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10. Daily Life

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10. Daily Life

10.1 Alekseev's Life

Up till then, I had looked at the Koryak's life and worldview mainly in reference to the reindeer. That was because they are a group of reindeer herders called *Chauchu*. However, as I spent time with them, I learned that they had other various subsistence activities besides reindeer herding, such as hunting and fishing. Therefore, I grew curious to know what Alekseev's family and Vakhtangov's family's daily activities were like throughout the year.

Alekseev began by talking about the kind of activities he was doing at that moment. On May 7, he was supposed to have gone out to the tundra to hunt bears. However, he had stayed behind in his house in the village that year because we were there. The Pakhachi River melts by the end of May – in other words, between May 20 and June 1. About a week before it melts, they return from hunting and start to prepare the net for fishing. When the river surface melts, they go 60 to 70 km upstream from the village and stay there for a week in order to catch arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*), or *kharius* as it is called in Russian. After catching the arctic grayling, they dry them. In order to do so, the fish is salted down for nine hours and then washed in fresh water. Then they hook each one and hang them on a line to dry. When the arctic grayling is dry, they go out to shoot wild duck. This is at the beginning of June. They hunt wild duck for a week just a little upstream from the place where they catch arctic grayling, about 70 km away from the village.

From the end of June until the beginning of July, they go salmon fishing using nets. When they go net fishing, the people on the riverbank hold one end of the gill net and from the boat they turn the net around in the river so as to surround the salmon with it. When they get to the riverside, they pull the net and get the salmon caught inside it. Since a large number of salmon come upstream, they can easily catch many of them this way. At first, chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) return. About 1.5 km upstream, Alekseev has his own little hut and shelves to dry the fish. Sometimes he goes back to his house in the village and takes a break. In order to catch fish, they need a permit every year. The chinook salmon's return goes on for a week, or two to three weeks at times. The sockeye salmon's return begins at the same time, but lasts longer. It goes on for two weeks even after the chinook salmon have finished their migration. The season when the chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*) return varies each year. While the chum salmon return, the arctic chars (*Salvelinus Alpinus*) are also seen returning. They have beautiful small red spots on their bodies – closely related to the Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*) seen in Hokkaido – and are said to migrate in large numbers. This is followed by the return of the pink or humpback salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbscha*), which also migrate in large numbers. From the end

of August through September, the coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) return. Alekseev says, "When the fish come upstream, we don't have time to even sleep." He collects bilberries from the beginning of August till mid-October when the river freezes over. In addition, he gathers a special kind of plant root called *jimanga*, similar to carrots. This is made into a tonic.

In other words, he is busy doing various activities from August to October. He has to work hard to prepare for winter. The river surface starts to freeze at the end of October, and freezes over completely in about 10 days. This is when the windy season begins. Before the river freezes up, he hunts bear, moose and seal. When it starts to frost, he freezes the arctic grayling and arctic char and stocks them for the winter. Then the river freezes. He goes hunting or goes fishing on ice by making a hole in the ice. In fact, they don't hunt during the molt or the breeding season – they don't disturb the animals.

When winter comes, he goes to where the reindeer herd is and herds them until the beginning of May. At the same time, he hunts fur-animals or goes trap hunting. He also fishes on ice. He hunts fur animals such as squirrel, lynx, wolf, weasel, rabbit, fox and otter. In this region, there aren't any sable, beaver or mink. He hunts these animals using iron traps, loop traps or rifles. In this case as well, he doesn't disturb the animals in particular seasons. In spring, all the animals give birth to babies. The animals grow during the spring and summer months, so people start hunting and trapping in autumn. He also said that the quality of the animal fur is not good in spring or summer.

