

11. Future of the Koryaks

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11.1 Prospect of Reindeer Herding

The day after I saw Yuri's *Kilway*, I went for a walk with Bazarov. As it was early May, the air outside was crisp and refreshing, but the roads were muddy from snowmelt. As a matter of fact, conditions hadn't changed from my last visit in autumn two years ago – apparently, it is like this all year around. It is caused by the tundra thaw, which seeps out into the riverside lowland where the village is located. Seeing how quiet the village was, where not one villager could be seen walking outside, Bazarov said, "Look, not a single person's here. This village is dead." People had no place to work in this village and just stayed home and drank.

Going over to the riverside, I saw the ice was cracked in the middle of the river, and the water surface could be seen. Ducks migrating from the south were flying over the river. Crying Seagulls flew over the frozen river, and stopped at the edge of the ice where the water-surface was showing, standing all in a line. Across the creek that branched from this river, in front of the hut where Maria lived two years ago, a man was cooking something in a pot hanging over the fire. Apparently, Maria is currently living on the tundra about four kilometres away from this village. The man must have been preparing for the coming fishing season. I could just barely hear his voice carried on the wind, singing merrily as he cut wood.

We walked downstream along the main river. The water was still frozen 10 meters from the riverside. The thick ice, which had covered the surface, had been washed ashore onto the riverbank, and was crushed into small icy pillars like frost. I remember how icy pillars like these, floating over a lake in Northern Canada, made soft rustling sounds all day long as they clashed against each other being pushed by the spring breeze – a spring scene of the North.

There was a small box where a pump was kept, to pump up water from the river. The pump stretched out toward the power station in the village. The station is not only a coal-fired power station, but also distributes hot water for heating through pipes to houses. At the riverside heliport where we arrived, there was a small pyramid-shaped sign. On top of a stone near that sign where the snow had melted, there was a pile of garbage. Looking at the used lipsticks and bottles of nail polish scattered on the ground, Bazarov said laughing, "Women want to look prettier." There were also empty boxes of chewing gum made in North Korea. On the bank a little further away, heaps of iron scrap were left rusting. Parts of a transmission and large-sized diesel engines used in factories were lying about on the grass. Bazarov pointed at the heap of scrap iron and said seriously, "You could make tens of thousands of dollars if you gathered this and exported it to Japan."

Then it smelled like cows. Over 50 cows were being bred right outside the village – they were milked for school children. Waste water from the cow barn

formed a small stream, crossed the riverbed and poured into the main stream. The water of this small stream must have been nutritious, as the pebbles were covered with mossy green algae. Bazarov said, "This is how nature is being destroyed." Then passing the riverbed, we climbed the bank. The whole place was also covered with scarp iron. Parts of engines were scattered in pieces on the grass; they must have taken out just the screws when they dismantled the engine before dumping them. An abandoned truck, a trackless vehicle without the caterpillar and even the trailer that must have been towed by it lay there, from many years ago without moving an inch, and probably will stay there forever. Among the iron scraps, other bits thrown out such as glass and reindeer fur could be seen. This was the dump yard of the village.

We then headed back toward the village. I could see the black smoke of the burning coal coming out of the power station. On the side of the street, there was a building that looked like a machine repair plant. The door was torn down, the plant was empty, and a tractor was left in the rain. No one even bothered to fix the power generator and it was left there. Bazarov said that these things would soon become useless. A slogan that read, "We offer great machines for agriculture" was written together with valiant figures of workers looking straight ahead on the wall of this repair plant built with planks. Even the slogan had faded; just faint enough for Bazarov to read it squinting.

Proceeding further, I saw a Russian entering his house with two dogs. A trailer with large handmade tires for driving on the tundra was parked in front of his house. Apparently, he had loaded the engine on some vehicle body and fitted tires from somewhere else. He was probably a Russian mechanic working in that plant we had just seen. He looked at us, but walked into his house indifferently without saying anything. We then walked along the muddy road in the village again and came close to Alekseev's house. A child was playing in a puddle, pulling a wooden boat tied to a stick with a string. Actually, in some places the puddle in front of the house had become so big, it was like a pond. At other places, the road had become too muddy to walk along, so planks were placed along the road like a connecting corridor. People would go up the steps and walk across this dangerous wooden road where the planks were wobbling at some places. I was told this village itself was "an experimental settlement" in the first place – i.e. the possibility of building a village along the river on the tundra. Bazarov said ironically, "They're testing how people suffer and what miserable a life they lead in this experimental settlement," and gave a wry smile.

It wasn't just the geographical conditions that were bad. The worst economic problem they were facing at the time was the management of reindeer herding itself after *perestroika*. Before *perestroika*, *sovkhos* was a state-owned organization under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture. In regions such as Kamchatka, the

sovkhos was positioned under the local constituency of the Ministry of Agriculture. Kamchatka is a state (Oblast), and its capital is Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii. In Northern Kamchatka, Koryak Autonomous Region (Okrug) has been formed and its administrative centre is Palana. The autonomous areas are divided into various districts (Raion). For instance, the village where we are, called Srednie-Pakhachi is part of Olyutorskii District, and its administrative centre is Tilichiki, located in the northernmost part of Kamchatka Peninsula, where we changed flights. Therefore, supervision for the *sovkhos* comes from the Ministry of Agriculture in Moscow to the state capital, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii, through Palana, the administrative centre of the Autonomous Region, via Tilichiki, the centre of the district, before it reaches each *sovkhos*. There is a chief in each *sovkhos*, and office staff members are assigned here. The office is located at the centre of each *sovkhos*, which is Srednie-Pakhachi in this case.

In the *sovkhos*, there is a division producing milk and eggs, which are necessary for children. Consequently, some people have to work here as well. Originally, wages were paid by the State, but particularly after *perestroika*, people had to sell reindeer meat and make profit on their own in order to run a *sovkhos*. The profits were not only used to produce milk, eggs or reindeer meat, but were also spent on maintenance and management of the village facilities, such as building houses.

As mentioned, administration was run within the village; as a result, in Northern Kamchatka, where there are reindeer herds on the tundra, the traditional skills of reindeer herding has been preserved. Thus, traditional clothing and dwellings can be seen here, although it is located within the modern State of Russia. It is true that the tradition has changed since various machines such as helicopters and tractors were introduced after the Soviet establishment began. However, the reindeer herding system itself – a socialist system as it used to be called – has not changed. Reindeer herding has had an advantage over cattle breeding for a long time in this region. Reindeer graze and eat moss on their own, which meant five to six herders were sufficient, not requiring much investment. Breeding cows on the other hand, required pasture and cow sheds to survive the winter. Grasslands had to be mowed, and hay had to be made.

When to transport and butcher the reindeer meat was a problem when selling them. Meat is butchered in autumn, but it depends on the geographical condition of each *sovkhos* whether to do it in early autumn or late autumn. For example, in Markovo Village, the *sovkhos* centre of Chukotskii Peninsula, they butcher their meat at the end of autumn or early winter when the meat will not rot, since they don't have a freezer in the village. The meat is then transported to nearby – although they're several hundreds to a thousand kilometres away – cities such as Anadiri or Magadan by air. However, a loss is already taken when making reindeer herds migrate hundreds of kilometres to this village, the *sovkhos* centre, to slaughter them,

because they lose weight that they had just gained at the beginning of autumn.

