus, whale, worm, cricket, bird, swallow, partridge, cormorant, duck, owl, hawk, eagle, bear, wolf, dog, fawn, reindeer, mountain-sheep, hare, plants, flowers, waves, mountain, star, moon, sun, and more. Carved posts represent guardians or emblems; they usually have human features, such as a face; unfortunately what they are called or what they represent, such as totems, is rarely explicated in the sources (e.g., Jochelson 1905: 458). One author noted the 'crudeness' of idol carvings, without indicating what they represented (op. cit.: 668).

In one myth cycle the protagonist was the raven-creator who gave the people all its material goods: reindeer, dogs, hunting booty, etc. In myths, the raven often appears as an old man who deceives his wife and countless kids. The raven's son, Amamkut, is more of a hero figure appearing in a myth-universe where the creatures are half animal, half human; such creatures are wolves, bear, fox, magpie, grouse, root-man, grass-woman, etc. They act like humans but also have the characteristics of natural creatures (Antropova 1964b: 868-9).

Each territorial group had its origin myths and legends, supposedly including struggles with other peoples. Mythic heroes used physical strength, but also trickery, wit and magic in epic struggles. Other tales were of hunters, nomads, leaders and workers. Some stories were borrowed from the Russians (op. cit.: 869).

Animal stories are poorly known. One fairly classical story is about the fox doing tricks. In this story the bear, who gets fooled, was 'fox's cousin', perhaps hinting at a phratry alliance (Jochelson 1905: 185). In one myth a man married a marmot-woman (ila-naut) (Jochelson 1905: 146). In one story the hares outsmart the powerful raven (op. cit.: 234-5). In another story the hare bests the fox (op. cit.: 266). All in all it seems that animal tales are fairly common among the Koryak, they have just not been disseminated. One scholar hesitantly notes that the stories relate to 'totem-ancestors', but conflates these with human 'culture-heroes'; in the same vein he mentions 'totem representatives' (Jochelson 1905: 355-6).

Koryak life-courses were rich and challenging. Souls rest on beams in the sky before being born (Jochelson 1905: 26). Newborn babies were named after ancestors. It was believed that each family member was a reincarnation of an ancestor. The family gathered to name a child after one of the ancestors by means of divination: a stone suspended in a leather purse stirred when the proper name was called. This may have been a fairly recent practice, influenced by Turkic people, Russian Cossacks, and others. Koryak male names include: Kachilkut, Kamak, Kammake, Komya, Kaivilok, Xotitto, Xatauchnin, Yulta, Opuka, Eigelin, Ainco, Euwinpet, etc. Female names noted include: Paqa, Tykken, Kachilkut (strong-rise), Kuchanin, Kilu, Kaichivanten, Kiuña (awake-woman), Neunuto, Nayava, Navakut, Yutaw, Yokowaana, Aqan, Elwaana (reindeer-woman), Amaaqen, Ayatto, Ayu-naut, Avvach, Ewpisho, etc. Infant mortality was said to be 42% (Jochelson 1905: 413).

Women were isolated after giving birth (Jochelson 1905: 100-1). Whether there was a similar isolation during menstruation and puberty is not known.

Children would begin to work from the age of 10-12 (Jochelson 1905: 758). Adult life was mainly taken up in productive activity. The Koryak had their own stimulants, including mushrooms used as a drug.

Death was not considered natural, but the result of evil spirits (Jochelson 1905: 101). The Koryak cremated the deceased. There was a separate feast of offerings to the dead. After death souls returned to the sky before being reborn (Jochelson 1905: 26).

Summary

Early Russian influences included iron pots, wooden houses, horses, and much more. A scholar around 1900 noted that the Koryak had never been studied (Jochelson 1905: 13). The Russians would break down Koryak society, and appoint 'elders' or henchmen to keep control and collect taxes (op. cit.: 767-8).

After the Revolution, battles arose between the Russians over Kamchatka until 1923, and native peoples were drawn into this. The Soviet state then suppressed the natives, took over all trade, reindeer herds were confiscated, and forced collectivization took place. State villages of plank houses were built, where the family members of hunters and nomads were placed. The organization of fishing was taken over by Russians who, among other things, controlled the use of boats with and without engines, fishing nets, etc. Russians came to teach the collective members agriculture and money household. The Koryak were gradually placed in large centralized villages and towns, with more than 30 houses, while the Russians took over the surrounding lands. Koryak was made a written language based on the Latin script in 1932, in 1937 this was changed to the Russian script. Reading books were published in Koryak, but the main school language was Russian (Antropova 1964b: 870-875). The hope is that knowledge about Koryak society and culture can be restored, including the fascinating elements of nature lore and totemism.

Alyutor

Self-designation: Alutal'u; aka: Olyutors, Olutors, Olutortsi, Alutor, Alutora, Alyutori, Elutelyt, etc. Olyutorka was a settlement where many of the Alyutor people formerly lived.

The Alyutors as an ethnic group were formerly classified as a subgroup of Koryaks. Their primary residence is on the Kamchatka and Chukchi peninsulas of the Russian Far East. They reside mostly in the Koryak Okrug of Kamchatka.

Population estimates include: 1600: 2500-4000+ people; 1897: 909+; 2002: 500+; <250 speakers; 2010: 482+ people; <200 speakers; 2020: <2000-3000 people.

Known settlements around 1890 include: Alut or Olutorsk, 11-15+ houses, 147+ (1859), 101+, ca. 117+81+ or 189+ people, 7 houses and 80 people (1901), Ilir aka Kultusno, Kutushino or Kultusnoye, 12-16+ houses, 222+ (1859), 202+149+ or 351+ Tilliran aka Tilechiki, Tilitsjiki or Tilechinski, 57+ (159), 84+8+ or 92-98+, 42 (1901), Vetvey, 3+ houses, 20+ (1859), 10 (1898), Vivnik or Vyvenka, 8+ houses, 88 (1859), 96+14+ or 102-110+, Kichhin or Kichiga, 15-18+ houses, 145+ (1859), 95+63+ or 158-170+, 113+120 (1901), Timlati, 7+ houses, 48+ people.

Settlements were near the coast or on rivers, on elevated spots with good visibility. The main type of housing was an octagonal earth house with vertical walls meant for 3 to 5 families. As among the Koryak it can be suggested that a village consisted of 1-3+ rows of houses along a river or shore, divided into 6-14+ totem clans.

Background

Northern Kamchatka and the neighboring areas consisted of coastal lands, rivers, forests and mountains. The land was well suited for a hunting, fishing and gathering way of life.

The Alyutor occupied the area around northern Kamchatka since prehistoric times. 'In 1697, the Russian Cossacks imposed taxes on the Alyutors, who would show armed resistance in the next few years. After the suppression of the 1751 uprising, the number of the Alyutors significantly decreased. Also, they were constantly under attack from the Chukchis, who often confiscated their reindeer herds. In the late 18th century, the Alyutors were an isolated and secluded group of people, which helped them to avoid the smallpox epidemics almost unharmed. Also, such isolation helped them to preserve their traditional way of life' (Wikipedia n.d.).

The Alyutors lived from hunting, fishing, gathering, and some reindeer breeding. While little is known about their family structure, it can be assumed that each local descent groups consisted of 2-3 married couples, parents and grandparents, in 2-3 separate houses with children and dependents. Each descent group or totem clan was exogamic, and marriage restrictions might extend to the local community as a whole.

Differentiation and further social aspects of Alyutor life

The Alyutor social system was broken up by the Russian colonization and takeover ca. 1700-1950. Presumably it resembled the Koryak system. Some suggested totems are: fish, seal,

bird, hawk, bear, otter, wolf, fox, deer, elk-moose, squirrel, hare, sky, earth, etc. Whether any totem clans can be substantiated locally is a question for future studies.

Little is known about Alyutor leadership and the native political system. Presumably they had an eschelon of chiefs and totem clan representatives who managed council meetings and local political decision making.

The native Alyutor religion is all but unknown. 'Most Alyutors are practitioners of shamanism and Orthodox Christianity'. 'Presently, the Alyutor traditions, culture, and art are endangered because of the decreases in reindeer population and reproduction caused by the worsening ecology of the region' (Wikipedia n.d.).

Summary

'Beginning in the 1950s and continuing through the 1970s, Alyutor children were sent to boarding schools which increased their loss of the Alyutor language and decreased their training in Alyutor traditions. Many Alyutors became teachers, doctors, geologists, and zoo technicians during the Soviet period' (Wikipedia n.d.). What is missing is a revitalization and celebration of Alyutor culture that may extend beyond modern conditions to the prehistoric existence of a totemic and sustainable way of life.

Chukchi

Names include: Chukchee, Tschuktschi, Chukcha, Chavchu, Chawchu, Ankalyn ('coastal dweller'), Ankalyt (pl.), Lyggoravetljan ('real human'), Luoravetlan, Lorawetlat (own name), Leyililit (own name), etc. (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 799).

The historic Chukchi area stretched from the Bering Sea and Anadyr Bay in the southeast to the Chukotsky Mountains and the Arctic Ocean in the northwest. The Chukchi region covers 650,000+ km²; this would easily hold 60,000+ people.

Population estimates are: 16,000-20,000+ in the year 1600; 1890: 12,000-14,000; 1897: 11,771+; 1927: 12,364 or rather 14,000-15,000; 1959: ca. 12,000, ca. 11,300 speakers; 1970: ca. 14,000, ca. 11,500 speakers; 1980: ca. 14,-16,000, ca. 12,000 speakers; 1989: 15,184, ca. 10,000 speakers.

The Chukchi groups include people residing in the tundra west of Kolyma, at Little Anjuj, at Omolon, at Chaun Bay, at Anguema, and on the Chukchi Peninsula. The coastal or 'maritime' Chukchi numbered ca. 3000 people around 1900 (Jochelson 1928: 45). Inland Chukchi or Onmylen-Chukchi lived on the upper Anadyr, while the Tuman or Viljunej Chukchi were on the lower Anadyr and at the coast. The regional groups included 15-20 local camps or bands and band territories. The reindeer nomads had main camps for children, women and old people who moved several times a year, while the reindeer herders had their own tents and walked with the reindeer. The main camp had 2-10 houses, often located from east to west, while 4-5 tents were the usual size of a nomadic camp. On the coast, the population was often mixed with Eskimos. Coastal villages stood near headlands and capes where seals could be caught. They consisted of 2-20 houses or yaranga. The modern collective villages are larger. A regional group could include several hundred houses or up to 1,000 families.

Chukchi groups around 1900 included:

Reindeer-Chukchi in the old Yukaghir territory, with 150 people on Indigirka River, 400 on Kolyma, many on Dry Anui, 500 on Anui-Omolon, and many on Anadyr River.

The Chaun Bay group had 50 'camps'.

The Erri group had 40-50 'camps'.

The Onmilin or Inland group had 60 'camps'.

The Telqap or Tumanskiye group had 50 camps.

The Uttegnichen or Big River group had 80 'camps'.

The White River group had 25 'camps'.

The eastern Chukchi Peninsula group had 80-100 'camps' (Bogoras 1904: 26-27).

'The whole number of reindeer camps amounts to about 650, with a population of 7500-9000' or more (op. cit.: 27).

Coastal and near-coast villages ca. 1900 included:

From Anadyr River to Indian Point: Chikayeva, 10+ 'families', Russianized; Ve'n, 7+ houses, 40+ people; Misqan, 6-10+ houses, 41+ people; Retken, 6+ houses, 22-35+ people; Cape Wukwen, abandoned; Valkatlen, 4-7+ houses, 28-39+ people; Enmilin, 19+ houses, 104-126+ people; Nunligren, 21-25+ houses, 104-110+ people; Achon, 4-5+ houses, 19-24+ people; Chenlin, abandoned; Chechin, half Eskimo, 18-25+ houses, 100-142+ people; etc. North of Indian Point: Kihini, 3+ houses; Yergin, 3+ houses; Alayon, 3-5+ houses, 26+ people; Ilhinin, 2-5+ houses, 28+ people; Chewin, 2+ houses, 8+ people; Nigchien, 2+ houses, 12+ people; Yanrakenot, 2+ houses; Mechiwmin, 2-6+ houses, 18+ people; Agrichin, 2

houses; Lu'ren, 10-21+ houses, 115+ people; Kukun, 3+ houses, 23+ people; Akanen, 7-10+ houses, 42+ people; Yanranai, 15-28+ houses, 101+ people; Nutepinmin, 2 houses; Nun'mun, 11-13+ houses, 63+ people; Chiñin, 4-5+ houses, 17+ people; Puoten, 6-17+ houses, 40+ people; etc.

East on the Arctic coast: Uwelen or Uelen, half Eskimo, 30-40+ houses, 231+ people; Tunken, 2-10+ houses, 17-25+ people; Inchowin, 18-33+ houses, 142+ people; Iñe'n, 3-5+ houses, 21+ people; Otenmitahin, 1-8+ houses, 27+ people; Uten, 8-20+ houses, 64+ people; probably Uten and Otenmitahin were part of the same community; Chulpen, 4-15+ houses, 32+ people; I'chen, 11-13+ houses, 78+ people; Cheitun, 8-18+ houses, 56+ people; Chechañin, 10-11+ houses, 77+ people; Iqelurun/ Luren, 5-10+ houses, 48+ people; Keñichvun, 11-17+ houses; Enurmin, 12-20+ houses, 125+ people; Netekeñichvun, 1-5 houses, 29+ people; Neten, 5-14+ houses, 33+ people; Natenmitahin, 2-4+ houses, 30+ people; apparently the places from Keñichvun to Natenmitahin and beyond were part of the same local community; Imile, 4-7+ houses, 49+ people; Mami-pilhin, 2-3+ houses, 19+ people; Mami, 3-7 houses; Tepqen, 8-9 houses; Palonnan, 1-4+ houses, 28+ people; Nesqan, 6-10+ houses, 59+ people; Velkel-tinup, 4-9+ houses, 33+ people; Nesqaqei, 6-7 houses; Irgu'nnup 5-6 houses; Yinrilin, 4-5+ houses, 26+ people; Pilhin, 1-3+ houses; Kuluchi, 11-20+ houses, 94+ people; Kuluchi Bay, abandoned or not counted; the settlements from Uwelen to Kuluchi could be elements of 4-5 communities.

Farther northwest on the Arctic coast: Nute-pinmin, 4+ houses, 23+ people; Wañkareman, 4-9+ houses, 28+ people; probably Nute-pinmin was a part of Wañkareman, that together may have had 14-16 houses and 70-80 people in earlier times; Rirkaipiyen, 11-15+ houses, 52+ people; Nota-timlin, 3-4+ houses, 28+ people; Re'n, 1+ house; Kinmanka-utir, 2-4+ houses, 13+ people; Yaqan, 3-5+ houses; Enmaatir, 2-4+ houses; Enmitahin, 2-6+ houses, 16+ people; Uwgargin or Uvargin, 2-4+ houses; 3 places on Cape Erri, 2-13+ houses, 10-30+ people (Bogoras 1904: 28-31).

In summary the scholar notes 1100+ Chukchi 'on the Pacific shore' and 1600-2000+ 'on the Arctic shore', for a total of 2700-3100+ 'maritime' Chukchi; counting a few Chukchi near-coast villages on major rivers, the number could be raised to ca. 4000 people in 1900. For the Chukchi as a whole the scholar around 1900 lists 12,000+ people (op. cit.: 32).

As will be noted many coastal and near-coast villages are small and probably represent remnants of former villages or parts of large communities. For instance, Mechiwmin, Agrichin and nearby places may be parts of the same community, a former village, with an earlier population of 12+ houses and 70+ people. It should be added that some scholars had a frustrating tendency not to count reindeer owners among the coastal dwellers, excluding them from the local population. For instance, for Kukun only 1 house was counted, with the note: 'All the other inhabitants have become reindeer breeders' (op. cit.: 30). The scholar has a view that people with different livelihoods cannot live in the same village, apparently based on Russian taxation practices.

Chukchi villages were based on 'territorial contiguity', that is, they controlled a fairly large local territory (Bogoras 1904: 628). A 'typical' Chukchi settlement would consist of 1-2+ rows of houses along the shore of a river or the sea. Each community or village has its own territory, in the inland stretching up to 200 km from the river base, nearer the coast measuring 10-20+ x 25-40+ km, for a total of 300-800+ km². A reindeer herding community's territory could measure 2000+ km².

Some incidental information is provided about the village layout. At Nunligren and at 'most of the villages' there was 'a special house' for gatherings and winter ceremonies (Bogoras

1904: 386). It was termed a 'front house' and controlled by a 'chief family' (ibid.). Other terms were council-room and ceremonial house. The chief family would receive the first walrus killed in the fall (op. cit.: 387). People occupied the same village 'from times unknown' (ibid.).