The actual day-to-day life of Alekseev's family was as follows: On May 10, three days after Yuri's *Kilway*, Maria's husband, Ivan, came to Alekseev's house. They were living in a *yanana* on the tundra. Early next morning, Alekseev went out to hunt wild goats in the mountains with his son, Slava, and Ivan. Although the goats' fur was not in good condition that season, they went out to get goat's meat to eat, since they had finished giving birth to the kids by May. After they had gone out, Nina came to knock on the door at 8:00 a.m. to wake us up. We had bread and tea for breakfast. Since Nina works at the *sovkhos* office in that village, she was wearing fashionable clothes like women working in the companies in town. She leaves home at 8:50 a.m. and goes to her office. Her working hours start at 9:00 a.m., she takes a lunch break from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., and then works until 6:00 p.m. She works as an accountant there, and says it is hard work. As always, she left smiling, looking a little troubled, but never complaining about anything. At 10:00 a.m., Natalia wakes up and goes to work. She is a nurse at a clinic in the village. As a matter of fact, she says her job is not a busy one at all. It is supposed to be the most important job in the village, but at that time, the clinic had no medications. Therefore, nobody came to the clinic, and Natalia just sat in an empty room. Then after a while, she goes back home.

At home, Natalia was cooking a dish by boiling a reindeer's small stomach and uterus together. Actually, only women can have this dish. She was also simmering a reindeer's trachea – without the cartilage – stuffed with fat. They say the reindeer get fat when people eat this. They cut off both ends before they eat it. Natalia says this is probably done to give to the evil spirits.

The next day, on May 12, it was sleeting and snowing. At 8:50 a.m., as always, Nina left for her office. At 10:30 a.m., Alekseev and Slava came back from hunting on the snowmobile. There was a goat loaded on the sleigh. Immediately, Natalia took out a small iron plate, lit some crumpled up newspaper with my lighter, and put it in front of the doorway. Slava brought the goat's head. Natalia pinched out the goat's whiskers with her fingers and placed the head over the fire. After that, the fire was placed beside the entrance and the goat's head was brought into the house. Slava gave Natalia the rest of the meat parts of the goat. She put took them into a storage room beside the entrance. The goat was carrying an unborn kid, but this was also kept in the storage room with the other parts.

At 10:40 a.m., Alekseev and Slava went into the house and had breakfast. They had already eaten twice this morning, so this was their third breakfast. When they finished breakfast, at 11:50 a.m., Slava and Natalia put a portion of the goat's meat – about three kilograms – in a bucket and took it to Slava's wife and children. At noon, Natalia took a kilogram of meat in a plastic bag to Alekseev's father, Vakhtangov's place. In this manner, they say they divide the meat among all the relatives. When I later asked them who they gave the meat to, they said they gave a kilo each to Kacha – Natalia's daughter – Vakhtangov's cousin (the daughter of Vakhtangov's mother's brother), the daughter of Natalia's father's younger sister (Natalia says she is also Vakhtangov's neice), Vakhtangov's wife who is hospitalized at Tilichiki at the river mouth of Vivenka River, and the old lady living next door to Alekseev. In addition, on the way back from hunting, Ivan stopped by at the *yanana* on the tundra where he lives with Maria and left a portion there as well. Maria is Natalia's cousin, and Vakhtangov's relative as well. When Natalia gives out these portions of meat to people, they give back sweet plant roots, bullets, or whatever they can give as return gifts.

When you focus on the distribution of the meat, the primary distribution is done among the hunters, then to Alekseev and Natalia's children and their families, Alekseev's father, Vakhtangov's family, Vakhtangov's cousin, Natalia's cousin; the secondary distribution is done among the family group formed by cognatic descent. Furthermore, although they are not related, they give it out to the neighbour as well. The neighbour is a person living on the other side of the wall of the house. The houses in this village, provided by the government, are parted in the middle with a wall, and there is an entrance at each end of the house, so that two families can live in one house.

Natalia said that in the old days, if someone hunted an animal, the meat would be distributed to everybody since all the *yananas* were close together. They were all happy about it. Those who lived close together were a group of people formed mainly by kinship, living in the *nimiyolgan*. Non-relatives were sometimes included, but the group basically consisted of relatives. Although Natalia said that everything had changed now, they were basically not very different from the people who she actually gave the meat to now in the village. What Natalia had meant when she said “everything had changed” was that they didn’t distribute the meat to everybody living in the village – the residential group had just changed from the *nimiyolgan* to the “village.”