In this respect, Olyutorskii District has a geographic advantage. At the *sovkhos* located in the east, they drive the herd toward Natalia Gulf on the east coast, facing the Bering Sea, and butcher them there. The eastern *sovkhos* is called Sovkhos-Achaivayamskii. As I had heard from Slava, Natalia's son who is a herder, he too drives reindeer herds to the east coast. Each productive unit (brigade) puts their reindeer herd into a fenced space and decides which reindeer to slaughter. Sick, weak or aged reindeer are to be slaughtered. Well-fed vigorous ones are not killed as they can survive the winter. A freezer-equipped ship comes from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii, Kamchatka's capital, to Natalia Gulf, and transports the reindeer meat. Therefore, in this case, the season for slaughtering is not limited to late autumn. The transported meat is consumed in big cities like Khabarovsk in Primorskii, as well as in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii. It is also exported to foreign countries from here.

Before *perestroika*, the management of reindeer herding was incorporated in the national planned economy. However, after *perestroika*, each *sovkhos* has had to plan management on its own. If they do not make profit, the *sovkhos* will go bankrupt, not being able to pay wages to workers. The village will go broke financially, and people will not be able to live there anymore. As a matter of fact, the current situation indicates that this is becoming the reality – i.e. coal isn't being supplied, and blackouts and heating shutdowns occur daily.

Actually, the *sovkhos* chief had asked for my advice seriously if there were places where she could sell reindeer meat in Japan. As she had told me before, 3,500 to 4,000 reindeer were slaughtered annually. About 15 tons of this meat was sold as joint meat outside the *sovkhos*. She asked if the joints could be sold at 10 dollars per 10 kilo. Ten dollars would be approximately a thousand Japanese yen, which meant 100 yen per kilogram of joint meat, or 10 yen per 100 grams at cost price. This was double the local price. If it were just the meat without the bones, it would be 20 yen per 100 grams. If this were to be exported to Japan and brought to the market, you would have to pay for other costs – i.e. shipping, labour cost for boning and processing the meat, cost for freezers and duties. Roughly calculating, it would come to 200 yen per 100 grams, or 300 yen per 100 grams in retail price, considering profit. In Japan, as beef import has been liberalized, you can buy Australian diced beef for 160 yen per 100 grams, or even 200 yen per 100 grams for sliced shoulder of a domestic beef, 350 yen for thin-sliced chuck eye roll, and 500 yen for a fillet steak. Furthermore, in Hokkaido, hunted deer does not sell well at all and is left in excessive supply; although it is supposed to be gourmet food, its taste is not so popular. I must say, the odds are against reindeer meat, which is far more expensive than beef.

Nevertheless, the *sovkhos* chief asked me if something could be done about it, because she knew about a Japanese trade firm that processed salmon roe during summer and exported it to Japan from a town at the estuary of the Pakhachi River. To

my regret, it is clear that I myself cannot do anything about it, but I told her I would ask around for people concerned. As a matter of fact, I had called up a Japanese trade firm office in Khabarovsk on my way home from my last visit. This firm actually had started processing salmon roe from 1992, in Pakhachi. However, although 1993 was a bumper year for salmon, they could only make half the expected production of salmon roe. They said they had no interest in reindeer meat, and even regarding the salmon roe business, they hardly made any profit, but merely did it for social reasons.

Naturally, I asked her beforehand about the possibility of processing reindeer meat here and exporting it as a value-added product. But she said it would be difficult. In fact, such a project had been tried a few years ago, but didn't succeed. At the *sovkhos* of Achaivayam Village, which is the eastern neighbour of Srednie-Pakhachi, they established a joint company with an American firm in order to build a plant in the village to process reindeer meat to make sausage. They signed a contract and the plant was built with American funds. However, the village's *sovkhos* couldn't raise enough funds, which prevented them from purchasing the planned machinery on the Russian side; the project was cancelled in mid-course.

It wasn't just the *sovkhos* chief that was worried about the future of the village. Yuri talked about the changes and future of the village as part of his own history. He was born in Upper Pakhachi in 1930; he was actually born on the tundra, not in the village. When he was seven, he was to go to school in Upper Pakhachi. A teacher came from Tilichiki, the centre of the district, and taught him the Russian alphabet. From 1938 to 39, the teacher brought a book written by Stebnitskiy and said that this was his alphabet. Needless to say, Cyrillic already existed as the Russian alphabet, but he must have referred to the orthography Stalin revised in 1937 when he said "alphabet." At the time, people were gathered in one place, and a collective universal partnership for agriculture called "*TOZ*" was formed. Yuri said its objective was to alter people's herding lifestyle to a settled one in a village. At school, students talked in Koryak, their mother tongue, from first grade to fourth grade. Textbooks were written in *Chauchuwa*, which is Koryak spoken by reindeer herders. Many people were Chukchee – Yuri said he is a Chukchee himself – and senior people spoke Chukchee. However, the younger people had to speak Koryak, whether they were a Chukchee or a Koryak.

In 1939, the village of Upper Pakhachi moved 5 kilometres away from its original location. Then the village was relocated again downstream in 1972, due to flood, to its current location of Srednie-Pakhachi. As a matter of fact, a man came along in 1939 and announced, "You do not belong to the *TOZ* anymore. You are part of the *kolkhoz* (collective farm)." A special school was built, and students stayed there day and night. This is a boarding school called *internat*, which still exists today. All children had to go to school, and were prohibited to live with their

families on the tundra. Yuri remembered that his first teacher was called Mohnatkin. He was a Koryak, and was educated in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii. There were two teachers and they taught Koryak and mathematics. Ever since the boarding school was built, a special teacher came and took care of the students day and night. They were Russians. According to Yuri, this was the moment when children lost their mother tongue. This was how Yuri spent his four years in school and graduated.

Then he went to an educational institute in Apuka called *kultbaza* (cultural base). The first three years he studied in Upper Pakhachi, and then went to Apuka in his fourth year. In this last year, he studied history, literature, Russian and geography. The schoolmaster was Mr. Tihonov, and he also said there was an Itelmen teacher named Fomichova Kollevgov. They taught Russian and Russian literature. The *kultbaza* was located upstream of the Apuka River, not on the coast, so they went there on dog sled or reindeer sled. After that, Yuri started reindeer herding in the *kolkhoz*, which he continued until 1951 when he was 20 years old. This was when a CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) leader named Alexandrov came along and encouraged Yuri to continue studying. So he went to Palana where he attended an agricultural school for two years, and studied his specialty at a secondary school level. Then he and his classmate were sent to a technical school in Salekhard, the capital of Yamal-Nenetskii Area. He received a high school level education, specializing in veterinary science, and graduated in 1957. He said he lived in Salekhard for five years.