Ecology

The land of the Chukchi is mostly tundra, with some stands of forest and coastal zones. On the Chukchi Peninsula the climate is harsher than on the Kola Peninsula. The winter season is October-May, and the summer season June-September. In the inner parts of the Anadyr valley the climate is continental, on the coast and further north it is mostly tundra. The fauna includes wolves, polar foxes, foxes, bears, wolverines, weasels, reindeer, moose, mountain sheep, squirrels, mountain hamsters, grouse, as well as sea creatures such as whales, seals, sea lions etc. The fish include salmon, whitefish, etc. (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 800).

History

The Chukchi were a part of so-called Paleo-Asian languages and cultures in northeast Siberia, which can be seen as links between other Siberian peoples and Native Americans and Eskimos in North America. The language family includes Koryak and Itelmen. Luoravetlan was partly used as the name of the entire language family. The Chukchi originally were a part of the Koryak that moved to the northeast towards the Chukchi Peninsula. This move was part of the Koryak people's movement eastward over a period of several thousand years before the year 1000 AD (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 802). Supposedly, after 0 AD, the group that became the Chukchi went into its present area. Probably this occurred much earlier, possibly as early as 4000 BC or even earlier.

The Chukchi interacted with and absorbed elements of both Koryak and Eskimo culture (op. cit.: 802-3). The Yukaghir people called Chuvan were assimilated to the Chukchi culture in historical times. There supposedly were disputes in ancient times with Eskimo, Koryak and Yukaghir people. One scholar thought this occurred from when the Chukchi penetrated into their present area, but this seems dubious without any prehistoric evidence. The Eskimos moved further to the east and towards the coast in historic times. Chukchi nomads gradually extended east before the year 1700. Russian traders and colonization could contribute to such moves. Such impacts led to Chukchi conflicts with Koryak and others, e.g., about reindeer pastures and herding, leading into the 1800s.

The general condition was one of peace. Relations with neighboring peoples could for long periods be more peaceful, characterized by barter, intermarriage, neighborliness, etc. Unfortunately Russian scholars would not emphasize the generally peaceful outlook of native societies, no doubt to mask the general aggressivity of their own society.

The Russians came to the area after 1642; by sea the Russians arrived in 1648; and in 1649 the Russian Cossacks established a trading fort at Anadyr. After this Russian soldiers, administrators, traders, and hunters settled at Anadyr. However, the Chukchi avoided tribute 'taxes', because there were few fur animals on the tundra, and the nomads were difficult to tax. As soon as the Cossacks entered the area they started attacking villages and killing people, demanding tribute. This would be the colonizing strategy off and on after 1650. The Russian Cossacks waged war on the Chukchi around 1730-50. Russian Cossack officers were

killed in 1730 and 1747, and the Chukchi fought strongly for their land, leading the Russians to ease up (Bogoras 1904: 15; Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 803).

Attempts at armed tax collection were carried out until 1770; next, taxation through trading posts was introduced, with far greater dividends for the Russians. The peaceful situation of trade with the Russians, led to an expansion of Chukchi reindeer herding nomads into the Yukagir Territory in the west after 1820-1860. In the 1850s, American whalers and traders came to the Chukchi Peninsula; they used booze as a commodity and nearly wiped out whales and walrus in the Bering Strait. The Russians consolidated control of the area until 1917; among other things, coal mines were put into operation (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 804). The Russians carried out a military fortification of the Chukchi Peninsula after the Revolution, setting limits on the freedom of movement of the natives across the Bering Strait (op. cit.: 825).

Economy

The ancient economic adaptation was one of hunting, fishing and gathering. The late historic adaptation was divided between trappers-fishing on the coast and reindeer herders in the hinterland. In 1926, 70% were nomads and 30% were resident trappers (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 800).

In this work, as noted elsewhere, the emphasis is on the prehistoric adaptation, in particular hunting, fishing and gathering. The adaptation of reindeer herding Chukchi will be briefly noted. Chukchi reindeer herding was very extensive; the shepherds followed the reindeer year-round. The reindeer provided meat, leather for clothing, shoes, tent cloth, and other resources. The adaptation was based on exchange with people on the coast for sealskins, blubber, and more (op. cit.: 806).

The sea-mammal hunting culture on the coast is characterized by contact with Eskimo culture, though also depending on local practices. The main prey was walrus, whale and seal. The weapons were harpoons, later rifles. Nets could also be used to catch seals and small whales. Seals were caught at breathing holes in the ice that a sleigh dog sniffed out. In spring the hunters used a sneak hunt with a harpoon; in the summer, harpoons or nets thrown from boats were used to catch seals. Larger boats with 7-10 men were used to catch walrus in the summer. Several large boats were used in whaling. The largest boats could hold up to 20-30 people. The large leather boat or baydar was operated with sails or oars. In the 1900s, European boats were used, with boat teams (etvetjyryn) which included men from 3-5 neighboring families, with a minimum of 8 men (Bogoras 1904; Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 808).

The catch was divided according to prescribed rules between the members. After whaling expeditions it was divided between several boat teams. Whale meat and bones were 'distributed among all the inhabitants of the village' (Bogoras 1904: 632). The boat owner usually was the leader of a boat team, the boat master, though he might yield this position to a more capable man. Meat of sea creatures was the main diet for trappers and dogs. Skins provided clothing, footwear, tent leather, boat covering, ropes, and more. Whalebones and walrus teeth were used for sleigh skids, cutlery, etc. On occasion other animals were caught such as polar bears, mountain sheep and wild reindeer, but the latter were almost extinct when firearms were introduced. Extra sustenance included fishing, bird catching, gathering berries, etc. Cod, pollock and salmon were caught with nets, rods, and hook and line. Birds were

caught with bolas, throwing arrows, sticks, and snares. Plant food included roots that women and children dug up with pickaxes. Some plants consumed included edible roots, bark, green leaves and shoots, sorrel, berries, etc. (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 808-810).

Under the Russians, the capture of fur animals became commonplace, especially foxes, for the payment of taxes and as a means of exchange. People could shift adaptation during their lifetime, trappers became reindeer owners and vice versa. Some cases of combination use also occurred, people with 50-150 reindeer and a seasonal catch adaptation as well.

Transport was provided by dogs, reindeer sleighs, snow shoes and boats. From the Evenk, the western Chukchi learned to ski. The driving sled was lighter than the freight sled. When the camp moved, 30-40 or more sleds could be on the move (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 818-9).

Reciprocity and mutual aid were common in the camps. As noted, inland and coastal peoples traded with each other, and were also linked by kinship and intermarriage.

Trade and barter took place with neighboring peoples. The Chukchi and Eskimo had markets in Uelen and Naukan, where people in modern times came armed to the market. Here trade ran across the Bering Strait, between Eskimos in America and Eskimos and Chukchi in Siberia. Blubber and seal oil from America were exchanged for reindeer skins from Asia.

The Chukchi were fond of fairs and trading, practices that may lead far back in time. Inland trade was with the Koryak, Yukaghir and Even. Coastal trade would include the Aleut, Koryak, and eventually the Russian colonists. Trade would take place in an open space beside a village. The trade may have been moiety based, each half of a village going in different directions to trade, possibly at different times, so that the village would always be occupied. The Russians established trading posts and marketplaces for trade with the natives in the 17th and 18th centuries. Standard media in trade were tobacco and pots for the Russians, and fox skins for the Chukchi. Other commodities were firearms, tobacco, and alcohol. On the coast, boat was an important property, inland reindeer (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964).

Through trade with Russians, property differences between people increased, related to the value of goods such as boats, leather, fur, etc. Over time, native traders called 'exchangers' (kavralyn) appeared in the trade with Russians and Americans (ibid.).

Kinship

Households on the coast lived in excavated houses called 'valkaran', 'whale-jaw house', until 1850. The framework was of whalebone or wood, covered with earth. A long corridor was used as a door in the winter, but became flooded in the summer when an entrance in the ceiling was used. In the middle of the house lay whalebone, and a large blubber lamp in the middle stood for light and warmth. On all 4 sides there were platforms containing 2-4 skin cubicles depending on how many families lived in the house. These houses were replaced with tents and eventually with huts of the Russian type. On the move people used smaller tent or converted boats (Bogoras 1904; Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 815-818). 'All sacred objects of the household, as well as the house itself, are in the care of the women' (Bogoras 1904: 358).

Cleanliness was a problem on the coast, since one lived in the same house for much of the year. Houses and camps were cleaned spring and autumn, women had the hard job of

knocking the tent walls with knocking logs. The inland dwelling or yaranga, and later on the coast, was a yurt tent. Inside the tent were 1-3, occasionally 4, skin cubicles used as living areas. The only heating and lighting was a blubber lamp, which was also used for cooking food.

Each family had its fire, obtained from a sacred fire stick. A small bonfire could also be made in the middle of the tent for cooking. Food stores were kept inside the tent or on a sleigh inland, and on a platform of whale bones or wood on the shore. The diet was powerful, not only meat but also blood, fat, brain, etc. Reindeer people ate stuffed reindeer stomachs; this dish (rilkeil) was the usual breakfast for reindeer people. On the coast, buried and fermented walrus meat (kopalgyn) was eaten all winter. This was supplemented with other meat, raw and dried fish, plant shoots, leaves, grass, and more. On the coast one also ate seaweed mixed with fat; a delicacy was loaves of chopped roots mixed with meat and fat, and was used as a gift from coastal people to reindeer people. Later one received imported food, flour, biscuits, tea and sugar. Flour was fried in fat or boiled as gruel. Household items included spoons, barrels, wooden containers, bones and leather, sacks of sealskin, etc. In the sacks were stored fat, rilkeil, meat, plant food, etc. From the Russians people received pots, jugs, cups and glasses (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 810-813).

Marriages were entered into through agreements between families. Scholars would reduce this to notions of women exchange and, rarely, woman-stealing. Bride service was common, where the husband worked for the wife's parents, such as herding his father-in-law's reindeer for a time. On the coast he worked for his in-laws, among other things with firewood-gathering, for 2-3 years (op. cit.: 819-820). The wedding included painting with reindeer-blood sacrificed for the occasion, where the woman had the man's family badge painted on her face (ibid.).

After bride service and wedding, the woman supposedly moved to live with the husband's family, patrilocally; this need not be the case, or could be a historical development. Monogamy was common, while rich Chukchi, especially reindeer owners, could be polygamous. There were occasions of wife-swapping, when a man could avail himself of the services of the wives of friends. This was when the women were classificatory 'wives', i.e., cross-cousins; probably this is the Russian scholars' construction (ibid.).

Kin supposedly was reckoned through the paternal line; another scholarly bias. A supposed example was that fire-making tools could only be passed on in the paternal line. Actually the oldest daughter could inherit both the fire-board and the family house, her husband coming to live with her. There also was a mixed matrilocal-patrilocal tradition in which a daughter and son stayed with their parents after marriage, continuing the extended family or totem clan (Bogoras 1904: 359). This explains why married residence was both patrilocal, matrilocal and bilateral.

Social groups spanned several generations, e.g., local descent groups, but also groups such as phratries and moieties. An associated word was 'varat', 'gathering' or 'collection' (Czaplicka 1914: 27).

Neighborhoods, such as in boat teams, had a bilateral appearance. Boat teams consisted of a core of close relatives as well as intermarried people and other neighbors. Through extended kinship, most people in a village could be considered as (extended) kinfolk. Also, the inland camp of 2-10 or usually 4-5 families consisted of bilateral kin and unrelated neighbors,

referred to as 'nymtumgyt', 'camp-friends, neighbors' (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 819-820).

Kin terms included: mirgin (GrFa); ñew-mirgin (GrMo); endiw ('uncle'); eččai ('aunt'); elihin, ate (Fa); ela, amme (Mo); yičemit-tumgin (Br); meelin (eBr); eleñi (yBr); čakihet (Si – male speaker); čaket-tomgin (Si – female speaker); inpiči-čaket-tomgin (eSi – female speaker); ye'lhi-tomgin ('male cousin'); ñaw-ye'lhi-tomgin, ñaw-γel ('female cousin'); ekik (So); ñeekik (Da); elu'e ('nephew'); ñaulue ('niece'); elo-tomgin ('cousin's son'); ñaulo-tomgin ('cousin's daughter'); etc. (Bogoras 1904: 538-9). The scholar, based on a poor knowledge of kinship, fantasized about 'group-marriage', which never existed (op. cit.: 540, 602).

Differentiation

Potential Chukchi totems would be: fish, sea-fish, red-fish, salmon, keta-salmon, pike, sea-mammal, seal, thong-seal, walrus, whale, insect, spider, snake, worm, bird, grouse or partridge (khabev), ptarmigan (khabev), raven (kurkil), duck, pintail-duck, owl, hawk, eagle (pehittin), bear, black-bear, polar-bear (kochatko), wolverine, wolf, dog, fox (nuteneut, 'field-woman'), lynx, animal, deer, reindeer, mountain-sheep, beaver, mouse, marmot, ground-squirrel, hare, fire, water, sea ('white-sea-woman'), lake, sky, rainbow, thunder, earth, stone, light, star, moon, sun, etc. Totems could transform into each other; thunder could be raven or eagle (Bogoras 1904: 328).

Supposedly there are no snakes in Chukotka, yet the people have stories of large snakes eating reindeer. The confused scholar, in diffusionist fashion, thought this showed a southern origin for the Chukchi, yet stories of snakes travel much faster than people.

The extended family group or local descent group was the main genealogical unit. It is tempting to refer to it as a totem clan. Scholars associated this with the word 'varat', of somewhat unclear significance. It was bound together through common rules, duties, and ceremonies. Russian scholars would emphasize blood vengeance, with the family as a 'revenge group' (chinjyryn). The family was called people of 'one blood'. The descent group was called people of 'one fire' (Bogoras 1904).

During the autumn reindeer sacrifice, people painted themselves in the face with reindeer blood, where each family or local descent group had its pattern or totem. Possible totem names are grouse or ptarmigan (khabev) and more; unfortunately a complete list is missing.

There is mention of clan origin stories. In some of these a woman marries 'an eagle, a whale, a raven, etc.' (Czaplicka 1914: 74). The naive scholar saw this as a 'ravishing' of 'girls' by 'spirits', rather than an origin story (ibid.).

Local phratries and moieties are poorly known. Boat crews of 8-10 men may have been phratry or moiety based. 'Related families appear as units in the organization of the boat-crew' (Bogoras 1904: 544). These would consist of members from associated totem clans, 'a kind of family co-operative group', in the classificatory sense (op. cit.: 629). The main prey would be sea-mammals such as seals and walrus. The boat crew is made up of members from 4-5+ local clans or 'families', all being 'neighbors' or 'friends', perhaps phratry members (op. cit.: 630). 'All such families have their houses in the same part of the villages', which would indicate a local moiety (ibid.). Perhaps this would depend on the size of the village; in a large

settlement a phratry could operate a boat, while in a small community a moiety might have to step in.

There may be a historical element involved. In some cases it was said that a 'village has three boat-crews', hinting at a phratry structure. In one village, Iñeen, 2 out of 3 boat crews were exterminated in a measles epidemic, leaving only one (op. cit.: 631). This would indicate that settlements with fewer than 3 boat-crews had been reduced by modern epidemics. For catching whales 2-3+ boats would be needed, and the whole village would receive their share of the catch (op. cit.: 632).

'In former times' groups of 10-15 families, 'living always together', cooperated in hunting and defense or warfare (Czaplicka 1914: 27-28). This might refer to a moiety of 6-7+ totem clans.

Settlement layout

It would seem that Chukchi dwellings often were placed in rows. The inland camp's tents were located from east to west, with the leader's or 'owner's' tent farthest east and the 'lowest' dwelling furthest west; easily misinterpreted by hierarchy-oriented Russians. This is not very clear. One scholar refers back to himself several times to try to explain how Chukchi settlements are oriented (Bogoras 1904). First he claims that houses have entrances 'toward the northeast' or east, which otherwise would be towards the shore of a river or the coast (op. cit.: 172). Next he claims that the 'Ceremonial House' or 'front house' (a'ttoran) is 'first on the right side of the line' of houses facing east (op. cit.: 386). This would indicate that the (main) ceremonial house is to the south or west. Finally he repeats that the 'front house' is on the right side of the line 'turned toward' the east (op. cit.: 612-3). This would indicate that the scholar never paid attention to how settlements were laid out, since he merely points back to one house facing 'northeast'; nor is it clear what he meant by the 'right side'. He tries to clarify this by noting that the right and left side, 'according to the Chukchee fashion', would 'face turned toward the sacrificing-place behind the tent'. 'Thus the place of the front house in the camp is farthest to the northeast. The rear houses are put up southeast of the front house. All houses stand in a single line' (op. cit.: 613). Yet in another place he writes that the front house is 'on the right side of the line of houses, which are all turned with the entrance towards the sea' (op. cit.: 628). For extra confusion he added 'that the camp-line may be turned also to the east or to the north'; 'the camp-line may be broken' out of 'strict order', with 'rear houses' turned 'more and more' to the south – 'and the last house may face a direction quite opposite to that of the front house' (op. cit.: 613). Perhaps the scholar suffered from the same ailment as me, dromosagnosia (direction blindness). Quite clearly the village organization was more complicated than the scholar deduced from looking at one house. One clear injunction was that the front of one house should not face the rear of another house, its 'sacrificing-place' – unless they belonged to the same descent group or totem clan and shared the same fire source (ibid.). This would imply that a Chukchi village consisted of 2 or more parallel rows of houses, the senior house in front and the junior house(s) in the rear, sharing a 'sacrificing-place'. There are indications that each village had up to three ceremonial houses, one for each phratry. These were called attoran (front house), armachiran (strong house) and yaarran (rear house), associated with the first, second and associate village leaders. Unfortunately a pervasive description of villages is lacking – the scholar would focus on a single house instead, considering this to give a full outlook of the village; somewhat like describing one arm to provide an anatomical overview of a body.