She thought the principle of giving out the meat was to distribute it to everyone living in the same place; so in that sense, the principle had changed. It is impossible to distribute the meat from a single goat to every single person in a village that holds a population of hundreds. She had limited it to a group of relatives based on cognatic descent. Looking at it from the other side, the principle of cognatic descent encompassed the whole village, so it could be said that the relationships were still kept even though they lived far apart. However, from Natalia’s point of view, it went against the distribution rules if she didn’t give out the meat to everybody living there; this made her feel bad. Maybe she was at least trying to compensate by giving it to her neighbour living on the other side of the wall. Alekseev says that whom you give the meat to shows whether you are selfish or not. He himself thinks that the meat should be distributed to everyone whether he may be your friend or relative. Moreover, when you are giving it out, the earlier the better. His wife, Natalia, does it all. There are no rules saying that they should leave a special part of the meat for the hunters. They believe in equality in their daily lives. If a person is selfish and doesn’t give out things to others, they say his children and grandchildren will eventually lose these things. In the same sense, Alekseev says they are not allowed to criticize and talk behind people’s backs, because it will recoil on them.

At 1:05 p.m., Natalia started cooking the goat meat. She cut the heart into three pieces and cut off the end of the third piece and threw it out. She says this part is probably an offering to the evil spirits. She was not positively sure about this, but did so because it was customary. The heart must be cooked first after it has been caught. They don’t give the meat of animals that people have hunted to the dogs. Only the hunter’s dog can eat the hunted meat. In fact, they can feed the dogs in the house with goat meat if a wolf kills it or if it dies from a disease. As she explained, she boiled the goat’s heart that she had cut vertically into three pieces. In another pot, she melted moose fat that had been stored to make oil. The dish was made of simmered meat mixed with butter, coriander, black pepper, red pepper, laurel leaves, tomatoes and flour. At 2:00 p.m., they cooked rice in another pot and lunch was ready.

Alekseev told me in passing about his hunting trip that had started early in the

morning the day before and had lasted until the next day. He went hunting with his son, Slava, and Maria's husband, Ivan. He took his son Slava to teach him how to hunt. Slava had started doing this when he was much younger. Yesterday morning, he got up at three, and left at four when the sun was rising. It took them two hours by snowmobile to the campsite. It was a mountainous area about 20 km away from the village, and the snowy road on the tundra was in poor condition – he said it felt like the 500 km motor race in Monaco. He knew about the race because he had seen it on television. When they go hunting, the first thing they must do is find out where the animals are. So they must choose a place where they can look for the animals. Finding the animals is everything in hunting. He placed himself where he could have a broad view of the mountains, and looked for goats that are usually in the rocky area of the mountains with his binoculars. Then they found the goat and had lunch. During lunch, they talked about the direction of the wind. At the same time, they decided which goat each hunter would go for. In addition, they decided which ones they should catch and which ones they should leave alone.

When they had made the decisions, they prepared for the hunt. Then they decided which route to take in order to get close to the goats. They wore snowshoes and put on climbing spikes with sharp iron claws over them. The rocky areas are slippery and are very dangerous. Many people have slid down the snow and lost their lives. They also used a pole with three hooks on it to climb up the ice. They had to go around to the other side of the rocky area and go to a position where they could look down on the goats. The goats can easily recognize things coming at them from lower levels, but they don't realize it when they are being looked down upon.

When they got to the top of the mountain, they looked down on the goats, which were eating grass. Then they went even closer to the goats so they would be within effective range of the rifle. They always keep in mind the direction of the wind and are careful with their footsteps. When they come to a place where they can watch the goats closely, they make the last decision of which goat to go for. They try to get as close as possible to the game. When the goat turns and looks at them, they start shooting.

At this point, they were 150 meters away from the goats. There were two of them; one escaped and the other one also ran away, although injured. They looked for the injured goat, but couldn't find it in the end. Then they found three female goats and shot at them for the second time from 250 meters away. One of them was hit, the second ran away, and the last one escaped injured, but he said it would die eventually because the wound was deep. When the goat that was hit fell from the rocky area, they all cheered.

There is a custom among the Koryaks that says they shouldn't kill all the animals. They watch carefully to see how many male and female animals there are. If there are three males and two females, they can shoot two males and one female.

They also don't kill females with kids. If they urgently need to, they shoot the female but let the kid go. This is an old tradition.