He then returned to Upper Pakhachi and started working again. When he came back, the *kolkhoz* had changed into a *sovkhos* (state farm). He worked there for a year, then went to the Ministry of Agriculture of Kamchatka, in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii, met the director and told him he wanted to continue studying. As a matter of fact, Yuri had written to his former classmate who was at the agricultural institute in Tomsk, Siberia. The director, Mr. Bagayev had asked for a leave for Yuri, and permitted him to keep studying in Tomsk under the condition that he passed the exam. Consequently, Yuri graduated this institute in 1964. After he came back to the village, he started working again. From 1974 to 1976, he worked as a veterinarian. However, being a veterinarian required walking long distances, which caused him to change jobs for physical reasons; so he switched to the cultural division. He retired in 1985, with no further changes.

The history of the village that Yuri told me was basically the same as what Vakhtangov had told me about the history of reindeer herding. For example, Yuri said the *kolkhoz* had switched to a *sovkhos* in 1957 when he graduated school in Salekhard and returned to Upper Pakhachi. This does not contradict Vakhtangov's explanation that the *sovkhos* was established in 1956. In addition, both said the village was first built in Upper Pakhachi, but was then disbanded and the current Srednie-Pakhachi village was established in 1972. However, Vakhtangov said the

kolkhoz was organized in 1931, whereas Yuri explained accurately that a universal partnership for agriculture called “*TOZ*” existed, which was altered to a *kolkhoz* in 1939. Both of them said that the Upper Pakhachi village was established in 1931. Although one of them is a Koryak, and the other a Chukchee, they both experienced the same history in the same village from then on. Vakhtangov had told me in more detail about the establishment, transition and names of the *kolkhoz* and *sovkhos* of each period, as mentioned before. Vakhtangov emphasized the fact that people continue to live on the tundra herding reindeer, whereas Yuri stressed the fact that the education of two languages – *Chauchuwa*, as standard Koryak, and Russian – began when a boarding school was built in 1939. Vakhtangov told me his version based on his observation and experience through his daily life herding reindeer. On the other hand, Yuri was trying to fit the history into a broader frame of the relation between the State and ethnic minority, through his education he received outside the village.

In fact, Yuri explained the transition from a *kolkhoz* to a *sovkhos* as follows:

“Originally, when the *kolkhoz* was first formed, the state government established in the constitution that ownership of the entire premises would be given to the *kolkhoz* eternally; clearly indicated as a legal instrument. In 1956 – I was not living in the village at the time – a man from the Tilichiki government office came and made an announcement to the villagers gathered there. ‘Based on mutual agreement, your *kolkhoz* will be dissolved here and will be converted into a *sovkhos*.’ Then he added, ‘You are no longer members of the *kolkhoz*; you are *proletariats* (laborers).’ This was how the property of the *kolkhoz* was returned to the State, and from then on, nothing was left that belonged to the local people. All the land and forest was owned by the State government. Workers lost everything they used to own, left with nothing but their own hands.”

Nevertheless in Tilichiki today, after *perestroika*, people are trying to launch a company run by the ethnic minority to privatize the land, Yuri continued. In other words, a shift to private ownership and the privatization of the *sovkhos* were underway. In fact, individuals need funds to take the property private. They have to do business, make profit and buy their houses with that money. To purchase a room in an apartment in this village, for example, it would cost 5,000 dollars (500,000 Japanese yen). Therefore, Yuri says it is up to the regional administration whether this village can continue to exist, or not. He says they have missed an important point. There are many kinds of fish, reindeer, animals and birds here, as well as plants that are edible. If these products are sold as-is, they won’t make as much money. For instance, a kilogram of reindeer meat can only be sold for 3,000 rubles. In 1995, the value of the ruble dropped to a fifth of what it was two years before; a dollar was about 5,000 rubles. So 3,000 rubles would be 60 cents or 60 Japanese yen. On the other hand, if factories were built and produced sausages or smoked meat, it would sell for 10 times the raw material, or 30,000 rubles (6 dollars, 600 Japanese

yen) per kilo. In addition, the *sovkhos* slaughters approximately 3,000 reindeer per year. If the reindeer fur were to be processed and commercialized in this village, they should be able to earn quite an amount of money, he says. Reindeer leg fur is sold for 1,500 rubles (30 cents, 30 Japanese yen) in Tilichiki, but Yuri calculates that if shoes were made out of them in this village, they would sell for more than 15,000 rubles (3 dollars, 300 Japanese yen). He had complained before in front of the *sovkhos* chief and I that it is almost a crime to sell products at a price higher than their purchase cost. However, facing the collapse of the former Soviet Union's economy and policy, he had understood the basics of the market economy – i.e. more value is added as a product is handed down from the first person trying to sell it to the last consumer. Then he said, "If we don't organize our local products, we won't be able to earn money."

In reality, before even doing what Yuri had calculated, this village couldn't even attract any buyers for their reindeer meat. Due to the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the regional economy had come to the point where it didn't come into effect. Indeed, as I have mentioned before, the exertion of interests by the State government has impeded the independence of the regional economy. Politically, in addition, blocking the independence of regional economy has always been and is a way to prevent secession from the central government. Actually, regions are not obedient to them without protesting. After *perestroika*, in Congress the Koryak Autonomous Region (Okrug) declared its independence from the Russian Republic as the Republic of Koryak. But this has not been approved by Russia, and has remained in limbo. The plan to construct an international airport in Palana, the capital of Koryak Autonomous Region, shows how desperate they are. Kamchatka Oblast owns two transport ships, but since Russia does not respond to the demand of the Koryak Autonomous Region, they plan to build an international airport to ensure direct means of transport between other countries. Of course, if you look at the current economic situation, this plan does not seem realistic at all. Furthermore, the Koryak people of each region wonder why they are trying to build an international airport when they cannot even generate electricity on their own for their daily lives and are short of fuel for the small aircraft that connect local regions. The reality of those who live on reindeer herding and the ideal of the Koryak administration that is trying to make the regional economy self-reliant internationally by export are far apart from each other.

As a matter of fact, I will not forget what Natalia, Alekseev's wife, told me despite the tough situation they're under. She said all Russians should go back. She told me how much better it would be to live in a *yanana*, a traditional dome-shaped tent made of reindeer hide, without electricity or tap water. In fact, if coal wasn't distributed to the village, they would have to return to their traditional lifestyle on the tundra. It wouldn't be such a problem for those who have experienced the

traditional lifestyle and still live that way, like Zoya or Maria, and for those who have some experience and can switch immediately if they want to, like Natalia. However, it is doubtful whether many young people can actually live on the tundra. Just as Yuri calls the young people “the lost generation,” and just as I had seen with my own eyes when I was invited to a birthday party, they live in a world where the current Russian culture and their traditional culture overlap.