The coastal camp's dwellings lay along the beach, varying in size and shape according to the hunting and fishing resources; no doubt this is a simplification. The 3-5+ families involved in a boat team often lived in the same part of the village. This might entail a phratry or moiety reference; if they lived on two sides in the village this could imply a phratry split across two local moiety areas. The village was comprised of a larger collection of related and unrelated families (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 815-818). As a tentative suggestion a Chukchi village could include the following totem clans: fish, seal, grouse, eagle, bear, wolverine, wolf, fox, reindeer, mountain-sheep, ground-squirrel, hare, sea, and earth.

Further views on social differentiation

Russian scholars found it hard to avoid ideas of hierarchy, akin to social classes, virtually unknown in native society. One such claim or bias was that, until 1750, there was a form of primitive slavery or rather prisoner adoption, in which captured persons from other tribes lived and work with local families, such as that of a boat or reindeer owner. Murderers could be surrendered as 'slaves' to the murdered person's family, probably an atonement practice, and said to resemble adoption. The murderer married the murdered person's wife and fathered his children (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 820). Obviously this was very different from 'slavery'.

The Russians put an end to the so-called 'slavery' or incorporation of outsiders (ibid.). Above all, it was trade with Russians and others that led to an increased differentiation among the Chukchi in historical times.

Politics

The fascinating topic of Chukchi politics is virtually unknown. Each village had leading families and a 'front house' where people gathered. There may have been a first and second chief in each village. Some words may indicate a first chief (aunralin, 'master', or attoralin, 'front house man'), a second chief (ermechin, 'strong one', or ermechiralin, 'strong house man'), and perhaps a chief's assistant or adjutant (yaarralin, 'back house man') (Bogoras 1904: 612). The second chief may have had his own ceremonial house, armači-ran ('strong-house') (op. cit.: 628). Also the adjutant might have his own public house, yaarran ('rear house'). These chiefs would seek contact with other chiefs, forming alliances that could span tribal subdivisions up to the national level.

The Chukchi had village councils held in the 'front house' or some other locations. Here matters ranging from local disputes to external alliances could be discussed, and there also was an exercise of law. Such councils included both older and younger men, and perhaps women as well. It was noted that 'the Chukchee are eloquent' (Bogoras 1904: 662). In modern times the councils would be broken up by depopulation and Russian control.

The head chief of a village held a special position. The 'owner of the front house pretends to have the priority of connection with the local gods, and even receives occasionally a kind of tribute from the other families' (Bogoras 1904: 628). The chief's position was religious and economical, as well as political.

It was said that 15-20 camps in a regional group were bound together through mutual support. If these were local communities of roughly 150 people, then this would be a tribal division of 2200-3000 people. The political organization no doubt reach further, up to the Chukchi nation

as a whole, with 30,000+ people. But how this organization was implemented is unknown. Presumably there was a totem for the nation as a whole. Around 1850-1870 the Russians spoke of a 'Chukchee King'; but little is known about him. The Russians would deny the existence of a native leadership to enforce their own power. The 'highest chief' of the Chukchi in 1895 was named Eiheli, who got embroiled in Russian intrigues and violence (Bogoras 1904: 658). Being a Chukchi leader after 1870 would be thwarted by Russian power.

Perhaps because of the remote location, the Tsarist administration gave the Chukchi some autonomy, to be 'governed and judged according to their own customs and rituals'. Yet Russian rule was dominant, with a state controlled 'clan administration' set up after 1850. So-called 'clan leaders' or band henchmen were appointed to collect taxes for the Russians. However, most people did not care about the leaders and did not pay taxes. Instead, there were financial intermediaries, reindeer owners and boat owners, who could exploit the work efforts of relatives and other natives, and who, in turn, paid some remuneration to the Russians.

Religion

The quite extensive religion beliefs and worship of the Chukchi cannot be entered into fully here. Beliefs were nature-based, so-called animistic, and included gods or spirits (kelet) (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 821). Some such gods were the sun, moon, sky, earth, sea, thunder, and more. The spirits lived like humans in camps, kept reindeer or hunted, and so forth. Disease and death were seen as the soul-theft by evil spirits, a historical condition. Animals were prominent in the religion.

Animals and other beings referred to in beliefs include: fish, sea-fish, sea-mammal, seal, walrus, whale, killer-whale, snake, worm, insect, spider, bird, small-bird, raven, hawk, eagle, bear, black-bear, polar-bear, ermine, wolf, dog, fox, red-fox, polar-fox, lynx, animal, reindeer, elk-moose, mammoth, mouse, boat, lemming, cannibal, house, arrow, red, seaweed, tree, forest, mushroom, river, lake, cloud, wind, thunder-bird, aurora-borealis, stone, mountain, dawn, star, etc. (Bogoras 1904: 282-303). 'Each species' of animal has a spirit 'master' of its own (op. cit.: 285). In the beliefs animals could transform themselves into humans and vice versa. Dogs became a part of native beliefs as human companions and protectors (Bogoras 1904: 13). There were many taboos, such as not killing wolves except when attacked, since the wolf was a transformed human being.

To protect oneself from disease and misfortune and ensure hunting happiness, amulets, incantations, and rituals were used (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 821-2).

Kin groups had female 'master' or patron spirits, indicating a matrilineal tendency. Sacred objects included a house fire-log used to drill fire on and of human shape. Transferring fire to another family could mean the loss of financial happiness. Other items included a bundle of family-protective amulets, hand drums, etc. (ibid.). Incantations were used to lure prey, protect the reindeer herd, and so on.

The Chukchi had extensive annual rituals and ceremonies. The seasonal festivals were held to ensure the welfare, happiness, and goodwill of the whole camp or the whole tribe. Reindeer herders celebrated the autumn and winter slaughter of reindeer, as well as a horn festival. Inland people sacrificed reindeer to the spirits (op. cit.: 822).

Coastal people celebrated sea-offerings, a boat-festival, head festival and sea-spirit festival, among other celebrations. 'The ceremonial cycle of the Maritime Chukchi' began in the fall with two short ceremonies that could be combined, a commemoration of the dead and a sacrifice to the sea to ensure the capture of seals (Jochelson 1928: 223). Such sea-offerings were held in the fall, when a hunter and a woman came to the beach, where the woman sacrificed blood-gruel while the man showed the sea his hunting gear and prayed for sea hunting fortune. The main ceremonial of the year took place in late fall-early winter, celebrating the sea god (keretkun) (ibid.). The festival in honor of the sea spirit (keretkun) took place in late autumn, and lasted 2-3 days and nights depending on the wealth of the family. It took place inside the house where a net of sinew ('keretkun's net'), painted oars, bird statues and a wooden male figure of keretkun were exhibited. The family dressed in walrus watertight clothing, ate stew of seal fat, meat and ground roots, and finally the wooden figure was burned in the lamp, the floor swept and the remains of the celebration thrown into the sea. In this way one believed that the soul from killed animals returned to the sea. On the coast dogs were sacrificed to the spirits. Other offerings were animal figures of reindeer. The sacrificial bowls could be ordinary plates, or anciently carved bowls and, reportedly, bowls of snow (Jochelson 1928; Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 822-3).

Winter ceremonies are not well known. There may have been masked performances, similar to the false-face tradition in North America. Each family would have its own ceremony in winter, so that 'the winter ceremonials in the largest villages' lasted more than a month. In midwinter there was a sacrifice to a star, possibly the North Star (Jochelson 1928).

In 'the middle of spring' there was a ceremony with a sacrifice to the sea, whales and the summer season. The boat ritual was in the spring (Jochelson 1928: 223). In the morning the boat was taken off the scaffolding on land, meat was sacrificed to the sea, after which the boat was put in front of the house and new sacrifices were made. The participants went around the house with the oldest woman of the house first, secondly the boat-owner, rudders, rowers and the rest. The next morning the boat was carried to the sea and set up on a scaffolding specially placed there, the sea was sacrificed to. Then the boat was put into the sea and the men set out on the first sea hunting trip.

In the summer, the head-feast was held (Jochelson 1928: 223). Heads of walrus and seals were taken from the meat pit and laid on skins in the middle of the dwelling. A strap was attached to the largest head and the men recreated the pull of the carcass from the sea. In addition there were 'minor festivals' until the main celebration in late fall completed the cycle. As in winter, there might be family or totem clan ceremonies lasting for a month or more. Animals honored with or at ceremonies included: fish, whale, seal, thong-seal, ringed-seal, walrus, bear, wolverine, fox, white-fox, reindeer, elk-moose, hare, etc. The polar-wolf 'was considered to be a changeling' and was not killed (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 824)

Most dances were performed in summer. Many songs and dances refer to animals, e.g., seal, walrus, bird, raven, sand-piper, duck, long-tailed duck, goose, swan, fox, reindeer, bone, etc. Popular dances included 'raven', 'goose' and 'one-eyed man' (Bogoras 1904: 268). Music consisted of singing and drumming. The hand drum was 40-50 cm in diameter.

The different festivals and the sacrifices to the sea the coastal peoples shared with the Eskimos. Hand drumming was common during Chukchi rituals.

In historic times the shaman became a spiritual anchor point. The shaman's suit had extra many amulets and pendants sewn on. The Chukchi became nominally Christian near Russian villages, but took up only the simplest rituals without forgetting their native beliefs. 6% were Christians in 1897.

Culture

The Russian scholars, staunch diffusionists, would discern Koryak ancestry in much of Chukchi culture. They also saw a contact with Eskimo culture in everything from sea hunting gear to ceremonies. The clothing was of the skin parkas type. Women wore leather overalls (kerker) that reached to the knees. On the coast people made a raincoat of walrus intestines (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 813-5).

Chukchi colors were white, black, red and grey (Bogoras 1904: 39). In the old days, tattooing was in use; small circles near the mouth for men, straight lines on the nose, forehead and chin for women. Suggestively, some tattoos may resemble village outlines, usually showing two sections beside a line, like two moieties next to a shore (Bogoras 1904: 255). If this is what the tattoos represent is not known, since the scholar never asked about it. Patterns used in decorations included geometric designs as well as fishes, birds, animals, stars, moon, sun, and more. Facial paintings seem to represent simplified images of fishes, birds and animals (op. cit.: 360). Art included wood and bone carvings, as well as embroidery.

Men wore wooden ornaments or 'manikins' that represented 'protecting spirits', possibly totemic (Bogoras 1904: 258-9). One scholar devotes a chapter to 'charms and sacred objects', without showing what they represent (op. cit.: 338-367). The scholar meticulously points out that 'thunder or wind' cannot be used 'as amulets' (op. cit.: 339). Wooden amulets are often formed as humans; what totem they represent is not noted, merely that some 'represent animals or birds' (op. cit.: 341). Mention is made of 'animal' amulets, of skin, bone, claws or feathers, but without saying much about different elements (op. cit.: 284, 342). Incidental mention of specific amulets or figures include: fish or sea-spirit, sea-animal, seal, walrus, whale, bird, ptarmigan, raven, sea-bird, murre, duck, eider-duck, owl, hawk, bear, black-bear, polar-bear, ermine, wolf, dog, dog-man, fox, deer, reindeer, hare, human, boat, stone, etc. Figures of dogs represented guardian spirits or totems, similar to customs found in California. A carved dog could then represent any totem, such as fish, bear, wolverine, sea-spirit, etc. Representations of totems were simplified, a 'simple line' is 'sufficient for an image' of a 'guardian' (Bogoras 1904: 364). A specific reference to a 'raven totem' is doubted by the scholar, who does not like the idea of totemism (Bogoras 1904: 343). A presentation of 'family charms' is made but ignores totemism (op. cit.: 348-361). Almost inadvertently some animals and beings are indicated among the family charms: fish, sea-mammal, seal, walrus, whale, raven, bear, polar-bear, wolverine, sea-otter, wolf, dog, fox, white-fox, deer, reindeer, hare, boat, fire, stone, etc.

Games among the Chukchi included races, wrestling and more. 'Women also wrestle, but their matches generally end in scratching and pulling hair' (Bogoras 1904: 266). Presumably this reflected the scholar's own bias. People played both football and handball. This was more common among the Maritime Chukchi, 'who live in settled villages' and 'whose life is more regular' or fixed (op. cit.: 271). A combined football and handball game can occupy 'almost the entire population of the village' (ibid.). It would be interesting to know if this was like Shawnee football, where men kick the ball while women throw it; unfortunately no descriptions are provided.

The Chukchi language was agglutinating, e.g., several word stems are linked morphemically in one word or phrase. The counting method had 20 as the base number, by the number of fingers and toes; the word for count was 'fingers'.

The rich folklore included everything from stories to riddles. Supposedly, many Chukchi myths are similar to those of the Koryak, Itelmen, Eskimos and Indians. Many of these are circumpolar myths, and many themes are fairly universal.

The raven (*kurkyl*) was a creator figure who chopped holes in the sky to bring light and released the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon and stars. Yet the raven appears mostly as a trickster, getting into ridiculous situations. There were stories about monsters (*kelet*), such as a supernatural polar bear (*kochatko*), and sea monsters. Animal stories involve fish, insects, birds and animals. The bear is always awkward, stupid and frivolous. He is frightened by grouse flying out of the bushes. The fox, called the 'field-woman' (*nuteneut*), is clever and cunning. The wolverine is a thief. The stories may resemble totem tales. Protagonists in Chukchi myths include: fish, sea-mammal, insect, seal, snake, bird, grouse, raven, duck, pintail-duck, owl, bear, polar-bear, wolverine, wolf, fox, deer, reindeer, hare, lake, sky, earth, stone, star, moon, sun, etc. Russians instead would focus on stories about violence, such as supposed battles with Koryaks, Eskimos and others; in native mythology these tales would be secondary.

Life courses were surrounded by rituals. Chukchi personal names are poorly documented. Male names seem to have a totemic significance and refer to the movements of animals: standing, walking, going down, coming, moving, being, crying, bringing, lying down (*femlae* ending), etc. Some such male names are: *Pelqanti*, *Pañanto*, *Tumyenenti*, *Qerginto*, *Tñerultin*, *Tñenintin*, *Nutewgi*, *Akimluke*, *Omruwge*, *Petelqut*, *Tatko*, *Kitilqut*, *Qergukwat*, *Notalqot*, *Omrilqot*, *Girgol*, *Tñentegrew*, *Ranawkurgin*, *Leivitihin*, *Mewetiryin*, *Ninqewqin*, *Yatirgin*, *Vaalirgin*, *Omrirgin*, *Aičirgin*, *Hiuqei*, *Nutenqew*, *Kokole*, *Rahtilin*, *Ročhilin*, *Remkilin*, *Yetilin*, *Notaimen*, *Nuvat*, *Tñeičevun*, *Nutetehin*, *Añika*, *Eiheli*, *Little Spoon*, etc. Female totemic names include: *Tiluwge*, *Aiñargin*, *Qergiña*, *Rahtinña*, *Ročhiña*, *Ranawñaw*, *Omrinña*, *Tñeñeut*, *Qergukwañaut*, *Nuteñeut*, *Qutyeut*, *Yetyeut*, *Hiuñe*, *Notatvaal*, etc. The names of women differ from those of men in sometimes indicating gender, 'woman'. The names are typical in that they do not refer directly to a totem, but to an animal's behavior, e.g., 'standing up after lying down', 'coming at dawn', 'bringing back', 'standing strong', etc., that could refer to a variety of animals, but still would have a totemic reference. Each person would know which animal his or her name referred to, though not self-evident. Names were probably kept secret as well, to avoid them being misused; it is rare that a scholar obtains a list of native names with translations (Bogoras 1904: 514-6). The names are here arranged after the last syllable or ending, though names should be analyzed further by an expert. Some additional names, like nicknames, directly referred to animals: fish, walrus, bird, raven, bear, wolf, dog, reindeer, marmot, etc. There were also more general nicknames, like 'man' or 'hairy anus' (op. cit.: 515-6).

Life was generally good among the old-time Chukchi. Poor people were taken care of. Hospitality and sharing was an unbroken rule (Bogoras 1904: 636-7). This would gradually change when Russian colonizers started taking away meat and skins as 'tax'. Yet people would make an extra effort to supply visitors with food.