The goat they caught was a female. The females don't have the large curled horns, just small straight horns. This goat had 40 kilograms of meat. They say female goats in winter weigh 100 kilograms. The quality of the fur in this season is not good, so they threw it out. If it had been autumn, the quality would have been good, and they could have used it to make a drum. If the road from the place where they caught the goat to the campsite is bumpy or hilly, they don't cut up the goat but take it down as it is across the snow. If the road is flat, they dissect it where they killed it – it is easier to carry that way.

When they got to the campsite, they immediately started a fire. They smeared fat on a small piece of meat and offered it to the fire. This was an offering to the fire, or an "*inawet*." Then they put the goat's head near the fire and put a stone over it. This was to wish good luck for the next hunt and to prevent the stones from making any noise under their feet when they approach the goats. They also throw a portion of meat to the ravens.

In hunting, the *inawet* is the most important ritual. As a matter of fact, Alekseev offered an *inawet* to the land, river and fire before he went hunting. Here he prayed for good luck. In addition, just before he started shooting, he said he put an *inawet* down on the ground. At the campsite, the fire plays an important role. After making the fire, if there is any problem with it, they have to change campsites. That is because that site is in someone else's path. Therefore, even if that place is a good location, they can't pitch a tent along that path. This story of Alekseev's, that fire lets people know of danger, corresponds with what Yuri said about fire – that it foretells the future.

After returning home, they burnt the goat's whiskers so these goats that were "guests" could "meet" the fire. This is done with any kind of animal that is hunted. Even when visitors come, they make a fire in front of the entrance and throw some fibre from their clothes into it. They even do this with family members living in the same house – for example, when Slava comes home after a long time from his reindeer-herding job on the tundra, he "meets" the fire in the same way.

I asked Alekseev what he thinks about before he goes out hunting. The Canadian reindeer hunters negotiate with the animals in their dreams and reach a consensus for them to be hunted. Alekseev said he only thinks about hunting before he hunts. He tries to figure out various things in his head – where he should go, how he should travel there, and which route he should take to get there. He thinks the most important thing is not to break the rules. When he says "rules," he means that people should only kill what they can eat. He takes pride in being a "rule keeper." In other words, he means he is not a person that disturbs order. They express this word "rules" using the Russian word for "law." He says Ivan, who went with him, is a

man that breaks these rules.

In addition, Alekseev said something very interesting. He said that having thought about many things in his head before hunting, once you make up your mind about how to hunt that animal, you do not kill other animals. Thus, on his hunting trips, he only hunts what he has decided upon. For example, if he finds a bear on his way to shoot a goat, even if it is only five meters away from him, he won't shoot that bear. He says everything has to stand to reason. When he says "stand to reason," he means "must be reasonable." In other words, he means not to hunt excessively. This doesn't only apply to goats, but is the same with hunting bears and moose. If there are only a few animals there, he says they will leave them alone.

These "rules" and "being reasonable" that Alekseev refers to are a promise between the hunters and the game. When he says he will not hunt any other animals other than the ones he has decided to, that means a special relationship has been built between the hunter and the game, or the person who hunts and the animal that is being hunted. There is a consensus between them – to hunt and to be hunted, in this case. It could be said that by pondering over how to hunt in his head, although he is unaware of it, he is making a spiritual negotiation and reaching an agreement with the animals, in the same way the Canadian hunters do. We can also interpret the fact that they only hunt what they can eat as a promise between the hunters and animals. In reference to this, he said, "We have to think about the children and grandchildren of the future. We have to keep to the rules of our daily lives for our future." His opinion here is practical. Nonetheless, if we think of this "rule" as a promise between hunters and animals, we could also say that it suggests a supernatural relationship between them.

In day-to-day life, women's jobs are just as important as men's. I had already seen among the Canadian reindeer hunters that the subsistence unit was structured by the division of labour according to gender. In particular, the life of Canadian Forest Indians is based on various activities related to reindeer hunting. Considering their daily life as a form of these activities, we could name them together the "reindeer hunting activity system." When you consider the Koryaks, women cut up the reindeer, cook its meat and make jerky out of it. When I first visited the village two years ago, guided by Natalia, I saw a woman tanning reindeer hide spread on a thick slanted wooden platform, by pushing a curved wooden handle with a stone embedded in the middle of the handle, both ends of which she held with her hands. On the ground in front of Maria's hut, I had seen her drying out reindeer hides painted with red fluid made from alder bark on the inside of them. What's more, Maria kept softening reindeer hide with her hands while she talked. Tanning reindeer hide was part of their task of making clothes, and was a very important activity for them.