Nevertheless, I do not think it is impossible for the Koryaks to return to their traditional lifestyle herding reindeer on the tundra. Above all, the system itself of reindeer herding is still practiced today. They have enough reindeer, and can adequately manage its production and consumption. It may be difficult to find buyers interested in slaughtered reindeer meat on their own, but the self-sufficient lifestyle on the tundra can be well-proportioned by reindeer herding. If the reindeer herding lifestyle and its transcendent worldview were valued, they might not even have to go to school in the village. A time may come when they have to decide whether entering boarding school, separated from their parents, and learning Russian are really significant for all Koryaks. They may have to figure out if they’re really happy with their family falling apart; even if they sell reindeer and get paid, they become alcoholics, cry their eyes out in the wet and muddy village, and have fights with their families. Of course, some may have to do the minimum administrative work; some have to return to the village a few times a year to trade, as reindeer herders have done from the old days. They don’t have to eliminate the village completely and return entirely to the tundra lifestyle, but can shift their foothold to the tundra, while maintaining their relationship with the outside world.

At the moment, a total of 14,000 reindeer in five herds consist of four herds managed by the *sovkhos*, and one herd that contains some privately-owned reindeer. It must be possible to turn this ratio around, try to convert them to privately-owned herds and handle just a small part of it for the public as common property. A reindeer herding unit, consisting of families who own them, might stay with each herd and live on the tundra. This means to turn the clock back to the time before the former Soviet Union organized them into *kolkhoz* or *sovkhos*. As long as they herd reindeer for a living, receive no subsidies from the State, and hope to be free of the central government’s control over concessions, they have no choice but to go back to 1931. That is their starting point, from where a new relationship between the State government and the region can be built.

What I am saying here is not just idle speculation. The re-privatization of livestock in a herding economy has already begun in Mongolia, where they experienced a changeover from socialism to the free-market system. Furthermore, in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, where they shifted to an economically open policy, although the political establishment hasn’t changed, privatization of domestic animals has already begun under a system called “individual contract system.” In

addition, as Yuri says, privatization is also being discussed in Tilichiki, located at the northern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula. The possibility to change depends on what people value in their lives. Therefore, the prospect of reindeer herding is the very future the Koryaks hope for and will weave for themselves.

11.2 Lost Generation

This village is the frontline of Russian culture and Koryak culture. Russians and Koryaks live together, Russian language is spoken at school, and TV programs from Moscow come on television at home. This contrasts starkly with the fact that people lead a traditional Koryak life just an inch outside the village on the tundra. The younger generation, in particular, lead their lives experiencing both Russian and Koryak culture. Therefore, I wanted to find out about the young generation, who bear the responsibility of the future.

Two years ago, I was here at this village with three other Russian researchers. The three were; Sergei, the vigorous “hunter,” Mikhail, who was our coordinator, and Vasha, who was rather sickly but had a kind heart. Ilyna was a teacher of the ethnic language and culture division, and we had been invited to her birthday party. However, since we hadn’t asked where it would be held, we were waiting at Alekseev’s house for her to call. Later on, we got a call saying it would be held in a room at an apartment nearby, and Tanya, the younger sister, came to take us there. We left for the apartment at eight o’clock at night. Opening the door of the room on the first floor, there was a toilet on the immediate right side and a corridor continued on the left. Right in front, there was a kitchen and a bedroom next to it, and the living room was at the end of the corridor. I could see red and blue lights flashing to disco music from the opened door. Ilyna welcomed us at the entrance to the living room, and I gave her a calculator I had brought from Japan as a present and entered the room – a calculator wasn’t an appropriate gift to give a woman for her birthday, but I didn’t have anything else with me that seemed nice.

The birthday party started when Ilyna blew out some 25 candles on the birthday cake and everyone applauded. Then we made a toast with vodka. The vodka we drank was a “moonshine,” or illicit liquor. Drinking this, you often fell unconscious and woke up with a terrible headache the next day. It could be as harmful as taking away your life in some cases. The Russian researcher warned me not to drink it too much, but Vasha himself drank glass after glass, which made us worry. Ilyna’s sisters, their husband and other friends were invited. There were 14 of them in total; nine women, three men, a boy and a baby. The majority were women, teens and those in their twenties in particular. Including the four of us, Russians and Japanese, there were 18 of us in total at this birthday party.

We had potato and vegetable salad, *piroshki*, a Russian specialty made by deep-frying leavened dough made of flour with meat and vegetable fillings, and juice

made from blueberries gathered on the tundra. While we ate our meal, the guests made speeches celebrating the birthday and continued to raise their glasses of vodka. A Russian village man played his guitar and sang Russian songs loudly. He was an engineer at the *sovkhos*, working in this village for five years. His wife and children had already returned to their hometown in the mainland near the Volga River. He had completed his job already, so he too could go back now.

Young women were wearing heavy make-up and colourful dresses, which they probably sewed with fabrics they had bought. Just as Russian women do, they were wearing eye-shadow beneath their eyes, as well as on their eyelids. A girl in her teens was wearing a black dress that was in fashion from Europe to Moscow. Of course, this was the reality of the village, but to me at the time, the whole party seemed like they were pursuing momentary pleasures and were imitating Russian culture. It seemed as if I was witnessing a culture disappear and women yearning and being attracted to a stronger culture – although it was that very culture that ruined their traditional culture – then being absorbed by it. Although I knew I was making a biased analysis, it seemed like a sad scene to my eyes.

When the guitar slowed down, people started to dance. A couple continued dancing, embraced in each other's arms in the dark where red and blue lights that decorated the room flashed on and off. Ilyna danced with the Russians too. Vasha made a comment on one of the women and whispered to me, "How beautiful!" To my eyes, she looked like a child with makeup on, but he was impressed with the woman's prettiness all through. It could have been the effect of the "moonshine," or because he accepted this situation very flexibly. I decided to go home early and left the apartment after telling them so. Mikhail came with me as they said it was dangerous to walk alone at night. Indeed, several drunken men were hanging around the apartment, shouting something out loud. After seeing me off to the house, Mikhail went back to the apartment again.

At Alekseev's house, Natalia's daughter Nina and her friend – a Russian girl – were watching television together. Although I turned down her offer, Nina served me a plate full of meat and rice cooked together and tea with blueberry jam she fetched from the storage room. As I recalled the scene at the party, I was again asking myself the question Nina had asked me that morning. At first, she asked me if I was married, then asked me why I wasn't wearing a ring even though I was married. Of course, the Russian researcher had told Alekseev's family that I was married and had a son. Nevertheless, she couldn't understand why I wasn't wearing a ring. I explained to her that originally in Japan, wearing a ring wasn't customary even when you got married, so there were many people like myself who didn't wear one. Then she asked me how you distinguished married men and single men. I told her you couldn't.