Burial occurred by cremation. In some cases corpses could be left on the tundra. To the funeral belonged an extensive ritual. People were buried in the best possible manner depending on the season. The corpse clothing was of white leather. The best part of the realm of the dead was reserved for people who died voluntarily. If a man told his relatives that he wanted to die they had a duty to kill him. It was mostly the old and sick who asked for this, but sometimes also people who lost the desire to live. Such extremes may be due to historical developments with epidemics and depopulation. During the mourning period for a wife, a man abstained from hunting for up to 40 days.

Summary

The way in which the Chukchi and their society was broken was a topic for Russian scholars. The proximity to America placed the Chukchi in a vulnerable position after the Revolution. After the Revolutionary War of 1923, the Russians set up 'camp committees' for all Chukchi, followed by local and national 'soviets' (Antropova & Kuznetsova 1964: 825). Reindeer herding was collectivized under state control. One goal of collectivization was to gain Russian control of the Chukchi population by placing family members in large collective villages led by Russians (op. cit. 825-6). Mistakes were made, such as overgrazing. At the same time, the party apparatus in the region closely monitored the population.

Hunting and fur trapping were organized into hunting brigades. The coastal Chukchi were relocated in combined sea hunting and reindeer herding collectives, which were large and under strict Russian control. The 'Lenin' collective was created in 1940, with 4 boat teams and 300 reindeer, but was later expanded through the forced relocation of natives to 8 large boats, one whaleboat and over 15,000 reindeer, with sea hunting organized in capture brigades (op. cit.: 826-829).

All boat traffic was controlled by two 'motor-hunting stations'. In the coastal collectives, Eskimos and Chukchi were placed side by side, and inland other peoples were mixed, in classic divide-and-rule style. Immigrant Russians and Russianized Chuvantsy were established as overseers in fishermen's collectives on the coast. In Soviet times there was mass production of bone carvings. In Russian markets the Chukchi exchanged natural products for factory clothes, tea, and liquor. The Chukchi held on to skin clothing, but wore Russian underwear (op. cit.: 829-831).

The greatest effect was probably the forced housing of family members. In the collective towns were Russian schools and assimilation pressure. Epidemic diseases were treated, but new ills were general health or social problems and alcoholism. Compulsory education in Russian and boarding schools meant that children lost their culture. A separate written language was developed for Chukchi and the language would survive in the hinterland until the 21st century. Chukchi folk tales were published, and a few native poets appeared (op. cit.: 831-835).

This would allow the Chukchi to stay in touch with their past. There are still enough speakers to keep this knowledge alive. Hopefully a more detailed view of native totemic and social systems will be available in the future.

Aleut-Eskimo

The Aleut and Eskimo-Inuit are here treated under one heading, as they form a 'bridge' between North Asia and North America. The many and interesting connections found between the two continents, such as the similarities between the Northwest Coast Indians and the native cultures of the North Pacific coast, attest to the closeness both culturally and socially of people on both sides of the Bering Strait. However the current presentation stops with the people directly in contact across this ocean branch.

Aleut

Aka: Unangan – own name, 'people'.

The Aleut occupy the Aleut or Aleutian Islands, extending from Kamchatka to westernmost Alaska. The land area was roughly 20,000 km², allowing a population of 7000+ residents. The rich coastal habitat with marine life allowed a much higher population density than the minimum would suggest, and at one time as many as 18,000+ people may have inhabited the islands and points in Alaska and on Kamchatka at either end of the archipelago.

Population estimates include: 1600: ca. 12,000-16,000+ people; 1780: ca. 8000; 1850: ca. 2000; 1890: ca. 2,300, ca. 2,000 speakers; 1980: ca. 8,000, ca. 700 speakers. Aleuts in Asia were: 826 people in 1892; 574+ in 1897; 501 in 1909; etc. They lived in 3-4 villages (Jochelson 1928: 63).

Around 1940 the Aleut in Alaska numbered 1,000+ people living in 10 villages, inhabited by between 10 and 294 people. The small settlements would be remnants of larger groups, while the largest settlements were consolidated from diminished villages.

The Aleut are customarily divided into 3 districts, each with its own dialect, Western, Central and Eastern. One estimate has 1000+ Western, 4,-5,000+ Central and 10,-12,000+ Eastern Aleut, for a total of 16,000+ people, presumably in prehistoric times (Laughlin 1980: 10, 15). The relatively high population density of 1+ per km² was explained by the rich coastal resources, such as sea otters (op. cit.: 10). The Western and Central bands are not well known. The Eastern or 'Fox Island' Aleuts were estimated at: 1750: ca. 10,000; 1760: ca. 9,000; 1770: ca. 5500; 1790: 1900+; etc. Between 1764 and 1768 the Russians slaughtered 3,-5,000 Aleuts in genocidal attacks (op. cit.: 15-16).

Some village locations from E to W can be noted: Akutan is a historical Aleut center in the east. Unalaska was an important Aleut Island that came under US military control. Umnak Island of ca. 1800 km² had room for ca. 9 villages; a mention of 22-27 'villages' presumably includes many seasonal camps that were parts of larger villages (Laughlin 1980: 79-80). Each village may have had 2-3+ moiety- or phratry-based camps. Major villages were: Tulik aka Otter Point, Tanak aka Adhush, Inanudak aka Qumningan, and Aglaga or Idaliuk Point; all abandoned and taken over by whites; the tiny island now has 4 airports or landing strips. The pre-contact Aleut population supposedly was 2000-2500 people (op. cit.: 80). A fifth major village on Umnak was Chaluka aka Nikolski Bay, Nikolski or Rechesnoi, that included camp sites at Uuki or Okee Bay, Aanagula, etc. (Laughlin 1980: 62-95). The village has been occupied since 7000+ BC. The area was savagely excavated by American and Russian archeologists after 1935 (op. cit.: 62). Apparently Chaluka was occupied by 8-12+ totem

clans; the population was estimated at 200-300 people (op. cit.: 80). This would indicate a total of 35-60+ houses. There could be 2-3+ rows of houses, each with 11-28+ houses. Modern Nikolski has ca. 31 houses, with one row of 11-13+ houses. Further west Atka is an Aleut center.

Sources on Aleut social organization are limited. The main ethnographic book is based on racist research, such as cranial measurements (Laughlin 1980: 7). This is not helpful when studying social life, so what little information is available has to be examined with care.

Aleut villages were placed alongside shores near protected bays and rivers or lakes (Laughlin 1980: 23).

In early history the Aleuts were settled in small camps, 'winter camps', often with 10-12 households and 50-100 members. Other information points to 200+ inhabitants and 24+ houses (Laughlin 1980: 50, 73). The camp or village was preferably located along a good beach, often at a headland or isthmus and near a river outlet. Later, the settlement pattern was changed by Russian and American colonization, people were settled in larger fishing villages and hunting districts both with scattered and concentrated settlements.

Aleutian villages had a recognizable settlement structure of 1-2+ rows of houses above a beach or river. Such a build-up structure is recognizable in native villages also today, and resonates with village layouts in North Asia. For example, an ancient Anangula village had 24 pit houses placed in 3 rows 'along the edge' of a 'bluff'; houses measured 13-20' by 20-30' – 4-6 x 6-9 m (Nat'l Park Service n.d.). Much larger subterranean houses, called 'barabara', were said to house 10-15 families.

There is a highly interesting village formation on Atka Island of 14+ houses placed in a circle with a somewhat triangular shape. While the village layout is conditioned by the terrain, a triangular plateau, possibly an old fort, the setting up of houses in a circle is indicative of older patterns, with totemic implications. A slightly similar pattern is found at Nelson Lagoon, perhaps also at Unga, St. Paul and other places (APIA n.d.). Quite possibly pre-modern Aleut villages may have varied between houses placed in non-geometric straight lines and circles.

Each village had control of a local territory of ca. 200+ km² (Laughlin 1980: 45). There would be room for 100+ villages in the Aleut territory. People observed a rule of 'avoiding hunting or fishing in front of another village' (Laughlin 1980: 54). That is to say, each village would control the resources for some distance up and down the coast, as well as inland. This territory would be controlled by the complement of local totem clans in common. It was noted that a 'traveler' would find food and 'accommodations' when visiting a village, and that hospitality was 'a prominent feature of Aleut life', as among other native peoples (ibid.). Yet the visitor would have no rights to hunt or fish without village approval.

Ecology

The islands on which the Aleuts lived were generally treeless. Most land mammals were absent, except in the far east. People lived off the resources of the sea and seabirds. The resources, especially in the ocean, were rich. Land and sea animals, fish and plants could be harvested. The Aleuts had a stable and balanced adaptation to their environment, living peacefully and with plenty on their islands for thousands of years (Laughlin 1980: 20f).

Resources harvested included plants such as green shoots, seawoods etc., birds, mammals such as sea-otters, seals and whales, shellfish, and fish. A small whale could sustain a village for much of a year (op. cit.: 25). The Aleut took care of their environment; not so for the Russian and American colonists. The western Aleutians were unique as a refuge for the 'northern sea cow', which was exterminated by the Russians in 1768 (op. cit.: 22).

History

The Aleuts have a common linguistic origin with the Eskimo-Inuit languages. They settled in the Aleutians after 9,000 BC, towards the end of the Ice Age. That was when the land connection between America and Siberia, the 'Bering Land Bridge', subsided into the sea, leaving the string of islands as stepping stones across the Bering Sea. The Aleuts developed a distinctive maritime culture along the elongated island chain, where the sea both separated them from other peoples and bound together the various island communities in the chain. Theirs was a unique historical development in a shielded geographical setting.

Before 1740 the Aleuts lived in peace in their island nation. The subsequent Russian colonization of the Aleut area was very brutal. As noted, the Russians killed 3000+ natives around 1764-68. Along with epidemics, etc., this led to a drastic decline in the Aleutian population of over 90% between 1650 and 1850. As an example, Umnak Island lost 70% of its population around 1759-62, and by 1830 less than 5% of the native population remained. The Russians ruled the area as a trading colony ca. 1759-1867. They carried out forced Christianization and suppressed the natives. Eventually a significant Aleutian-Russian mixed population emerged. When the Americans took over Alaska in 1867, they carried out an equally harsh Americanization, which meant that the Aleut language and culture soon came in danger of obliteration. According to one scholar, 'the last 40 years', 1940-1980, 'have been the most destructive to Aleut cultural traditions' (Laughlin 1980: 133). The US policy was to eradicate every trace of native life.

Economy

Hunting, fishing and the capture of marine mammals was the main source of livelihood in pre-modern times. Boats were an important marine tool and mode of transportation. Vessels included smaller kayaks as well as larger ocean-going sea hunting boats. The 'gains of the hunt' were distributed 'to everyone in the village and their guests' (Laughlin 1980: 61). On land, birds such as ducks and puffins were caught, and eggs were gathered (op. cit.: 44). Plants collected included roots, berries, green shoots, seaweeds, as well as grass and other plant fibers. Gathering also included smaller animals, shellfish, mussels, clams, whelks, chitons, limpets, sea-urchins, etc. In a dietary estimate plants accounted for less than 5% of the food, yet this may be misleading, since less plant food is wasted in the course of preparation (Laughlin 1980: 49). Products included basketry and plant-based textiles. Clothing was generally made from skins.

Many activities were community or village based, such as catching salmon in weirs, hunting sea-lions, walrus and whales, and some processing of food and materials. People were specially appointed to oversee the division of fish and meat among the villagers, referred to as a 'divider' (Laughlin 1980: 134). Such dividers, working in pair, would make sure that each household got an equal and fair share of the catch, depending on its size and need. When an inane scholar complained that this was an inefficient means to handle the catch, the Aleut

politely answered that ‘this was more fun’ (op. cit.: 135). People would visit other villages and islands on trading trips.

Kinship

The winter residence consisted of large semi-underground houses, where only the roof protruded. The entrance was through the fire-vent, via a log of carved steps. One house could accommodate up to 30 or more occupants; perhaps a ceremonial house. Ordinary houses might average 5 occupants.

One scholar seems to confuse ‘household’ with totem clans, such as including collateral kin in the term; perhaps the local tradition was to refer to clans as houses (Laughlin 1980: 59). The women would own or control all household equipment, except for cots or cradles used for sleeping; a man could sleep in the same cot all their life, which might have to be enlarged (op. cit.: 52). Perhaps this was a way for men to claim a space in the matriarchal household.

Village exogamy seems to have been prevalent. Wives were mostly ‘secured’ ‘from a different village’; ‘wives’ presumably meant spouses in this gender-biased view (Laughlin 1980: 59). Men ‘often went’ to another village to serve their parents-in-law (op. cit.: 59-60). The gender-biased view was that such bride service was temporary, yet men might very well live with the wife’s family. It was noted that ‘contiguous [sic] villages were closely related to each other’ (op. cit.: 54). This could both mean that some ‘villages’ actually were seasonal camps belonging to a central village, and that people habitually married into other major villages. One inane scholar with some disbelief noted that modern Aleut were not able to marry in their village because of exogamy and marriage restrictions; he noted 9 men in Nikolski who were ‘unable to marry’ because of such restrictions (op. cit.: 140). This strongly hints at the former existence of exogamous totem clans, phratries and moieties in the village, leading to a preference for village exogamy.

The kinship terminology was bilateral with an emphasis on relative age and gender. One scholar inanely noted that Aleut kinship was ‘intricate’, claiming they had ‘about 56’ kin terms (Laughlin 1980: 59). There were separate terms for ‘aunts and uncles’ as well as ‘nieces and nephews’ (op. cit.: 60).

Differentiation

Potential Aleut totems included: fish (qan), greenling, cod, pollock, black-bass, halibut, flounder, salmon, trout, shark, octopus, shellfish, insect, flea (katkik), louse (kituk), seal (isuk), harbor-seal, hair-seal, fur-seal (lakudak), sea-lion (kawak), walrus (amak, amkadak), whale (alak), white-whale, killer-whale (akluk), dolphin, bird (sak, sakuchatak), wren, warbler, finch, ptarmigan, cuckoo, raven, shearwater, gull, kittiwake, auk, murre, guillemot, auklet, puffin, sea-parrot, cormorant, duck, eider-duck, goose, egret, owl, hawk, eagle, animal (alkak), bear (tankak), polar-bear, sea-otter (changtulik, chengatuk), mink (ilkituk), ermine (samikak), wolf (alidik), dog (saklak, aykuk), fox (ukuching), caribou, goat (nanik), pig, marmot (kuskik), lemming (askukitak), vole, mouse, rat (chalakuk, itkitumak), ground-squirrel (hulnkik), hare (hamyukak), house, tree, birch, grass, sky, sea, earth, sun, etc.

The fauna of the Aleutians is peculiar. Most land mammals are found only on the easternmost islands, while most islands have very few species of land animals. This would influence the distribution of totemic references on various islands, though how this played out is hard to

tell, since records are scarce. It may be that some sea-mammals were counted with land mammals, while other were counted with aquatic animals and fishes. Seal, sea-lion, walrus and sea-otter could be grouped with the few animals on land, dog, mouse and rat. While whales were counted with the fishes, though sometimes placed as a separate group of animals (Black 1998: 133). The word for 'animal' (alkak), include land and sea mammals, but not whales (op. cit.: 127).

This leads to 3 totemic categories: Fishes and fish-like animals such as cod, halibut, shark and whale. Birds such as puffin, gull, duck and hawk. Sea and land mammals such as seal, sea-lion, sea-otter and dog. In addition other beings or phenomena can be totems such as sea and earth.

Another configuration, based on personal names and related information, could be fish, halibut, salmon, whale, bird, cormorant, raven, hawk, seal, walrus, sea-otter, dog, sea and earth. Several variations and permutations are conceivable.

Houses were inhabited by extended family groups. Supposedly these were mainly linked together through patrilineal kinship, but a scholarly and colonial bias may be at work here, so matrilineal and bilateral links must also be considered.

A totemic type of organization ensured the integration of the village. People who were not a part of local clans were 'outsiders' (ashadan) (Laughlin 1980: 103). The outsiders could be strangers, marauders, enemies, scary people or 'rugged individualists' (ibis.). They did not have any rights in the village and could be killed, in which case they were also dismembered to symbolically destroy the threat they represented as 'outsiders' in local society.

Russian scholars claimed to have found 'slavery', but this involved persons captured during raids and enmity who somehow were taken care of by the community. Supposedly there was strong differentiation and rank distinctions associated with the rich fishing and sea hunting areas.

Politics

The smallest political unit was the local community, the 'winter camp', which was called so because people preferred to live together in the winter, while they moved around more, hunting and fishing, in the summer. The 'winter camp' would actually be a permanent, year-round village, from which people could move on shorter or longer trips to hunt, fish, gather vegetable matter or trade. That such trips were more common in summer when the weather was more moderate is not surprising. Summer would also be the time to make political visits.