Natalia explained to me how to tan reindeer fur, and in order to show me how

it is actually done, she took me to Vakhtangov's hut on a hill across a creek at the outskirts of the village. The fur, skinned from the killed reindeer, was spread out on the ground to dry and in order to soften it. This is done after the reindeer are killed: in winter they spread the fur on the snow and in summer on the ground. Because the dried fur gets stiff, they soften it. Hence, they spread the fur on the floor throughout the year and people walk on it. The carpeted fur in the living room of Maria's hut was there for this purpose.

Once the fur turns soft, the membrane on the inside of the skin is scraped off. This is not fat; because they stick their hands between the reindeer's body and the fur when they skin it off, it doesn't have any fat on it from the beginning. In order to scrape off the inner membrane from the fur, they use a slate-like stone with a sharp, semicircular blade. This stone is called *nechuakan-auta*, which means "sharp stone." It is attached to the middle of a wooden stick, and this tool is called *enanbenan*. People hold both ends of this tool and scrape off the inner membrane by moving it forward along the backside of the reindeer fur. They say it takes about two hours to do this.

Then they tan the fur. There are two ways to do it; different fluids are used for the two methods. In the first method, they smear the backside of the fur with reindeer dung boiled in water. The dung sticks to the fur in a powdery form. In the second method, they grind pine needles and mix them with urine, which they then smear on the backside of the fur. They crush the pine needles on a stone dish using a stone hammer. Besides this, they also use a fluid that is a mixture of alder bark and urine. The urine they use is left to mature for a long time and turns into a kind of acid. They cut off the bark from alder using an iron sickle with wooden hafts on both ends. This tool is used in the following way: you pull it down with both hands to carve the bark off. Actually, you can also use a knife to cut the bark off, but it is dangerous. Autumn is the season for collecting the alder bark. People look for alders and collect the bark and roots. The roots are used to make reindeer blood soup. Once it is cut, alder bark turns powdery by itself, so you just have to mix it with urine – you don't need to grind it with a stone hammer. Then the alder bark fluid turns red. The red fluid smeared onto the reindeer hide that I had seen in front of Maria's hut was made from this bark. The reindeer hide that has been smeared with the fluid is dried in the sun.

Furs processed only by the first method are not suitable for making winter clothes, because they don't block the cold and lack pliability. When they use alder bark for the process, the fur softens and the insulation level increases, suitable for winter clothing. In fact, in order to tan reindeer fur for making winter clothing, the following procedure is necessary: On the first and second day, they tan it with the fluid of the first method – reindeer dung mixed with water. Then on the third day, they tan it using the alder branch and urine mixture, which is the second method of

tanning. Natalia says she adds two spoonfuls of reindeer dung to this. On the fourth day, they do the same as the third day, using the alder bark fluid. Meanwhile, she softens the fur by crumpling it with her hands and feet. The alder bark and urine mixture is poured into a wooden bowl and she takes out the amount she needs and smears it onto the fur. In addition, at the beginning of this procedure, she also uses a fluid that is a mixture of pine needles and urine. She has to keep softening the fur in order to make good fur. For example, she puts it down on the floor and walks over it and crumples it with her hands. Then she holds it with both her hands and pushes her heels forward, drawing the fur under her heels to soften it. She softens the edges of the fur by working it with her hands. As she explained, Natalia actually showed me how to do it. Then, after softening the fur in this way, she smears it with the alder bark and urine fluid.

When this procedure is over, the fluid becomes dry and powdery and it is then dusted off. The fur is dried since it is moist. It is softened by the hands and then with a stone implement. The stone implement, called *auta*, that is used here is different from the “sharp stone” used to scrape off the inner membrane at the beginning. It is a small but thick semicircular stone implement with a blunt blade. It is used to soften the fur, not to scrape it. I had seen the implement two years ago, and had remembered its shape. It is made of a hard stone, and there are two kinds – a bright coloured type and a black type. It is called “moon stone” in Russian. From what I saw, one looked like quartz and the other looked like obsidian. Women look for these stones on the riverbanks when they go fishing in summer. People believe these stones came down from the sky. She told me that some women know how to chip these stones into implements. From what I had heard two years ago, these stones are commonly found around the Vivenka River, west of the Pakhachi River, and they got these stones from their relatives who lived there.