Nina then asked me if marriages were registered, so I answered yes. She

went on and asked if it was taken as a “marriage” if a couple just lived together without registration. I told her it was socially accepted as a marriage only upon registry. As a matter of fact, I discovered later on that my answer was not accurate. A marital relationship is legally accepted if a married life exists between a couple. These questions must have been important for her, because in Koryak society, the husband-to-be lives together with his wife’s family and works for them before the marriage is officially accepted. Nina probably wanted to know if this period of a few years would be taken as “married” socially. She was actually spending this so called “preparation period” with a Russian man in preparation for a marriage – which didn’t work out in the end. In Koryak society, this period when the husband-to-be lives together with his wife-to-be and her family is not accepted as an official marriage. As Vakhtangov had told me in detail earlier, after this period, the groom’s father visits the bride’s father and asks if they can marry. Even to this day, Koryak women refer to such a man as “my husband-to-be” or “my future husband” when introducing them to me. Nevertheless, this “preparation period” can actually be taken as “married life” in reality; Nina might have been questioning the Koryak tradition.

Nina went on with her queries. She asked me at what age people in Japan got married, to which I replied that it was usually in their late 20s for women and even later for men. “Why so late?” she asked. “First of all, because the education system is so long. By the time people graduate from university, they are already 23 or 24. Secondly, women do not want to get married. They do not have to get married immediately after graduation because they have jobs. This means that they can do what they want, rather than getting married and becoming a housewife.” Nina said that she could understand why women were reluctant to get married, but was puzzled why Japanese men did not get married. “I bet the parents are anxious to have their grandchildren.” she said. I replied, “Since women don’t get married, it’s difficult for men to find someone to marry. This is often the case in rural farm villages in particular. Women choose to go out to big cities and marry businessmen, rather than living with a local husband’s family and doing farm work. Therefore, there are fewer and fewer women in the villages and the men are left behind. So they invite women from cities and hold group-arranged introductions. In addition, brides from the Philippines or Thailand are arranged and come to the farm villages in Japan to get married.”

As I answered Nina’s questions, I realized something – what would happen to the villages in the Philippines or Thailand after the brides leave for Japan? In other words, the same thing that is happening in Japanese farm villages must be happening over there in chain reaction. At the same time, I thought this must have been happening in villages in Kamchatka as well. Koryak women marry Russian men, while Koryak men are out on the tundra chasing reindeer and don’t even have the chance to meet Koryak women in the village. Those who teach in this village after receiving higher education, such as universities or training institutes for

teachers, or leaders and employees of the *sovkhos* are mostly women. Yuri told me Koryak culture was fading out. As a matter of fact, what they are losing is not just the culture, but Koryak society itself as well.

Then Nina asked me how young Japanese people were doing sexually, if they didn't get married till late. I told her sexual relationships weren't supposed to exist before marriage in Japan traditionally, but nowadays people were more open-minded about it, although there were differences among individuals. She then asked me what people did if their child was born handicapped. I said, firstly they seek a way to cure it, and there's social security depending on the degree of handicap, as well as special schools. She asked if the government took care of the child, such as hospitalization. So I told her the government gives minimum assistance, but basically the parents look after the child. Even if the child is handicapped, that child is born to the parents and nothing can be done about that, I explained.

These questions reflected Nina's interest toward Japanese women of the same generation and toward marriage, but she was also comparing them with modern Koryak customs. The social acknowledgement and registration of marriages, as well as the issue of taking care of handicapped children must have been a familiar problem for the Koryak women. I did my very best to answer Nina's questions that were like those asked by anthropologists. As I answered them, I could see where her interest lied. I also felt closer to young Koryak people.

Two years later, on our second visit to Srednie-Pakhachi in 1995, we visited Yuri in the village. His daughter, Ilyna and her younger sister Tanya, who were teachers, live here as well. They were the ones who invited me to their *Kilway*, a family event, and willingly showed me their traditional lifestyle. After having a conversation with Yuri, Tanya told me she wanted to talk to me privately. Wondering what about, I went over and found that she had invited me for coffee. Tanya, who turned 20, told me as she showed me her photo album how she used to go to a training school for teachers in Sankt-Peterburg and made many friends from ethnic minorities from various regions. In a photo taken with friends at a party, a smiling Tanya was wearing one of those hand-made dresses you often see in Russian towns. She had graduated from this school three years ago, and had just returned to the village. Then Bazarov and I had bread, crepes and coffee Ilyna and Tanya had prepared for us and talked. I couldn't believe this was the lifestyle of the same family that showed us the traditional ritual, *Kilway*, inside a *yanana* out on the tundra. On the tundra, they made a fire using a *Gichigi*, cut reindeer meat into small pieces and prepared the offering, and threw them over the roof to offer it to the reindeer's master spirit, *Koyavaginin*. However, in this house in the village, there was a TV set, and a song that had been taped before was playing on the VCR. We were drinking coffee at the table, placed in front of a drawing of a large red rose Ilyna had painted on the entire wall.

The following day, we visited Yuri again. Ilyna and Tanya had prepared us coffee, tea, bread and jam, and reindeer meat cooked with potatoes again, which we had for lunch. I commented that Ilyna's wall painting was very nice. Three large roses were drawn over a gold background that spread across the wall. The green stem and big rose about a meter wide were flamboyant, giving out a strong power that dominated the whole room. On the left side of the rose, Mickey Mouse stood there like in the cartoon, wearing a cowboy hat, a scarf around his neck, red trousers with a silver-buckled belt and guns on both sides of his hips. On the right side of the rose stood another Mickey Mouse, holding out a small bluish violet with his right hand. A small bee with blue wings and large eyes was drawn with its tongue reaching out toward the violet. It also looked like a character out of a cartoon. The realistic rose and the cartoon characters around it were drawn cheerfully and lively. The largest of the three red roses, drawn in the middle, was painted so dynamically as if it represented Ilyna herself, who had drawn this. Whereas the smaller rose next to it resembled Tanya, who was like an innocent child.

Ilyna remained silent even after I commented on her drawing. She laughed loudly, then suddenly went into deep thought with a grim face. Though her expression was severe, she had a smile on her lips. She always viewed herself and society from the outside. Then she asked me to tell her about Japanese women. I asked her what she wanted to know about them, and she asked about the *obi* (belt) of *kimonos* (clothes) and *kanzashi* (Japanese hairpin) worn in their hair. So I told her they are traditional Japanese clothing and ornaments, but are not used in our daily lives today.

Regarding young people, who were the same generation as his daughters, Yuri explained as follows: "Children speak in Russian at school. Then in the army, Russian is also spoken. When they return from military service, they're 23 years old and can't speak Koryak. English and Koryak are the same for them; they are both a second language."

According to Yuri, the crucial problem lies in boarding school. He says this is the reason people lose their culture. When the language is lost, their culture is lost too. Furthermore, history cannot exist without culture.

"Think about a small ethnic group and a large nation. If there isn't any culture, there is no history. Then we can't talk about the future at all. At the moment, we are about to lose our culture. For example, even if people wanted to know about our culture, we don't know about it because much of it has been lost. On the other hand, some are trying to revive it, but it is on the verge of being lost. The transition from Koryak culture to Russian culture occurred so rapidly that the culture of the Northern People has been forgotten. Nobody knows what will happen after our culture is gone. These young people are a lost generation."

Their father referred to Ilyna and Tanya as a “lost generation” who cannot decide their future, but to me they seemed very high-spirited.