Each Aleut village had one or more chiefs, in biased versions called 'headmen', though they could be of either gender. There would have been a head chief and a second chief, with an assistant chief or adjutant as well. These would strive to keep peaceful relations within the community and between communities, in a political system stretching from island to island. In some villages there still is a First, Second and Third Chief, sometimes called a President, Vice President and Secretary (Laughlin 1980: 137). Leadership terms included 'strong man', perhaps referring to the second chief (op. cit.: 29). The first chief may have been known as a 'headman', unfortunately the same term used for clan leaders; for distinction, the term 'village headman' seems reasonable. The local community controlled a territory, which included at least two possible camp sites, so that the winter camp could be moved in case of a bad year,

earthquakes, etc. It is worth noting that the village political system lasted into modern times, and was well working (op. cit.: 137). The wider political system is largely unknown, due to the hard colonization of the islands.

There was a strong sense of justice and conforming to the common good. People who would not conform 'might be put to death after a general consultation among the village elders' or clan representatives (Laughlin 1980: 58). This would refer back to the concept of 'outsiders', people falling outside the community's social limits. That such people might be executed sounds harsh, but the village's main concern 'was the maintenance of the peace' (ibid.). In modern society those who do not fit in are placed in prisons or slums – equally harsh.

Warfare was dreaded in native societies. Yet Russian scholars would emphasize war, seconded by American researchers. For the Aleut it was noted that warfare was 'between those in different dialect groups' or with 'Koniag Eskimos' far away (Laughlin 1980: 54). Basically this meant that warfare and hostility was avoided. One scholar hesitantly noted that 'a fight' was 'a rare event'; people would do all they could to stay on friendly terms (op. cit.: 137). Villages 'aided each other, reciprocating with festivals', dances, 'games, and gifts' (op. cit.: 54). This renders a strange slant on the chapter about 'warfare', which was a Russian-American hangup. Warfare entered the Aleutians when Russians arrived, massacring the natives.

Religion

The Aleuts fell into the hands of bigots, Russians and Americans, and as a result their spiritual life was prohibited and destroyed. This makes it difficult to make cogent statements about their religious beliefs, especially when the scholars themselves are Russians and Americans – not much room for tolerance.

The annual ceremonies of the Aleut are not well known. Among the celebrations there was a bird dance (Jochelson 1928: 221). One scholar awkwardly tries to mention 'dancing, singing, and wretling', while apparently having no reference to what went on (Laughlin 1980: 53). Apparently people had ceremonial houses, since dances could be held 'inside a large barabara' or subterranean house (ibid.). Dances were intercommunity events, with visitors from other villages and other islands (ibid.). The scholar, in inane fashion, wrote that there were 'several kinds of dances' – no less (ibid.).

Each village had its burial sites. In many places, people were buried in pits and caves. Mummy-like corpses from caves have been reported. Burial in stone and wooden coffins was known; among other things, people used double coffins, a custom which today is continued in Orthodox burials. The Aleuts were forcibly converted to Orthodox Christianity in the 1700s.

Culture

Aleut culture was expressive and beautiful. Of clothing, a known feature is the conical hats worn by men (Laughlin 1980: 55). Threads were made of sinew from whales and caribou (ibid.). Decorations on hats and other objects could indicate animals, though little is known; animals noted include: bird, sea-otter, sea-lion, etc. (op. cit.: 57).

The Aleutians had a complex native cosmology. They believed in an afterlife. The body contained a soul or principle of life that bound together the living and the dead.

Aleut arts and crafts were rich. Each house had a 'deity' image (Laughlin 1980: 52). This was a human 'figurine' 'suspended from roof beams' that a hunter 'could speak with' (ibid.). The figures, called 'katakatak', were 'made of ivory, bone, or stone' (op. cit.: 87, 110). Curiously, but not surprisingly, the scholar does not ask what the figures represent; he inanely assumed that they represent 'the deity', e.g., 'god' (ibid.). It is worth noting that the Aleut refused to speak about the figures until pushed by the scholar, who then gave them his own Midwestern meaning (op. cit.: 88). In excavations, the number of figures found 'may correspond to the number of houses' (op. cit.: 52-53). This would indicate that the figures had a totemic significance.

'Story telling was one the great arts of the Aleuts', with stories told at night (Laughlin 1980: 60). These ranged from epic stories to everyday accounts. Animal myths are common. Several stories hint at totemic affiliations. These included stories in which women marry a seal, fur-seal, sea-lion, etc. (Black 1998: 134). This may be a double reference to totems and matrilineal affiliation. Other animals that may occur include: whale, sea-otter, fox, etc.

The life course rituals had different forms. The naming of children was a significant act, but native names are poorly known. In one comment it was said that if two people had similar names they would have similar lives, pointing to totemic ideas (Laughlin 1980: 59). Unfortunately what the names were is not indicated; frustratingly scholars will make general comments without specifying what they are talking about. Known male names include: Spawned-Out-Salmon, Hair-Seal, Old-Wornout-Stomach, Walrus-Tusk-Breaker, Little-Killer-Whale, Little-Wren, Little-Guillemot, Kills-Many-Ducks, Suns-Himself, Always-Kills, Small-Knife, Soup-Ladle, Hard-Rock, etc. Female names include: Sea-Lion, Teeth-Woman, Raven, Summer-Face-Woman, etc. Most of these names seem to be nicknames; yet they may have a totemic significance. It was observed that 'true Aleut names' are 'often' made in reference to 'animals and birds', without clear examples (Laughlin 1980: 113). In true totemic fashion the 'true' names 'are not ordinarily used in front of outsiders' (ibid.). White observers would be content with using nicknames, holding that only a 'Christian' name would be 'true' (ibid.). This was a prevalent colonial practice found everywhere in the North.

Through socialization and 'codes for conduct' the Aleut were highly moral people, somewhat awkwardly compared to 'Swiss watches' (Laughlin 1980: 58). Interestingly Aleut people had 'sponsors' (anakisak) who vouched for their good behavior, such as an older woman looking out for the behavior of a child. This would contribute to the social stability of the village, with a criss-crossing of kin and 'sponsor' relations. In a similar vein, criticism was avoided, while approval and mild corrections were common in interpersonal relations – or keeping silent (op. cit.: 60). Personal avoidance and deference 'made for a harmonious and cohesive' village community (op. cit.: 61).

The Aleut used to have menstruation huts where girls and women went during their periods and after childbirth (Laughlin 1980: 104). Presumably this was common all over the north, though little known. There is mention of a woven 'charm belt' that women wore, perhaps similar to the Ainu 'kut'; but no descriptions are provided (op. cit.: 104-5).

People had long and good lives. Old men 'over 70' would fish from kayaks and caught 'far more halibut and cod than they could possibly eat', providing for their families (Laughlin 1980: 15). This is an important statement, since scholars mostly share a western age bias assuming that old people are a burden.

Funeral rites were extensive and varied regionally. It is possible to speak of a death cult. The burial ritual differed with the age, status, and rank of a persons. Burials were 'in a flexed position' (Laughlin 1980: 89). The Ainu were known for making mummies (op. cit.: 96-106). Associated with the mummies were parts of birds and animals such as seal, whale, bird, wren, owl, hawk, sea-otter, etc., that may point to a totemic association. In one late development, 'slaves' or prisoners could be sacrificed at the funeral of important persons; possibly this was a Russian myth. The burial site indicated the place of the deceased in the community. In one biased view, among the East Aleutians, family members were buried in side-chambers to houses, while 'slaves' or prisoners were buried in stone caves. Probably this view is wrong; leading people were mummified and buried in caves (Laughlin 1980: 101). The fact that the rituals of death had great significance is perhaps related to the harsh conditions in which the Aleutians lived, where the marking of fellowship in connection with deaths had great symbolic significance.

Summary

The Russians' heavy-handed colonization and Christianization, later followed by the unduly harsh treatment by the Americans, makes the ancient beliefs and cosmology of the Aleuts virtually unknown today. They are a people at risk, and have been so for 300+ years.

Under American rule people have become even more pressed, in particular in terms of language and culture. Due to exogamy restrictions young people found themselves forced to marry white people. This alongside relentless American missionaries, schools and officials, would spell the doom of Aleut life in the 1980s (Laughlin 1980: 140f). The inane scholar, somewhat fatuously, claims the Aleut 'may survive another 9000 years' (op. cit.: 145). This would depend on how they are treated by colonists like himself. Native Aleut names, myths and totemic practices await rediscovery.

Eskimo-Inuit

Aka: Inuit-Inupiaq, Eskimaux, etc. The Eskimo or Inuit comprise the largest ethnic group on the Arctic shores of North America, extending into easternmost Russia. The expansive territory comprised 500,000+ km², allowing for 150,000+ people.

Estimates of Eskimo-Inuit population are: 1890: 47,000+; 1980: 104,000+, 79,000+ speakers; etc. The Asiatic Eskimo counted ca. 1308+ people in 1897-1900. On nearby St. Lawrence Island, held by the USA, were 272 people, for a total of 1580+.

The vast majority of Eskimo-Inuit lived in North America. Three major groups are Western or Alaska Eskimo, Central or Canadian Eskimo, and Eastern or Greenland Eskimo. In addition the Kodiak Eskimo are found in S Alaska. Eskimo settlements in Asia were near Indian Point, East Cape and Cape Ulakhpen (Jochelson 1928: 62).

One Central Eskimo group were the Netsilik (seal people), today centered at Pelly Bay, present Kugaaruk. This band in and before 1923 had 8 communities, Arvertormiut (whale), 18-19+ people, Netsilingmiut (seal), 66+ people, Ukjulingmiut (bearded-seal), Qegertarmiut (island), (40+ people), Ilivilermiut (thing), 84-90+ people, Kungmiut (river), 37+ people,

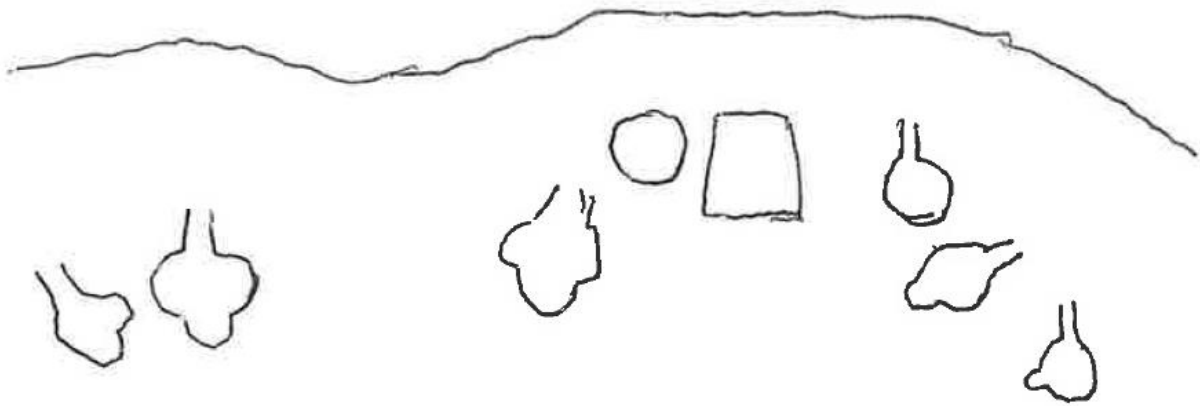
Utku or Utkuhikjalingmiut (soapstone), (30+ people), and Arviligjuarmiut (bowhead whale), 54-56+ people. The Utku in 1956 counted ca. 100 people; in 1963 ca. 20-38 people. The population figures are incidental estimates, and may include people from several groups, such as for the Arviligjuarmiut. What seems clear is that in every community the population had fallen drastically and was no longer sustainable, so people would seek together in a few larger units, mainly Netsilingmiut, Qegertarmiut-Iliviermiut and Arviligjuarmiut. It would also appear that around 1900 as many as 160+ Netsilik left their land and moved south to Repulse Bay and Chesterfield Inlet, perhaps hoping to get away from epidemics, which would be ineffective (Balikci 1970: xx-xxiii; 129).

One scholar hesitantly added that a community size 'of ninety people' was more representative than small camp; he could have put this much more strongly and noted the decimation of every Netsilik village from its former strength (op. cit.: 129). A village or 'winter camp' was 'composed of a number of extended families' (op. cit.: 130). Each community controlled a territory of 10,000+ km², and included 150-200+ people. There were community emblems or totems, as well as a totem for the whole band: seal. In historic times calamities struck. The Ukjulingmiut were exterminated by epidemics and starvation ca. 1890-1930. Other bands suffered dramatic population losses. This led to a disintegration of the social system by 1950, though interpreted by scholars as undisturbed. The Netsilik population of ca. 1500+ people was reduced to 259+ people in 1923 (Balikci 1970: xxiii). After 1930 aggressive mission and state colonizers gathered the survivors at Gjoa Haven, Spence Bay and Pelly Bay, and enforced strict 'acculturation'. This was when anthropologists arrived to study what they thought were unchanged native societies (Balikci 1970; Briggs 1970).

Scholars in 1970 would portray an image of Eskimo settlements as small and isolated; yet 100-200 years before they were large and in close contact. An image was conveyed, apparently with benevolent intentions, that would belittle the complexity and size of Eskimo society, based on the blindness of the scholars to their own colonial society – 'colonial, moi?' It should be noted that modern Eskimo towns are large, often holding 1000+ people.

Some further Central Eskimo groups can be noted: Interestingly the Utku, though reduced to 1/10 of their aboriginal number, still retained a central village site, Amujat, and 3-4 phratry-like seasonal sites, Umanak, Itimnaaqjuk, Kajat, and Kalingujat near the central site (Briggs 1970: 30). Anciently each seasonal site may have held 40-60 people, with 120-180 people for the whole village. Inland from Utku were the Hanningajuk or Hanningajuqmiut, whose subgroups included Ualiakliit; badly decimated by 1950, they today reside in the Inuit town of Baker Lake with 2000 people.

The local organization of Eskimo or Inuit people must be considered in detail. The social and economic life of Eskimo people render their local settlements or villages a basic object of study. Eskimo villages are fascinating but poorly known. In arctic and subarctic environments prehistoric remains can last a long time, as seen in some ethnologic surveys.



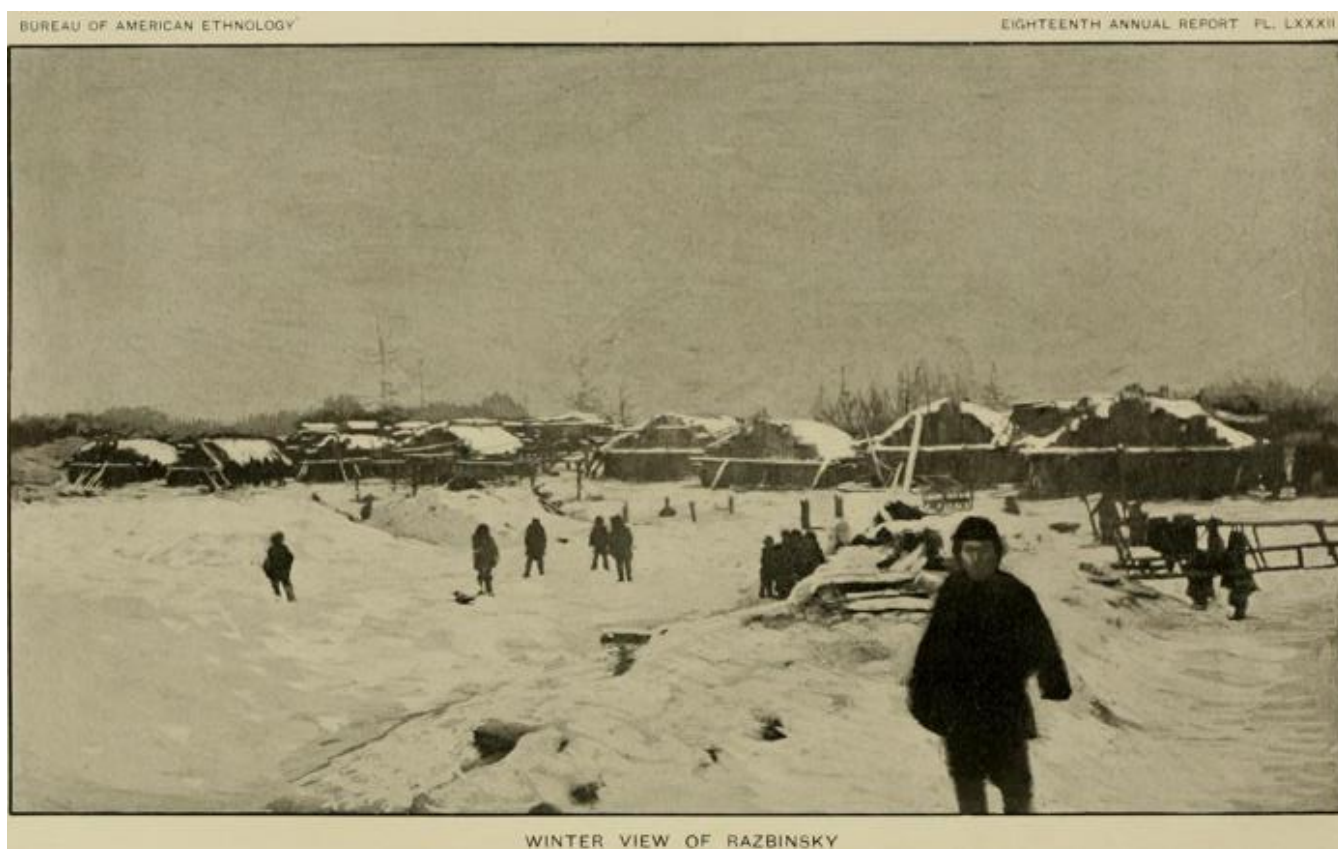
Pangnirtung, Cumberland Sound

At Pangnirtung there are 6 dwelling houses, 3 on each side of 2 communal houses, one round and one square, perhaps representing winter and summer uses (Boas 1888: 550). Probably there would be several of these villages in the area, each with 6 kin groups – or clans if you like. The structure suggests a pattern of 6 clans, with possible totems such as: seal, whale, gull, cormorant, wolf, and polar-bear. In addition there would be 3 ‘phratries’, represented by the 3 houses on either side of the village, and 2 moieties, represented by the two sides of the village. The communal houses would represent the unity of the local group, summer and winter. The Pangnirtung village can be seen today on Google maps, both past and present; but the present one has several hundred houses. An Eskimo village at Hudson Strait seemed to have a similar structure, two rectangular tents facing the beach surrounded by 5-6 tipis in a semicircle (Turner 1894: 226).