The following day, we ended up visiting their house again. This time we were invited to the younger sister Tanya’s birthday party. Ilyna, her elder sister, another elder sister and her husband, Tanya’s aunt and her younger sisters had gathered. In addition, another woman who was her colleague and her male Russian friend who was here to film were invited as well. Her colleague had come to this village two years ago and had made friends with this Russian who distributed fuel in the village. They planned to get married soon, and were living together. A boy, who was apparently Ilyna’s son, also joined later on. On television, President Yeltsin was participating in an inspection parade of the military, tanks, aircrafts and helicopters, which was being broadcast live from Moscow.

White roses decorated the dining table and plates and glasses were set over a white tablecloth. Macaroni and reindeer meat cut in small pieces were served. In addition to bread, chocolates and biscuits were out on the table as well. A bottle of champagne was opened and served to everyone. Bazarov made a speech celebrating her birthday and then we toasted. When all our glasses were empty, another bottle was opened. Then it was my turn to make a speech, so I said I was deeply impressed by the rich Koryak culture. It is a Russian custom that a speech is made every time we emptied our glasses of vodka, then we would chat. Needless to say, this was the Russian manner. As a matter of fact, on my way home, I had a drink with some Russians at Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii, and was told that you couldn’t say you “drank” it unless you gulped down at least three glasses of vodka. In the end, I remember they ran out of speeches to make and raised their glasses “to Kamchatka.”

Tanya, the birthday girl, was wearing a red dress with black high heels and big white earrings. She sat at the head of the long table smiling happily. I sat next to her, then Bazarov, then the Russian teacher. Ilyna was sitting in front of me, and her aunt and her sister sat next to her. The sunset glow came into the room through the thin lace curtains. Everyone went on with this small Russian party solemnly but enjoyably as if it were a formal ceremony. Ilyna was wearing a white brooch that looked like a small firework on a blue dress and long metal-framed pearl earrings. She stood up against the wall painted with big red roses with a big round chocolate cake she had baked for her sister in her hands and showed it to everyone. In addition to the words celebrating her birthday written in white, she had drawn many swirls over the chocolate with pink-coloured cream. Soon when the meal was over and the table was moved to the corner of the room, the lighting was changed to a dim one and we started dancing. We got into pairs and danced to the slow rhythm. In fact, it wasn’t the first time for me to experience a party like this. I had been invited to a birthday party in this village two years earlier. It was Ilyna’s party held in an apartment room, and I remember the strong impression I got from it.

So I wasn't surprised when I was invited to the birthday party at Yuri's house this time on our second visit to this village. Actually, I felt the ability of women adopting a new culture positively, rather than the sadness of losing Koryak culture. The interesting thing was that Ilyna, who was mainly organizing this party, was the one promoting preservation of the traditional language and culture at school. She might have strongly felt the need to preserve traditions more than anyone else, precisely because she was the one adopting changes into the tradition positively. They are standing in between the past and the future; with one foot in traditional culture, and the other stepping out into the future. They are the ones who know both the Russian and Koryak cultures and connect the Russian people with the Koryaks. It is true that people lead traditional lives by herding reindeer on the tundra, while there are also people like Natalia, Alekseev's wife, who rejects the Russian culture even while living in the village. However, there are others like Ilyna, who accept the Russian culture, make contact with the outside world and bear the role of creating a new mixed culture. I was very interested in the fact that it was women who were taking this role. They are the ones who will create the future, rather than a "lost generation" as Yuri had said.

Ilyna and Tanya teach Koryak language and culture to children at school in the village. They made the school acknowledge the language as an official subject 10 years ago, and the culture three years ago. Their enthusiasm towards preserving the culture may owe a lot to their father's education. Furthermore, Ilyna was thinking about building a museum in this village. She wants to collect many traditional items in the museum to show them to the children. In fact, this idea to build a museum was being planned by the Russian researcher, Mikhail. It was originally planned by the former Soviet regime, but was cancelled since funds could not be distributed. In this plan, they were going to build a museum in every village in the North. If it is impossible to construct it in every village, Mikhail says they can build one in Srednie-Pakhachi. As a matter of fact, his friend had built a small Chukchee culture museum in Anadiri, the centre of Chukotka Autonomous Area. When we visited Srednie-Pakhachi village the last time, Mikhail had talked Ilyna, a teacher of the native language and culture division at school, into building a museum in this village.

Mikhail says the museum should be public. One museum he knew of had been built by a native of the ethnic group, who had a deep understanding of their culture. Many materials were collected there, but were all lost after his death. Museums – for example, the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Sankt-Peterburg, to which Mikhail and the other Russian researchers belong – in the first place, are institutes to keep cultural materials of the Northern people. There are advantages, such as the eternal preservation of materials from the 18th or 19th centuries in a good environment, while there are disadvantages as well

– i.e. the materials being taken away from the region they belonged to. Therefore, Mikhail says museums should be built in each village of the Northern ethnic groups and linked with a network run by the Academy of Sciences. Consequently, Mikhail was running about busily to persuade the *sovkhos* chief and schoolteachers, in order to make his dream come true. So he told me after Ilyna's birthday party, "Personal connection is the most important thing in doing research." I was impressed by the Russian researcher's diverse ability, because it seemed as if Mikhail was building a good relationship with the villagers and even organizing them, while he was a researcher at the same time.

As a matter of fact, Ilyna was taking a major role in changing the people in the village positively, as well as preserving the traditional culture. After Bazarov and I had left the village, she continued to contact Bazarov who was in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii, and visited the town to participate in a summer training program for teachers. Since she had felt the need to reinforce even more English education in the village, she persuaded Bazarov's mother, who had already retired, to come to the village as an English teacher.

Ilyna must have understood that traditional cultures should take in new cultures by coming in contact with the outside world, and not just remain isolated. They were not merely losing their traditions and being absorbed into Russian culture; they were bringing out what they needed from the Russians by actively making personal connections with them. The fact that English education existed in this small village at the northern end of Kamchatka Peninsula was surprising. By using English, the young villagers can exchange information with many English-speaking foreigners, as well as people within Russia.

The birthday party was a frontline where the Koryaks and Russians, or the traditional culture and the outside world came into contact. I was at the very site where two cultures clashed, merged and created a new culture. Political negotiations that determined the cultural future were underway, as well as bargaining between men and women, and the first step toward the Koryak future was about to be made at this site. I wouldn't be surprised if the invitation to the birthday party was Ilyna's intention to build a relationship with the outside world. As I will explain, I ended up giving a talk to the school children of the village about Japan, upon Ilyna's request.

11.3 Koryak Children

At the school in the village, classes are given from kindergarten to high school. There are students from first grade – the first year of primary school in Japan – to 11th grade – the second year of high school in Japan. There is a boarding school called *internat* next to it for children whose parents are away from the village, herding reindeer on the tundra. As of 1993, there were 35 students, a Russian principal, an English teacher, and two teachers in charge of the indigenous language

and culture. These two teachers were Ilyna and Tanya.