Northern Alaska Eskimo villages in the inland averaged 30 hunters, but could reach 50-100 men, for a population of between 120 and 350 people (Spencer 1959: 48). The central village consisted of 10-50+ houses ‘and a karigi’ or communal house, aka kashim. Coastal villages in the same area could be larger, with up to 3-4 communal houses. One village at Point Barrow in 1853, Nuwuk, had 309 people in 54 houses; by 1882 the population was down to 150 (op. cit.: 15). Neighboring Utkeayvik village had 40 houses and 250 people in 1853, reduced to 130 in 1882. White colonization and diseases would reduce Eskimo population dramatic, as it did to the population of most native peoples. As the population declined neighboring ‘village units’ would be ‘combined into one’ at Barrow to maintain a larger population number; a sort of ‘fusion’. A sketch map would indicate that Utkeayvik village in 1895 had at least 13-14 houses, perhaps representing 2 moieties and 3 phratries with 4 clans each. There was a communal house and 3 outdoor ceremonial areas for dances, games and feasting (op. cit.: 50). This may have been around the time that a ‘fusion’ occurred with another village due to population loss.

One ethnologist described well-organized Eskimo ‘villages’ in western Alaska. They consisted of a number of summer and winter dwelling houses, along with storage houses. Dwellings were built ‘about’ one or more community houses. These structures, called ‘kashim’, ‘a large central building’, served as community buildings or centers, ‘the central points of the village social life’ (Nelson 1899: 242). A kashim was large enough ‘to contain all the villagers’ as well as ‘guests’ during festivals and dances. In large villages there could be two or more community houses. One mythical village had 35 kashim; a whole tribe.

Dwelling houses had sleeping platforms on three sides and a fire in the middle; each platform had an oil lamp for a 'family'; probably referring to extended family members in the household. No doubt a teenage daughter would want her own lamp. A kashim, by contrast, had narrow benches around its four sides to accommodate as many people as possible.



One such village, Razbinsky, with 25 houses and 2 kashims, apparently had a totemic clan structure. It is not clear if store houses and winter houses were included in the house count. Apparently there were roughly 12 summer houses and a similar number of winter houses, but the busy ethnologist did not specify this. The 2 kashims were built back of the summer houses at the side of the winter houses with the graveyard behind (Nelson 1899: 247). In other places summer and winter villages were built in separate locations; which probably was the older and more common arrangement. Unfortunately the ethnologist would not describe the layout or number of houses in each village; only what kinds of houses they had (op. cit.: 242f).

In pre-contact times villages were built 'on high points' or plateaus above a shore or river. Such locations were ideal for establishing well-structured village layouts in which the social organization was reflected in the way houses were positioned around the plateau. As will be shown, the neat arrangement of rows of houses in a village was based on a totemic organization, otherwise poorly recorded and little known among the Eskimo.

Some background aspects of Eskimo life

The Eskimo-Inuit occupy highly diverse biotopes, only united by a relative proximity to the sea. The landscape ranges from temperate forests in southwest Alaska to tundra and glaciers in Canada and Greenland. The adaptation of the Eskimo-Inuit people is not as well known as is generally thought. A village of 300+ people has different resource demands than a hunting

camp of 2-3 families. The village will need to organize the procurement of resources in a number of ways, while the hunting camp mainly relies on catching animals.

What is known is that the Eskimo-Inuit relied on hunting, fishing and gathering. Animals hunted included seal, whale, caribou, etc. Other game would be bear, polar-bear, musk-ox. Fishes that were caught included halibut, trout, salmon-trout, salmon, etc. Plant resources that were gathered included roots, berries, green shoots, etc.

Due to historical circumstances, mainly depopulation and colonialism, it is the small hunting camp that is known and used as an example of native adaptation. That most Eskimo lived in villages with an extensive organization based on totem clans somehow has slipped the researchers minds and led to a biased and simplified view of how native people lived, not least socially. Every available resource over an extensive territory controlled by villages has to be taken into consideration when trying to reconstruct how Eskimo people lived on the land in a prehistoric, precolonial context.

The most northerly Eskimo faced a harsh climate with winter-like conditions from September to June (Balicki 1970: xvii). One might expect that such tough conditions would put limitations on totemism, such as how many people could live and interact in one place, and to some extent they did.

Prehistorically, the Eskimo-Inuit share a common origin with the Aleuts. The two groups separated before 7,000 BC. The Eskimo-Inuit, in turn, were divided into two language groups, Yupik in the west and Inupiaq in the east. In later historic times the Eskimo suffered a population loss and traumatic upheavals caused by European colonists on their land.

As noted the Eskimo-Inuit had an adaptation based on hunting, fishing and gathering. The economy was far more advanced and activities more highly organized than is often credited in scholarly treatises. Salmon and trout were caught in community-run fish weirs (sapotit). There might be 2-3 such weirs in each village, one for each moiety or phratry. There are indications that Eskimo fishing crews on large boats (umiak) were phratry-based, headed by a master or 'boat-man' (umialik) (Bogoras 1904: 631). One author called the boat masters an 'aristocratic class' (ibid.).

There were rules for dividing produce such as seal-meat among the families of a local community or village (Balicki 1970: 133). A seal was habitually cut into 14 parts, perhaps corresponding to the number of totem clans or extended families in the village (op. cit.: 134-5). It was said that each hunter ideally had 12 'sharing partners'; again this may have corresponded to a totemic system (op. cit.: 135). Significantly, the hunter who caught a seal 'received practically no meat'; the customary distribution took precedence (op. cit.: 135). The meat was divided between the 12-14 'partners' wives'; e.g., the redistributive system was controlled by women. This was explained by butchering being 'a woman's task', but also bore on women's status in the village and its households (ibid.). The sharing of meat was reciprocal, and 'resulted in a network' of ties across the village (ibid.). It would take at least 14 hunters, each representing an extended family or totem clan, to complete the system of redistribution in a village. This would provide both a minimum and maximum number for local families. Given that families could have more than one active hunters, a minimum of 6-7 totem clans can be suggested, while more than 30-40 hunters in 14+ clans would render the system unmanageable. There are indications that the 'minimal' number of partners was 7, perhaps corresponding to a minimal clan number (Balicki 1970: 136-7). The fixed pattern of

meat distribution may have contributed to the continuity of villages and local communities. The position of 'sharing partners' was passed on from one generation to the next, and was based on long-term agreements (ibid.).

Supposedly the Eskimo 'had bilateral families with a strong patriateral slant'; all such statements can be modified even when referring to small groups such as the Netsilik (Balikci 1970: xv). It is almost endearing that a scholar would define the 'nuclear family' as 'the most important unit' among the Eskimo, since this would perfectly match his own view of social life (op. cit.: 101). That Eskimo lived in extended families identifiable as descent groups and totem clans is ignored. Yet survival in the arctic landscape was dependent on a larger unit than mom and dad. It is evident that people lived in local communities of 150-200+ people. Only when the larger units are ignored can a 'family' become the main unit, just like American society.

By considering single households scholars made it impossible to view relations between households. One scholar mentions a few extended household that all happen to be patrilateral, grandparent, one or more married sons and grandchildren living in the same or adjacent houses (Balikci 1970: 111-2). These represent 3 of 20+ extended households at Pelly Bay, so it is impossible to say how representative they are. Perhaps large parts of Eskimo society had a patrilateral tendency as claimed, due to factors such as male cooperation in hunting and fishing. Yet married women could also provide males for work teams. One family included an old woman, her son, his son and daughter, and two adopted sons of the old woman (op. cit.: 112). She would then provide more male work force to the family than her son. When asked about his 'extended family' one hunter included his grandparents, parents and married siblings, which would entail a basic bilateral system of residence (ibid.).

The Eskimo were strictly exogamous and prohibited marriage between cousins, presumably extending to second cousins. Local exogamy was the norm. The Netsilik were 'unique' in allowing 'cousin marriage', but they had lost 80%+ of their population when this occurred (Balikci 1970: 100). A cousin referred to by the extended term 'sister', would be called 'wife' or 'sister' after marriage – an awkward situation found in other native communities where depopulation forced people to marry kin (op. cit.: 101). Strict exogamy rules and marriage restrictions are indications of an underlying totemic organization. One scholar wondered 'why distant relatives were considered as cousins'; his answer was that they were 'nomadic', since he had defined away the social system; yet the ancient stable communities would be conducive to a wide range of kinship relations, not least through totemism, linking many people through shared and collateral totems (Balikci 1970: 101).

Residence after marriage could be patrilocal, matrilocal or bilateral; a married couple could stay in the same community as either spouse's Fa, Mo, 'aunt', 'uncle' or other kin, depending on the circumstances. A scholar might posit 'patrilocal residence', but this was a bias (Balikci 1970: 99).

Marriage could be arranged at birth, by two couples agreeing on their son and daughter to marry (Balikci 1970: 153). Beyond this young people could hope finding a spouse while traveling or visiting; often this would be arranged by relatives in different places (ibid.). Adults and widowed people would find spouses on their own. Polygamy was rare but accepted (op. cit.: 156).

One biased scholar criticized the practice of 'infanticide'. He particularly objected to killing female babies, since this 'reduced the number of marriageable women' (Balicki 1970: 147). Yet infanticide, like modern abortion, was a way to cope with overpopulation and the overexploitation of resources. What may seem less reasonable is that Eskimo such as the Netsilik continued the practice after suffering disastrous depopulation due to white colonization. The rationale would remain the same, that having more children would threaten the ecological and resource balance. The rule was for each woman to have no more than 2 daughters, which is an efficient way to limit population growth and overpopulation (Balicki 1970: 148). The scholar with some insight concluded that infanticide 'increased the chances of survival of the community by reducing the number' of 'people to be fed' (op. cit.: 150). The rational Eskimo explanation was that a child would not want to be born in a community without sufficient resources or food (op. cit.: 151).

The Eskimo-Inuit can be said to have had a modified Hawaiian type of kinship organization. Scholars have reduced this to a nuclear family oriented organization, similar to the 'Yankee' type of kinship among modern Americans. Mostly this is wishful thinking.

Some kin terms were: ilagiit (relatives); amaoq (ancestor); iktoq (GrFa, GrFaBr, GrMoBr); ningio (GrMo, GrMoSi, GrFaSi); atata (Fa); anana (Mo); akka (FaBr, FaSiHu); atsa (FaSi, FaBrWi, MoBrWi); arnarviq (MoSi); anga (MoBr, MoSiHu) angayok (eBr - ♂ sp.); ani (eBr, yBr, male cousin - ♀ sp.); nuka (yBr - ♂ sp.); alika (eSi, female cousin - ♂ sp.); naya (ySi, female cousin - ♂ sp.); idloq ('cousin' of same sex); angutekattigeq (children of two Brs); arnakattigeq (children of two Sis); irnik (So); panik (Da); kangia (Br's children - ♂ sp.); anga (Br's children - ♀ sp.); uyoroq (Si's children - ♂ sp.); norrak (Si's children - ♀ sp.); irngutak (GrCh, member of GrCh's generation); amaoq (GrGrCh's generation); etc. (Balicki 1970: 96).

Differentiation

The Eskimo are a testing stone in the study of totemism. In pre-contact times they had a totemic organization. Yet scholars would claim that the Eskimo did not have totemism. This paradox is important to solve, because it relates not only to the Eskimo but most peoples in North Asia, and is connected to the bias of scholars and other moderns against the idea of totemism. By showing that the Eskimo had totemism, they constitute an important cultural link between North America and North Asia, and at the same time they allow the exposure and criticism of scholars' views about what culture should be like. Ethnographers did not hesitate to push their own mold onto native cultures. This work is a belated effort to push back.

In western Alaska the Eskimo had 'a regular system of totem marks' and 'gentes' or clans. Interestingly the investigating ethnologist in 1877-81 wrote that it 'was extremely difficult' to get information about totems, without explaining why; probably people did not want to tell their names to strangers (Nelson 1899: 322). An alternative explanation is that the ethnologist was a pilferer; his main interest was to collect objects such as carvings, and he managed to grab 10,000 'specimens' on short trips.

Totemic clans were called 'uchohuk'. Among totem marks collected, the wolf clan was prominent. Wolf women wore 'strips of wolfskin in their hair'; wolf men had a 'wolf tail' hanging from their belt. Supposedly it was a custom 'for all to wear some mark' of their totem. Men would carry raven feet, hawk feathers and dog-bones to indicate their clan. Totem marks could be worn as tattoos; a hint at today's fad. One readily identifiable mark was a

bird's foot, 'a tridentate mark'. This may have been universal not only among the Eskimo but in America and around the globe. Such marks, lines, circles and triangles, could be modified or elaborated to indicate a specific totem animal. A V-symbol represented the wake of a swimming animal, like a seal (Nelson 1899: 325). 'All of these marks have totemic meanings', which the ethnologist did not have the 'opportunity' to investigate; he was busy packing his loot (op. cit.: 327).

Eskimo totems could include: fish, cod, loach, flounder, trout, char, salmon, seal, ringed-seal, bearded-seal, walrus, dolphin, whale, bird, grouse, ptarmigan, raven, plover, tern, gull, cormorant, crane, goose, owl, hawk, ger-falcon, eagle, bear, red-bear, brown-bear, black-bear, polar-bear, wolverine, otter, sea-otter, land-otter, ermine, mink, wolf, dog, fox, deer, reindeer or caribou, mountain-goat, mouse, rabbit or hare, tobacco, bow, pot, black, white, red, blue, soapstone, sea (nuliajuk), earth, sky, moon (tatqeq), sun, etc. These emblems are collated from various sources, too extensive to be individually referred to. A totem could be distinguished by colors such as red and black; perhaps an indication of moieties or phratries.

Unfortunately the ethnologist who reported on totems never examined the distribution of clans in a village. He was too occupied with collecting 'specimens' such as spearheads and other objects with totem marks. In one village, 'Sabotnisky', he found a wolf painted on a door. A local man told him that: 'All of our people' have 'marks ... handed down by our fathers from very long ago'. Other local totems included 'red bear' and 'loach' (Nelson 1899: 326).

The head of an extended family or totem clan was called 'the one who thinks' (inhumataq), by scholars called an elder or 'headman', the latter term easily confused with chiefs (Balicki 1970: 116). That each clan had a leader would indicate its existence as a component of the local social system, the totemic organization, though scholars would ignore this.

Probably there were at least 3 clans or phratries in each Eskimo settlement. There are indications of 3-4 phratries, each with 2+ clans. One phratry or subgroup would be the chiefs' clans. A basic clan pattern could be bird, land animal and water animal, repeated in pairs. Such a 3-partite system could be found from Pangnirtung in the east to Yukon River in the west. The Eskimo, unbeknownst to many, had a local totemic clan system. In this they would be paralleled by native peoples in North Asia. One possible totem clan distribution was: fish, salmon, seal, whale, bird, gull, goose, hawk, bear, wolf, deer, hare, sky, and earth.

Further elements of social life

As with most other aspects of pre-modern Eskimo life, the political system is poorly known. Each village may have had two leaders, a first and second chief, who divided the political and ceremonial duties of leadership among them.

There are indications that each village would have a council of the first and second chiefs along with elders representing the complement of totem clans in the village. One author refers to a clan elder as 'headman', yet seems to be speaking of a community leader. The 'headman's task was to achieve consensus without hurting the feelings and designs' of the other people; precisely what a chief would do in a village council (Balicki 1970: 116).

One scholar pointed out the suppression of violence in Eskimo society. There might be competition between hunters, but this 'took place within established patterns of collaboration' and social cohesion (Balicki 1970: 131).

Eskimo religion has not been intensively studied. A scholar's typical view would be that people 'believed in many supernatural beings' (Balicki 1970: xv). The Eskimo suffered a hard fate at the hands of missionary-colonists, whose main task was to subdue them to a system of colonial exploitation. The rich spiritual world of the natives was almost destroyed.

Beliefs spanned the universe and the natural world. Deities included the sun, moon, earth, sea, sky, weather, etc. Animal spirits included fish, salmon, whale, seal, swan, bear, caribou, wolf, hare, etc. Amulets and fetishes included parts or representations of: fish, trout, salmon-trout, salmon, seal, whale, killer-whale, sea-scorpion, tern, bear, ermine, dog, black-dog, fox, animal, caribou, hare, woman, monster, eye, moss, knife, fire, earth, stone, moon, sun, etc. Beliefs extended to beings such as 'monsters, 'giants, and dwarfs' (Balicki 1970: 198).

Beliefs among the Eskimo included magic formulas, tabboos and shamanism (Balicki 1970: 217-238). Heaven contains an Eskimo village, called Agneriartarfik or Aglermiut, etc., with plenty of game, where the moon goddess helps people to hunt (Balicki 1970:214).

Missions and other colonizers would suppress Eskimo celebrations and dances, restricting the knowledge of events. Annual ceremonies included drum dances in summer. These were attended by shaman rituals.

The shamans would grow in importance following the suppression of native religion, as they could operate more in private. Shamanism would carry on many of the Eskimo beliefs, such as in the belief in animal and natural spirits.

Among the best-known examples of expressive arts among the Eskimo-Inuit are ivory carvings of animals, people and other toipcs, carved on walrus tusks and other bones of large mammals.

Joking relations (akpiusaret) are strong among the Inuit, and can be related to the totemic system. People with the same or similar names were friendly partners, while those from other clans could be joked at (Balicki 1970: 138-9). Those engaged in joking could become 'wrestling partners and exchanged wives as song partners' (op. cit.: 139). Men who were involved with the same woman could engage in 'song duels' (op. cit.: 140). While this might sound shocking to 'modern' people, it is better than the random shootings of American cities.

Eskimo-Inuit names are poorly known and little analyzed.

Some male names noted include: Piuvkaq, Takutjartak, Tigusisoktok, Tallerk, Tulimaq, Tarajorqaoq, Tarajajuq, Kablalik, Kukigak, Kakortingnerk, Kokonwatsiark, Kokiark, Krasovik, Kringorn, Kanajuq, Konwalark, Kujaqsaq, Kaokortok, Sivatkuluk, Nakasuk, Nakliguhuktuq, Neruqalik, Iakka, Abloserdjuark, Ubloreasuksuk, Itqilik, Itimangnerk, Ituituq, Atuvir, Ikpagittoq, Ogpingalik, Iksivalitak, Oksoangutaq, Akkrak, Igunaksiaq, Ikinnelikpatolok, Ulik, Arnaktark, Arnasluk, Hindluq, Angutisugssuk, Inuksak, Anganuak, Anusa (pulls), Inuraq, Anarvik, Uyuqpa, Avagaidje, etc.

Among female names we find: Talliitok, Teriarnaq, Tunnuq, Tinuatluq, Katikitok, Krepingajok, Krabvik, Karmatziark, Kangmar, Kanayuq, Kajaksaq, Kajorsuq, Quertiliq, Sarutlu, Sivorak, Manelaq, Nagtok, Nalungiaq, Nulianoaq, Apitok, Agruta, Ikayuqtuq,

Akuardjuk, Irkrowatok, Haluraq, Arnarudlu, Arnanark, Amaaqtuq, Amauraq, Innakatar, Hiniruarjuq, Ivilinnuark, etc.

As in other cases the names are noted here because if properly investigated they may throw light on totemic practices and relations. Many of the names noted may be nicknames, such as Amusa, 'one who pulls', because he pulled women's pants (Balicki 1970: 161). Name secrecy meant that people varied their names; it was said that one person could have 'up to twelve names', which curiously corresponds with the general number of totem clans (Balicki 1970: 199). A person might have names alluding to different totems, while belonging to only one clan.

Summary

The social organization of the Eskimo-Inuit has been badly misrepresented by scholars and other writers. The background to this is the tremendous upheavals that Eskimo society suffered at the hands of European colonists in historical times, rendering much of the past existence unreachable. A post-cataclysm picture has been presented of a small and broken people.

American scholars presented a bastardized view of Eskimo life, as a society with no social or political organization, where the only unit is the single family, like a nightmare vision of American life (Balicki 1970: xv; Briggs 1970: 8). Describing a minority as being without a social organization is the worst possible approach since it invites more discrimination. The authors seem not to be aware of their colonial position, that they are writing about a people who have been subject to decimation and social destruction for centuries. Unlike Russian scholars, American authors do not seem to be aware of the devastating impact of their society on native minorities, leading to highly biased accounts. The Eskimo are presented as if 500 years of destruction never happened. All this must be taken into account if the full complexity of Eskimo life is to be found.

The true picture, leading back to prehistoric times, is of a great and independent people, spanning the Arctic from Greenland to Siberia. The greatness that was the Eskimo nation is reflected in their totemic organization, or what little remains known about it. The basic structure seems to have been one of 2 moieties or sides, and 3 phratries represented by 1-2+ totem clans on each side of the village. In addition 2 chiefly clans might complete the village makeup, for anywhere from 6 to 14+ totem clans constituting an Eskimo village. Beyond this pattern countless variations would be found, not least in historical times when Eskimo communities suffered disastrous depopulation due to European epidemics and colonization. A total examination should be made of the traditional social structure in native villages, a work that awaits completion. Yet the beautiful totemic composition of Eskimo towns shines through in the little and fragmented information that is available thus far.

Conclusion

‘The nearly universal mythological motif of animal-human marriage is present among most peoples of Northeast Asia and the circumpolar zone’ (Zgusta 2015: 309)

Scholars generally make the mistake of identifying totemism with animal biology and natural phenomena. If people say they descend from a wolf, this must be because they live in a wolf habitat, an area with many wolves, or are influenced by etiology, the behavior of animals such as a wolf. Scholars are averse to speaking of human-animal descent, and instead refer to ‘attributes’ of animals, fierce like a wolf or strong like a bear. What the researchers fail to see is the social significance of totemism. The different totems are part of a system, a totemic organization, and this system will be intimately linked with the social makeup of a local community. A village will consist of a certain complement of totem clans, and the relation of each clan member to her totem animal or being derives from this local organization. A study of totemism will start and end with uncovering the totemic affiliation of all local descent groups, the totem clans. Everything else is a digression; though all aspects of totemism are worth studying.

One digression is that scholars focus on the animals used as totems rather than the people who identify with the totems. The tiger totem is ‘obviously limited to those regions of Northeast Asia that are native habitats of the Manchurian tiger’, connecting the lower Amur region to East Asia (Zgusta 2015: 312). Yet the tiger is not chosen as a totem because of its habitat, but because of its contrastive use in social organization to other totems, bear, wolf, deer, and so on. If the habitat or the place is the determining factor, then the dragon totem will be difficult to delimit. Why do some people pick a stone as a totem, while others have a tree? It is the social significance and application that is important, not the being as such, though granted that will also have a significance in relation to how people experience their totems.

A good example is the joking relations between totem clans. Many animal tales presumably are based on such clan joking. The fox outsmarts the bear; the raven torments the hare. Every clan can make stories at the expense of other clans. These are relational phenomena. It is not about the wolf being stronger than the mouse, or vice versa, but about entering a relational, social system where there is give and take, but also an understanding that the system involves everyone, and people have to live with it.

A mitigating element in this confusion is that animals and other naturally occurring phenomena have wider symbolic applications than totemism. A good example is the tiger as a supernatural and mythical creature, linked not only with totemism but with religious and shamanic beliefs as well (Zgusta 2015: 313). Together with a general reluctance among scholars to discuss totemism this may account for the ‘zoo-centric’ view of animal symbolism and beliefs. People do not enter into the equation. In totemism this view is traversed; people, animals, totems and their interrelations are integral parts of the local society, its environment and the human-nature holism that is being investigated or contemplated.

The historical impact

Native social organizations have been disrupted by external colonizers for a considerable time, sometimes more than 1000 years. This has rendered the older structures obscure, and, together with a perceived scholarly aversion to totemism or animal descent, makes it hard to

envision how totemism and totemic organizations played out among different peoples and in different communities.

The societies that were latest to be colonized should have retained the memories of their former organization better, but this is not always the case. Recent colonization may remain within memory, but it was often socially and culturally violent and cataclysmic in its effects. The Central Eskimo population dropped by 90% between 1850 and 1930, followed by a state and mission colonization aimed at obliterating native culture. No wonder that naïve scholars reported no social organization among the natives (Balikci 1970: 102).

In the western parts of North and Northeast Asia a large part of the colonial upheaval occurred around 1450-1930 AD. The Russian Cossack 'conquest' of Siberia ca. 1540-1700 would be a significant element in this history. Yet what happened after, such as the forced assimilation and subjection of the natives to regional state dominance, raised the level of suppression from arbitrary violence and killings to degradation and the elimination of native community life. It is remarkable that many small people in this western region have preserved memories of their social organization including totemism. Presenting parts of the still obscure story is attempted in this account.

In the Amur-Sakhalin region to the east history has been tragic but complex and difficult to elucidate. This would start before 1000 AD with Mongol and Manchu influences, and continue off and on through history with forays and colonization attempts by people from Japan, Manchuria, Korea, China, and lastly Russia. A book could be written about each and every community in the Far East, more dramatic than 'War and Peace'. The Ainu people would complement this story with a history of their own. Sifting out the details of social life and totemism in this exceptional region is a work that remains to be done, with a faintly attempted contribution in this work.

Finally, the Northeastern part of Asia, north of Okhotsk to the Bering Strait, would face a motley crew of colonizers around 1630-1945 AD. The Soviet Communist Party wanted to eliminate ethnic 'inequality' after 1917, which in reality meant destroying minority cultures and societies (Sergeyev 1964: 487). The 'inequality' that was attacked was always within the minority, not between the minority members and the dominant Russians. Once the communists were in control after 1925 the small peoples of North Asia were in for harsh displacements, forced 'collectivization' under Russian control, and an external colonization of their land areas.

After World War II the pressure did not abate, but people could maintain portions of their living space as state interest in the far north waxed and waned. On the adjacent shore, in North America, the Aleut and Eskimo faced much the same impacts as their neighbors to the west. Life was hard in this northern region and remains so to this day, not so much from the climate as from the exploitative acts of colonizers, what people in Finnmark call 'Southerners'. People come to the North to find their fortune, mess with the people there, and return South. It is highly noteworthy that the rich and complex totemic systems found in this region in 1890, in a matter of decades were eliminated to such an extent that their existence was denied.

The dramatic history is reiterated here because it forms a tragic but necessary backdrop to the study of totemic organizations in North Asia. The time dimension, though relatively brief,

helps us bridge the gap between what may have been and what may be retrieved and, perhaps, be given new attention.

The forms of settlements

Scholars would describe native North Asian settlements as small and isolated. People lived in family-based groups with little contact with the outside world. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. A 'minimal' settlement would have 6-7 houses, while a large village could easily hold 500+ people. A fairly typical village would contain 12-14 totem clans and 100-150+ people. Examples of settlement patterns will be found throughout this book.

The complexity of native settlements gradually becomes apparent. Villages typically controlled an ample territory with various resources and land areas, ranging from seacoasts to mountains. Within such a territory land use would vary, and families might well live scattered during part of the year. More particularly fish and aquatic resources could be exploited on a moiety and phratry basis, while hunting could be assigned to phratry-based camps, as among the Ainu. Beyond this there would always be room for individual clan members to hunt and gather food in accordance with the settlement-based land rights. The basic unit of belonging was the settlement or village, consisting of a full complement of totemic clans.

The issue of totemic names

There are gaps in our understanding of North Asian totemism. One missing topic is personal names. People's names often have a totemic significance. For instance the Shawnee name Pemipto, 'runs along', may refer to a wolf. However, the construction and meaning of North Asian names are barely known. In most areas names have been supplanted with Russian, Christian or other non-native name forms. There are exceptions, such as among the Ainu, but in general native totemic names are not documented. A few examples of personal names have been given, but without a closer analysis. This should be an area for future research.

Clan stories

Most totem clans have a story about their origin, here called a 'clan story'. Unfortunately, since Russian and other scholars were not interested in totemism, they rarely collected such stories. Those few that are known often concern mythically prominent animals such as tiger and bear. Yet there will be a corpus of stories covering every totemic being from frogs to whales, still to be accounted for.

Several stories involve 'a girl' lost in the forest who meets a tiger or 'wakes up as a tiger's wife'; their offspring become the progenitors of the tiger clan (Zgusta 2015: 310). This is a fairly typical format for a clan story: a young person sleeps with a certain animal, and they have offspring who institute the totem clan of that animal. Some accounts are more circumspect; 'a woman becomes pregnant by stepping over a sleeping male animal, or an animal visiting her in her dreams'; forms of virgin birth seem amenable to white scholars (op. cit.: 311). However there are variations, not least in relation to how the half-animals are accepted when they return to the human world, their Mo's or Fa's village.

Also the gender of the progenitor is important. 'In rare cases, the genders may be reversed and a female animal becomes pregnant' (Zgusta 2015: 311). It might be assumed that if the human partner is a female, then the descent is patrilineal, from the male animal. But it seems that it is

the human gender that determines the pattern of descent, though this is not always clear. For extra confusion there need not be one ancestor, but several people who have children with a bear or some other animal, and become clan progenitors. The mixed 'clans' noted in recent historical times may even have several animal progenitors, several totems, and acquire new ones through additional liaisons. Without a full corpus of material on how each clan originated, it is difficult to assess this important aspect of totemic organization.

One element that scholars looked into were stories of national totems or emblems. Presumably such national myths were more amenable than family accounts of animal progenitors. 'Once a sister tricked her own brother into marrying her. Soon she gave birth to a boy and a girl. The children grew up when their father accidentally found out that his wife is actually his sister. Since incest among the Orochi was prohibited and strictly punished, he killed his sister-wife and threw away his children to be eaten by wild animals. However, the boy was found and raised by a tigress. When the boy grew up, she married him. The girl was found by a bear and they also got married. The Orochi and Udehe consider themselves descendants of these two marriages' (Bereznitskii 1999 in Zgusta 2015: 311).

The scholar may have found it less offensive that the relation was incestuous, than that animals were involved. An assumption is made that the Oroch national totem is a tiger while that of the Udehe is a bear, but this might be the other way around, depending on who tells the story (op. cit.: 309).

The integration of clans

An effort has been made to show that totem clans are not isolated and independent phenomena, but must be seen in relation to wider groupings and the total local organization. A totem clan may have an internal structure, in the form of a descent group occupying 1-3 houses, with parents, grandparents and children. But it gets its emblematic identity in contrast to other local clans. On the phratry level there are groups of clans with similar totems, such as fishes, birds or animals. As 'sibling' groups these extend the range of kinship to a considerable portion of the local families, roughly 1/3 or 1/4 of the people. The phratries in turn are distributed on both sides of a village, in so-called moieties, further extending the range of kinship and social 'crisscrossing' relations.

Moieties are represented by dual distinctions. These can be 'upper'-'lower', 'north'-'south', 'black'-'white', 'earth'-'sky' and many more, words that signify the division of a local community into two equal parts. More distinct terms are 'mont'-'por', 'mosh'-'por', 'jay'-'eagle' and similar regional or tribal terms. Unfortunately, as for most other aspects of the totemic organizations, the designation and structure of moieties have not been fully studied. There is still much to find out concerning the mutual relations, distribution and clan composition of moieties. What can be said is that phratries and moieties contribute to a composite and flexible organization of local totem clans.

The totemic integration of villages

The main arena in which totemism unfolds in practice is a village or local community. This is where totems obtain a social significance. They serve to distinguish the different descent groups in the village, as totem clans. And they serve to organize these groups by forming a definite series of distinctive and complementary totems that indicate what families or descent groups will occupy the village. Every village would have its own series of local totem clans,

more or less similar to other villages, but locally determined. Throughout the book attempts have been made to indicate such totemic series, local totemic organizations, among North Asian peoples. Below some of these series are reiterated.