When I first visited this village, Ilyna asked me to talk about Japan to the students at school. I willingly agreed to do so and went to the school on the agreed date. There were about 15 senior students and 20 students in the lower grades. Everyone gathered in one classroom, and I gave the talk there. Of course, Ilyna introduced me to the schoolmaster in advance and I decided to talk about the educational system in Japan, which was her suggestion. In addition, I was going to talk about the Snow Festival in Hokkaido and winter sports such as skiing and ice-skating, since they said they wanted to know how Japanese students spend their daily lives.

The children were beaming and cheerful. About two thirds of the students had features of the Mongoloid stock, to which the Koryaks and Chukchees belonged, and half of the remaining third had the features of Caucasoid stock, which Russians were classified as, and the other half had both Mongoloid and Caucasoid features. Actually, the exact proportion of mixed-peoples might have been higher. In the classroom, there were simple white desks for two, and there was a banner that read "Welcome to Kamchatka," written in Koryak using Cyrillic, the Russian alphabet, on the light-blue painted wall. Underneath the letters, a lively scene of a tandem reindeer-sled race with Koryak people cheering and waving around it was drawn.

I explained that the educational system in Japan consisted of three parts; six years of primary school, three years of junior high school and three years of high school. They were surprised at the fact that primary, secondary and higher education were done in different schools. In Russia, it was a continuous education all done in one school. Then I told them how students had various club activities at school and that they went skiing or skating on holidays. In addition, I introduced the Snow Festival, in which citizens enjoy making snow statues, and told them we hope to exchange information and deepen each other's understanding between the two regions of the North, Hokkaido and Kamchatka. Needless to say, they knew skiing and skating. Why would they be surprised at snow and ice when they hold races with reindeer sleds?

When I was through with my talk, the students came up with lively questions. A little student asked me, "What kind of punishment do teachers give the students in Japan?" When I told them teachers used to make students stand in the corridor holding buckets of water, or make them run around the playground, but that nowadays, teachers try not to give penalties to students, they all looked surprised and sighed. Then another student asked, "Do classes share responsibilities for the school?" I said they shared responsibilities within the class, such as cleaning the room or blackboard, but there weren't many responsibilities as a class that they owed to the school. In Russia, they shared the school's tasks among classes, which was typical for a socialist country. There were also questions about how grades were

given and what was done to evaluate them. Grades and exams were the top concern of students in every country, it seemed.

Then one student asked a question like a specialized engineer or a businessman. He asked in what field Japan's technology excelled, or for instance, which manufacturer produced the best cars. I said all the makers in Japan now were outstanding; cars hardly broke down even after ten years.

Then the questions moved on to familiar topics. One student asked what the proportion of seafood was in the Japanese diet. It was just like an anthropologist asking about the Koryak diet. I explained that people ate rice, meat, vegetables and seafood, and the proportion differed between big cities and fishing villages or mountain villages, probably ranging between 30 percent and 70 percent. I also told them by giving examples that there was a wide variety of seafood other than fish, such as clams and crabs. Then a student asked if salmon roe and stockfish were made in Japan as well. Since I sensed that the students were interested in salmon roe, I explained that people made it at home in Japan.

As a matter of fact, the Koryak people were interested in salmon roe, because a Japanese-Russian joint venture had been established in Kamchatka to produce salmon roe, where the local people worked. They knew that the salmon roe that was produced here was loaded into a carrier vessel and exported to Japan. Later on, I had a chance to talk with a Russian over glasses of vodka and bread with salmon roe. He had actually worked in a salmon roe processing plant in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii, the capital of Kamchatka Oblast. He had been wondering and asked me why the salmon roe exported to Japan was not broken up, but salted as a whole. Indeed, in Russia, they break up the roe, just as they did with caviar, and ate it with buttered bread. So I ended up explaining to him that Japanese lived on rice and often ate salted salmon roe in small pieces with cooked rice.

Regarding dried fish, I told them that in Japan there were companies that specialized in making it, and people usually bought it at shops. I knew the Koryaks made large amounts of dried fish by themselves and stored it as preserved food for winter. It seemed that the children felt familiar with the Japanese lifestyle, which had some common points with their own.

Finally they asked me if I was comfortable living here in Kamchatka. I said I was enjoying myself here in the village eating various kinds of fish and reindeer meat and watching different festivals. The students seemed to be satisfied with my answer. They had been worried, in their own way as children, if I was feeling uncomfortable here in the village. I found out that the children of this village received a sufficient modern education, while they also showed interest in many things and could speak up positively.

When the talk was over, we all took a photo together as the teacher had suggested (Photo 24). Everyone – the Koryak children, the teacher and I – all smiled

at the camera in the small classroom with the drawing of the reindeer sled race at the back. Then the teacher guided me through the school. The classroom for lower-grade students was also very clean. The shelves were decorated with green-leafed plants. In the same way as the classroom for upper-grade students, there was a drawing at the rear wall of the classroom. In that drawing, white cargo ships floated in the ocean and many seagulls flew over them. Then, they had drawn a reindeer on the tundra and a child and dog standing in front of it. As a matter of fact, the reindeer was wearing a riding saddle that could not be found in this region, while the child was wearing a rather unique tunic. I deduced that, this drawing must have been taken out of some book.

There was another drawing on the wall of the stair case landing. Steep snow-capped peaks of Kamchatka that penetrated the sky spread across the background. A wide river flowed across from the left to the bottom right, cutting across the scene. Woods were drawn on both sides of the river, where two reindeer that seemed to be a male and female, stood facing each other. On the tundra between the mountains and the river, were two traditional *yanana*, drawn like inverted bowls, and the ends of three poles supporting it from the inside stuck out of the roof. Black smoke was piping out of the roof-hole as well. No human beings were drawn in this picture, but it was thoroughly expressed that people were burning a fire inside the *yanana* and lived there. It was a realistic painting, and the scene that children experience daily had been drawn very lively through their eyes. I stopped in the middle of the stairway and looked at this picture full of life for a while.

Aside from the picture, there were a few pieces of work, which they called traditional handicrafts. There were small pieces of reindeer hide painted with flower patterns and landscapes drawn on wooden boards using coloured sand. In addition to these handicrafts made by children, there were miniature shoes made of tanned reindeer hide and dog sled models like the ones used in real life on the tundra. These miniature models were made by Koryak adults to teach the children about the traditional culture. There were also stones with strange patterns that were gathered on the tundra and small woodcarvings of animals, just like the icons used by shamans. As Ilyna showed me these traditional handicrafts, she said it wasn't a bad idea to build a museum here, as Mikhail, the Russian researcher, suggests.

Then we walked toward the boarding house, which was attached to the school by a connecting corridor. The TV and game room was neatly arranged, and there were different rooms for boys and girls. In the cooking room, seven to eight wooden cutting boards with handles hung on the wall. Each cutting board was decorated with cute drawings of flowers, butterflies, chickens and eggs for the children. On the wall next to them were five rolling pins for rolling the dough when baking bread. I had been served cakes and Russian-style sweets at Alekseev's house before. They had told me then that they learned how to cook and make sweets at the village school.