Comparing the totemic organization of North Asian peoples

<i>Sami</i> :*	<i>Komi</i> :*	<i>Udmurt</i> :	<i>Mansi</i> :
salmon	pike	fish	fish
small-whale	trout	snake	frog
goose or swan	duck	bird	gull or loon
eagle	eagle	hawk	eagle
bear	bear	bear	bear
marten	sable	badger	sable or marten
wolf	wolf	fox	wolf
fox	fox	wolf	fox
reindeer	deer	deer	deer
elk-moose	elk-moose	horse	elk-moose
squirrel	squirrel	mouse	beaver
hare	hare	hare	hare
sky	sky	fire	sky
earth	earth	water	earth
<i>Khanti</i> :	<i>Nenets</i> :	<i>Enets</i> :	<i>Nganasan</i> :
frog	seal	salmon	whitefish
salmon	fish	seal	muksun-fish
hawk	partridge	grouse	ptarmigan
goose	hawk	eagle	goose
bear	wolverine	bear	raven
otter	bear	sable	eagle
wolf	wolf	wolf	bear
fox	fox	fox	wolverine
deer	reindeer	reindeer	wolf
elk-moose	elk-moose	elk-moose	fox or polar-fox
beaver	squirrel	squirrel	reindeer
hare	hare	hare	hare
sky	'vanuyta'	sky	sky
earth	'kharyuchi'	earth	earth
<i>Selkup</i> :	<i>Ket</i> :	<i>Buryat</i> :	<i>Even</i> :
salmon	sturgeon	burbot	fish
perch	perch	snake	seal
sturgeon	hawk	swan	raven
pike	grouse	vulture	eagle
cuckoo	bear	bear	bear
grouse	otter	sable	wolverine
owl	wolf	wolf	wolf
hawk	fox	fox	fox
bear	deer	deer	reindeer
elk-moose	elk-moose	pig or boar	elk-moose
deer	mouse	marmot	mouse
hare	hare	hare	hare
sky	sky or eagle	sky or eagle	sky
tree	earth or cuckoo	earth	sea or earth

<i>Evenk:</i>	<i>Negidal:</i>	<i>Ulchi:</i>	<i>Nanai:</i>
fish	fish	sturgeon	fish
snake or frog	snake	salmon	salmon
woodpecker	goose	grouse	grouse or woodcock
hawk or eagle	hawk	hawk	raven or eagle
bear	bear	bear	bear
badger	ferret or weasel	otter	raccoon-dog
wolf	dog	wolf	wolf
lynx	fox	fox	fox or tiger
deer	deer	deer	musk-deer
elk-moose	elk-moose	elk-moose	elk-moose
mouse or squirrel	squirrel	beaver	beaver
hare	hare	hare	hare
sky or thunder	sky	sky or sun	sky or sun
earth or rock	earth	earth or snow	earth or bow
<i>Oroch:</i>	<i>Udege:</i>	<i>Orok:</i>	<i>Manchu:**</i>
fish	fish or salmon	fish	fish
snake	snake or frog	whale	snake
grouse	duck	raven or crane	goose
eagle	owl or hawk	eagle	hawk
bear	bear	bear	bear
badger	otter	sable	ferret or ermine
wolf	wolf	dog	fox
fox or tiger	fox or tiger	fox or tiger	tiger or wild-cat
deer	deer	reindeer	deer
elk-moose	elk-moose	deer	musk-deer
squirrel	squirrel	mouse	squirrel or mouse
hare	hare	hare	hare or rabbit
sky	sky	sky	sky
earth	sea or earth	tiger or earth	tree or earth
<i>Nivkh:</i>	<i>Ainu:</i>	<i>Yukaghir:</i>	<i>Itelmen:</i>
fish	salmon	fish	cod
whale	swordfish or shark	pike	salmon
bird	seal	goose	seal
hawk	whale	owl	whale
bear	kingfisher	bear	cuckoo
sable	crow	sable	raven
wolf	owl	fox	goose
fox	eagle	lynx	hawk
deer	bear	reindeer	bear
elk-moose	fox	elk-moose	fox
squirrel	deer	mouse	deer
hare	hare	hare	hare
earth	fire	sky	sky
sea	water	earth	earth

<i>Kerek:</i>	<i>Koryak:</i>	<i>Alyutor:</i>	<i>Chukchi:</i>
salmon	fish	fish	fish
seal	seal or whale	seal	seal
gull or raven	swallow	bird	grouse
owl or hawk	duck or raven	hawk	eagle
bear	bear	bear	bear
wolverine or otter	ermine	otter	wolverine
wolf	wolf or dog	wolf	wolf
fox	fox	fox	fox
deer or reindeer	deer or reindeer	deer	reindeer
elk-moose or sheep	elk-moose	elk-moose	mountain-sheep
mouse or squirrel	mouse or marmot	squirrel	ground-squirrel
hare	hare	hare	hare
sun	sky or cloud	sky	sea
sea	earth	earth	earth
<i>Aleut:</i>	<i>Eskimo-Inuit:</i>		
cod	fish		
halibut	salmon		
shark	seal		
whale	whale		
gull	bird		
cormorant	gull		
duck	goose		
hawk	hawk		
seal	bear		
sea-otter	wolf		
walrus	deer		
dog	hare		
sea	sky		
land	earth		

*Mainly hypothetical. **Manchu ‘totems’ would refer to a period before 500 AD.

Based on the similarities that are presented the reader might think that the totem lists were constructed before the description of each North Asian people. Such is not the case however. Each ethnography was written following a study of available sources, starting with the ethnic designation and ending with the current situation. Yet there are restrictions and preconditions in how the material is presented. One such precondition is that the makeup and number of totem clans will vary between local communities; a suggested minimum in many cases may be 6+ clans, while a maximum can be 30+ local descent groups. The similar number of clans in the comparison is an abstraction. Another precondition is the view that totemic organizations will have a specific appearance. There will not be places in which the totems are all birds, or where different kinds of fishes and reptiles are used to identify each local family. The availability of animal and cosmological emblems ensures variation in how totems are represented, and this selection reflects conditions on the ground, typically exemplified by pairs of complementary totems and wider groupings of phratries and moieties. All effort has been made to document these groupings and to try to identify the totems they use.

This being said it cannot be denied that my own interest in and familiarity with totemic studies have led me to have preconceived views of totemic systems. Any other view would be inconceivable, since it is not possible to turn off prior knowledge. For this reason every totemic reference has been presented as tentative, regardless of how well it is documented. And the preliminary nature of this work has been emphasized. The study of totemism in North Asia starts here, and hopefully will be followed by years of future study.

Readers may be skeptical about the seemingly symmetric structure that is presented for totemic communities in this work. This is at it should be. There would be local variations and differences virtually in every case to the models that are outlined. The examples should amply show that totemism as an organizational principle will vary from case to case. The models are not meant to be definitive; for that there is too little information available. Instead the intention is to show how totemism can be instituted as a way to organize local life and protect the resources that people depend on. How different families relate to each other in terms of totems is the end result of a lengthy development, dating back across many millennia, to find a way in which to manage their interests and resources together.

I hope to have shown that totemism in North Asia is a basic form of social organization, but also that it enters into many aspects of the cultural and social life in the North. I am no Lévi-Strauss or conceited French intellectual, but the many ways in which nature symbolism enters into people's life and way of thinking is remarkable (Lévi-Strauss 1963). Yet the social organization, the basic local relations that people enter into, remains the anchoring point of totemism. Totems are not simply 'good to think', but good to enter into relations that hold local communities together and extend into people's use of and relations with the environment (*ibid.*).

As a side note the existence of 'national' totems may be mentioned. In North Asia we find: salmon (Ulchi), whale (Even), duck (Komi), eagle (Selkup), bear (Khant, Selkup, Oroch), tiger (Udege, Orok), elk-moose (Nanai), hare (Mansi), birch (Orok), larch (Nivkh), fir (Ainu), etc. Whether these emblems are representative is not an issue here. What is notable is that the chosen totems represent a full range of elements, fish, birds, animals and other phenomena. The totemic universe provides the same possibilities for distinctions on the 'national' level as they do in a local organization. Curiously this custom has continued in modern nations, such as the Russian 'bear' or British 'lion'. Totems remain 'good to think' even today.

Most anthropologists are terrified of symmetry – as am I. They know that human life is unpredictable. This is why Lévi-Strauss (1963) would claim that there always is an element of asymmetry in even the most organized totemic system. Something else is at play when a totemic organization is developed. This is the need to work out stable relations between people and their environment. A modern analogy could be the division of state polities into governing, judicial and executive institutions, intended to organize relations between otherwise unpredictable agents.

A model to use is one of social fields with different levels of scale (Grønhaug 1975). The individual would want to operate on its own, but there are relations and conditions that work at a higher level than the individual, and a totemic organization is one of those levels; what might be called a totemic field of social relations.

Such a field is severely limited in North Asia today. But it helps us look back to a way of life that once was, and it points forward to a better understanding of how people organize their

lives, and how societies facilitate this kind of organization. This may seem privately limiting, but it is useful to know that we as humans enter into connections that are greater than ourselves, and that being aware of and studying such connections will hopefully provide a better understanding of social life.

We live in a precarious universe, and social life is just as precarious as everything else. Being aware of the stability and limits provided by totemic organizations may help us relate with more understanding towards our vulnerable environment.

The preservation of resources

The ‘tragedy of the commons’ springs to mind (Hardin 1977). If a shared resource is used without any clear ownership or control of that resource, the claim is that the resource will be gradually overexploited and destroyed. Each person may feel that s/he is not overexploiting the resource, but as more and more users enter an area the cumulative result will be depletion and a collapse of the resource – an eco-disaster. A totemic organization will counteract such a development. Only people belonging to the local totem clans, that form a finite and complementary series of units, will be allowed to exploit the local resources. Over time the local complement of totem clans will be finely tuned to the resources found in the local area, the communal or village territory, so that no danger of overexploitation will arise. There may even be a buffer, so that the local population does not get too high in cases where droughts or natural variations cause a decline in biological resources. The community of totem clans can survive when the resources used fall below the ordinary level of production.

Anthropologists are naturally skeptical of claims about indigenous people being ‘natural conservationists’ (Martin 1982). The claim is that hunters and gatherers live in balance with nature only because they do not have the means to damage their surroundings. When a hunter is given modern weapons and technology, such as guns and traps, the balance will immediately be broken and the hunter will kill far more animals than the ecosystem can replace, and the animal population will collapse. Yet this is the case only when people no longer control their situation. In North America people were given guns and traps to kill beavers and fur animals, leading to the demise of the animal population. But this was a desperate situation where people were dying from epidemics brought by colonists, the same colonists feeding an insatiable market for furs and other goods back in Europe. The local control and social organization, the totem system, had broken down as most people succumbed to diseases. The survivors had to kill more animals to bring in needed supplies and to keep the aggressive colonists at arm’s length. Once this pressure seized, once the fur traders withdrew, people could pick up what was left of their community life, including their totems, and carry on a sustainable relation with the environment. To this day the Shawnee Indians do not cut down trees, and their land is a sanctuary for wildlife, while their white neighbors overexploit the resources to water their lawns after cutting down all trees. So yes, totemists are natural conservationists, even though modern people are not.

A parallel found all over North Asia is the sudden demise of wildlife after Russian colonists demanded furs for ‘taxes’ from the 1600s onwards. Sables, beavers and otters were destroyed in many areas due to this colonization. Yet the wildlife and ecosystems seem to have been virtually undisturbed before this colonization began. The native people would not kill tigers – and now the tigers are threatened by extinction. Under native control environmental exploitation was restricted, and this restriction was based on the local totemic organization.

Totemism and social control

The reader may object that I am painting a rosy a picture of totemism – and I am. Totemism was the leading human ideology and organizational tool for thousands of years, in fact, the only organizational ideology. But this is not the same as saying that the ideology did not have drawbacks. Every ideology – as most people know who bother to vote – has its negative sides.

For totemism its negative side, as well as its strength, was its pervasiveness. A wolf could find a brother in every corner of the earth, including Australia, where a dingo or wild dog could fill the role. The downside was that the system could not be ignored, everybody had to have a totem. A strong example is provided by the Wyandot tribe, where women were granted agricultural plots based on totemic clanship (Powell 1881). Any person who was not a member of a local clan was not allowed to grow food within the village territory. It was not enough to be a wolf to get a plot with the wolf clan – you had to be a member of the local wolf clan, a direct Si or Da of the wolf matron. If the direct connection was lacking a person could be expelled, ostracized, potentially with dire consequences, since it is not certain any other community would accept the expelled person. Ostracism was considered to be almost like a death sentence. Fortunately this rarely happened, people usually found room for displaced people, such as through adoption ceremonies. But there was a limit – the rule was there to ensure local resource control and avoid overexploitation – and expulsion always remained as a threat. It makes sense that people are very protective and defensive – even secretive about their totem and their clan affiliation. Denying somebody's totem is not only an insult, but a threat. The fact that Russian and other scholars hardly got any answer when they (naively) asked people about their clan or totem, makes sense in view of how critical this information was to people's identity and belonging in a village. I like to compare it to asking people for their social security number or the pin code to their bank – it is something that is not (or should not be) divulged easily.

For good measure a person's totem can be linked to many other situations and relationships. These span from political involvement, to games, e.g., between moieties, and rituals, e.g., at funerals, where members of different totem clans help each other. So much hangs on a person's totem, in fact her whole social existence, that freely divulging information is not smart.

Perhaps this element of control and pervasiveness is one reason why totemism disappears rapidly when the local social organization is broken down. Yet a totemic organization tends to be robust. Something dramatic has to happen for people to give up their membership in totem clans and start talking of their belonging in other terms, such as parental names or family ties. In most of North Asia what happened was that dramatic changes took place around 1300-1900 that involved tragic losses of population and the displacement of communities and bands. The totemic system was broken not because people wanted to, but because there were no people to fill the totem clan positions – most of the people were dead. This is similar to what happened in North America, where most native tribes suffered a loss of 90+% of their population due to epidemics and other colonial impacts, making it almost impossible to carry on the local social organization. Numerous tribes and small peoples lost their totemic system of organization in the period 1600-1900. Yet many tribes tenaciously maintained their local organization of totem clans, such as the Shawnee tribe, who still consider a local community as consisting of 12 clans, each with its distinct totem. Weighing pros and cons, the benefits of belonging to a totemic organization outweighs the inconveniences, even today – or especially today, when postmodern existence renders life uncertain everywhere.

Then there are people who seem to have abandoned totemism rapidly without any great calamities taking place. One example may be the Komi nation, that retained most of its population throughout historical times. Yet this may be an exception to prove the point. There were dramatic events in Komi history. One occurred in 1385, when Russian clergy fought a war over Komi taxes or tribute. The Komi's own bishop won, but in the aftermath they had to support him. As a result the Komi seem to have gone into a religious frenzy, building churches like crazy. Virtually every village built its own church. Though hunters and gatherers, the Komi became 'modern' overnight, with churches, writing, Christian names and a strong work ethic. They wanted to hold their own against external pressure, and the only way to do this was to support their Russian bishop and show their fervency. Totemic names were supplanted with Christian names, and the old stories were superseded by furtive accounts of heroes who went to the forest to avoid Christianity.

Beyond this there is the lack of knowledge. Nobody studied Komi totemism. Descent groups, family names, popular rituals, animal stories, hunters' beliefs, animal transformations and much more can provide information about lost practices. Not least this concerns village information. Imagine if priests in each of the Komi villages kept church registers that would show whether people married inside the village or not, and how such information could point back to a time when life was simpler, easier, and organized in a different way!

A final summary

Hopefully this book has provided food for thought about the complexity of human life. The notion that everything there is to know is already known, is faulty at best. The topic of totemism remains largely unknown and unexplored, a 40,000-year-old ideology and worldview that helped organize human societies, but whose existence and relevance is barely acknowledged by modern scholars and students. Belief in a male god is reasonable, but people who name their child after a bear are discounted.

So the study of totemism has to start from scratch, with an open mind. Imagine the fantastic totemic landscape of the Selkup people, more than 200 villages each with a series of 12-14+ totem clans. There are 3 basic distinctions, fish, bird and animal, and then there is the intriguing issue of organizing these into 2 sides in each village. Should the distinction be between jays and eagles, or should it be between cuckoo and eagle or bear and hare as in some other societies? The system can be elaborated and developed endlessly, but it has a recognizable structure that can be replicated and modified across the continent.

And again there is the seemingly unsolvable riddle of 'clans' and 'phratries', 'khala' and 'dokha', among the Tungusic peoples; a starting point and impetus for this work. The suggestion here is that these units are consolidated remnants of social groups, marked by the untold calamities and depopulation that struck the people near the Amur and beyond in historic times. Still the clans and phratries hint at an underlying totemic organization that people have tried to reconstitute as best they could in their uprooted settlements until modern times.

In spite of differences the 30 or so native peoples presented here show striking similarities in their totemic organization. This organization in turn relates to local forms of residence with many similarities, such as rows of houses placed along a river or shore. The local communities are closely connected to a surrounding territory and the natural environment. In

theory a person could move from the far east to western Siberia and identify totem clans distributed similarly to his or her own village – perhaps even find clans Sis and Brs.

There is a holistic circle, as the environment provides the natural beings from which totems are taken. There is an ecological field or ‘ecumene’ of such communities spanning the North Asian landscape. Many – possibly most – details presented in this book may be amiss, such as whether an animal, say a wolf, is in one or the other moiety. But the field of communities and peoples remain, and mapping them is a work at hand.

Totemism has been a far more prominent part of people’s social existence than modern and not so modern scholars have acknowledged. How much of this reality exists today must be left to new students. The main attempt has been to show the pervasiveness of totemic units. Totems do not disappear, they are a part of nature. As a Shawnee Indian said, ‘Indians do not die’, they live on in the totems that people share. And the totems live on in the vast landscape and human societies of North Asia.

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