Furthermore, table manners was drawn with illustrations on the wall – i.e. how to use knives and forks, how to place them on the plate, how to spread butter on the bread, how to use your spoon when eating the soup. Apparently, this was drawn to teach children table manners. In the craft room, needle books and various coloured threads hung from the wall. A number of sewing machines and embroidery patterns were left on the table, and serviettes and handbags embroidered with beautiful flower patterns were displayed on the notice board.

The school was a place to teach children and impart Russian culture. Although there were traditional materials of the Koryak culture at school, the majority was Russian cooking and handicrafts. Despite this, Ilyna, who had studied at this school when she was a child, talked about the importance of traditional culture and was making efforts to pass it on. As a matter of fact, she had prepared all the educational material related to Koryak culture that I had seen here. In the same way that the birthday party was the frontline of Russian and Koryak culture, the school was another frontline where the Russian and Koryak cultures clashed and mingled. Furthermore, the school bore the important role of educating future generations. The education given here will directly affect the future frames of mind and lives of the children.

At the boarding school, there was also a cafeteria and a small classroom for kindergarten children. Children were eating their meals in the cafeteria. About ten students were living in the boarding house at the moment. Ilyna's father, Yuri, told me later the controversial point of the boarding school. He says the children lose their language and traditional culture because they live far apart from their parents on the tundra and only Russian can be used at boarding school. As a matter of fact, I then came to realize that although the culture was being lost, the preservation of traditional culture had been going on unintentionally at this boarding school.

Maria, who lived at the edge of the village, worked at the boarding school to look after the children. I asked her, "Do you tell them narratives there?" She answered, "Of course, I tell the little boys and girls stories." In fact, she has to talk to the children in Russian. These days, the children do not understand their traditional language. Nonetheless, Maria said smiling, "In any case, the kids are fast asleep when I finish telling the story." She told me a narrative she had once told the children at the boarding school upon my request.

This narrative was called "Who is the devil?" Maria made an introductory remark and said, "In the old days, people sometimes saw devils. This story is about a devil and an eagle." Then she went on and started the story. "Once upon a time, there lived a big family. One evening, a devil came to visit this family. When he got there, he waited until everyone fell asleep so that he wouldn't be caught. Then when everybody dozed off, he began his evil-doing. He started with the eldest member. Of course he knew who the grandfather, grandmother, husband, wife and children

were. What the devil was trying to do was to make all the children alone, without their parents or grandparents, so the devil got to work ruthlessly. He ate the heads of everyone except the children – the grandfather, grandmother, husband and wife. Then he called the eldest child. He was in his teens. He decided to run away, and ran through the forest.

Suddenly, he found an eagle's nest. So he talked to the eagle. The eagle was very old, but strong, smart and could fly high in the sky. "Can you please shelter me? I want to live with you." Then the eagle answered, "What on earth has happened?" The boy answered, "You are so strong, I want you to seek vengeance for me." The old eagle answered, "All right. There are more devils than human beings nowadays." It was so in those days, Maria added.

The eagle met with the devil. The devil had followed the boy's footprints. The eagle greeted the devil, "Hello." The eagle was very friendly. It was an amicable encounter. Therefore, the devil thought the eagle was his friend, but in reality, the eagle was sheltering the boy. The devil asked the eagle, "Can you please help me? I am looking for a boy. You can fly high above the sky, so you must be able to find the boy. Let's catch the boy and tear him into pieces."

So the eagle said, "Hold on to my back." Then he took off. The boy was hiding in the eagle's nest, and watched the eagle fly away. The eagle and the devil went higher and higher.

The devil began to wonder why they were flying so high. He asked the eagle, "Where can we catch the boy?" "Look at your palm. When the ground looks as small as that, you'll be able to catch the child immediately." Then they ascended even higher. The devil asked the eagle the same question again. "Spit on your palm. When that dries and disappears, we'll get to the place we're heading for." So the devil spat on his palm. Then it disappeared. The devil spat on his palm again. Eventually, the devil had spat out all the spit he had, and said in the end, "Now, I've spat out all I have, and it has dried out completely on my palm. Now, how high are you going up?" Then the eagle wiggled his body hard, and the devil fell from the eagle's back. The devil fell down to the ground. He broke to pieces and turned into ash, because he fell from high above the sky. So this was how the devil disappeared from this world. Today, even children know about the devil, but no one has actually seen one. That is because they were all destroyed in this way."

When Maria finished the narrative, she took a breath and said there was a sequel to this. Realizing that I was waiting to hear it, she told me the rest of the story. The sequel went like this; the boy, who became an orphan, was raised by the eagle, married a bear and had offspring who were humans. The first part of the story was about how the boy became an orphan because of the devil, and how he took revenge on the devil with the help of an eagle, so the latter part unfolds independently from the first part; the boy who became an orphan in the first half is the protagonist in

the second half. The first half also explains the roots of how devils disappeared and the second half tells the origin of human beings. This narrative is a myth of their progenitor, and a story about their mythical relationship with bears and eagles.

Maria went on with the narrative. “Then the eagle went back to its nest. The boy looked very tired and was about to go to sleep. The boy stopped thinking about the devil, because he wanted to do so. So the eagle decided to shelter this boy for 50 years. Eventually, the boy grew up and became big and strong. The eagle said, “You’ve spent enough time with me. You are my grandson. It’s time for us to part. You must get married.” The boy did not object to what the eagle said, but he was puzzled. He did not know what marriage was. In fact, he had not met anyone at all. However, at the same time, he had been in the nest for so long that he was sick of being there. So the boy asked the eagle to accompany him in order to get married.

The boy and the eagle, which was his grandfather, went out together. The boy worked for a while, but then met a young female bear. The eagle told the boy and the young female bear, “Now, wouldn’t you like to live together? We are friends. Let’s get food together. Then everything will go well for us.” The bear could not decide, and neither could the boy. However, they agreed to do so and eventually started to live together. The eagle flew high above the sky and continued to watch them from above. This was how they became a real husband and wife. Then they started to have children. From then on, when a baby was born, they cried like a bear; “yah, yah.”

When Maria finished the story, she went on as follows: “We all come from one place. So even if we’re not relatives, our roots come from the same place. Everyone in this village calls Yuri “Uncle Yuri,” or calls me “Aunt Maria.” It is a common point for all human beings that we all have the same roots. This was how we all started off from an eagle and a bear. It was just the devil that was not needed.”

Maria said this narrative was told to her by her grandmother on the tundra. From then on, Maria never forgot this story. As a matter of fact, Maria had told me this narrative when I was about to leave the village on my first visit. Maria said that her grandmother had told her this narrative in Chukchee, Maria told it in Russian, Sergei interpreted it to me in English, and I would put it into Japanese. In other words, this narrative would be passed on through four languages. Just as I was leaving the village, Maria said to me, “This narrative is a good story to tell when we are about to say goodbye to each other, isn’t it?”