After the pine needle and urine fluid is smeared onto the back of the fur and is dried, they scrape it off with an iron blade. But instead of a stone blade, a semicircular iron blade is stuck into the pole. This iron blade is called *puluwintin-auta* or “iron stone.” In other words, they use the *enanbenan* – a bar implement with a stone blade stuck in the middle – for three different purposes by changing the blade. The first sharp slate-like stone blade is used to scrape off the inner membrane; the second iron blade is used to scrape off the pine needles and urine fluid; the third blunt stone blade is used to soften the fur.

Natalia showed me a fur, which was in the middle of the tanning process. She had already scraped the membrane off, smeared the pine needle and urine fluid onto it, and scraped it off with the iron blade. She was now softening the fur. This fur would then be dried in the sun and made into shoes. For this purpose, she doesn't need to use the alder bark and urine fluid. That is only used when making clothes. Just as she had told me a while ago, when making winter clothes, she has

to go through the tanning procedure twice. When tanning the fur, it is essential to soften it, which requires a lot of hard work. She said all the women have sore arms, because they are always tanning fur throughout the year. When spring comes, they eat *mukhomor* to relieve the pain. They eat one and a half, and then after a while eat another one and a half. Reindeer skins especially have thick fur, so they say it is tough. Naturally, it is easy to work with fawn's fur. The furs on the fawn's legs make long strips of fur, so they use them to decorate the Koryak fur hat into stripes. Even Natalia, who should be well accustomed to the tanning job, says that it is a very tough work making fur clothes.

Women's tasks don't end at just tanning fur. Using the fur they have tanned, they sew them into clothes. The winter clothes in particular are double-lined to protect them from the cold. The outfit consists of trousers and jackets. There are two types of trousers, called *konaite* – short knee-length pants and longer ones. There is also another type called *milgot-konaite* which is smoked. Men wear different types of trousers depending on their jobs. If a man has to run, he wears old trousers that are light with the fur worn out. The underwear trousers are called *sojakut* and have fur linings. The outer trousers are called *guchigot-konaite* and the fur is on the outside. The jacket is called *iichigan*, and the underwear shirt has fur linings and the outer jacket called *guchigochi-iichigan* has fur on the outside. There are two types – one with a hood and the other without. In addition, there is a jacket called *yamochigup* for men with fur on the outside. The jacket for women is connected to the trousers. In the rainy season, they wear a raincoat like a vest called *iilamugan*. It has fur linings on the inside, and is hooded, and the hide is smoked which makes it waterproof.

The socks called *pamiyat* have the fur facing inside, and there are two types – light ones called *cheche-pamiyat* and others made of smoked hide called *melgo-pamiyat*. Then they wear shoes called *plakut* over these socks. On these, the fur faces outward. If they are wearing knee-length short pants, they put on the *plakut*. But if they are wearing long trousers, they put on short-cut shoes called *lulat*. These shoes are made of reindeer hide, but there are also shoes called *tannig-plakut*, which are made of sealskin. Mittens are called *liliyt*, and gloves are called *joget-liliyt*. (*Joga* means “fingers.”) The gloves are used to catch fish or to cut wood when they dry the fish. Fur hats are called *penken*. In summer, they wear jackets called *koflanka*. They have different types of clothes for winter and summer, men and women. Cutting the tanned reindeer fur, sewing them up with thread made from reindeer tendons, or embroidering the beads; they are all women's tasks. It is surely understandable how Natalia says it is hard work making clothes. Nevertheless, these skills of tanning the reindeer hide and making clothes, shoes and gloves are making it possible for them to lead a life in the winter tundra.

As I listened to Natalia's explanation, it reminded me of an old tale about a fox

that Maria had told me about. This is how the story goes:

“When the first human beings appeared and started their lives, various animals came about as well. Each of them led a different way of life in order to survive the winter. One day, a fox saw a woman entering the woods and collecting bark. The fox’s fur at that point was gray. He followed the woman into the woods. When the woman cut off the bark, it was gray at first but then it gradually turned red. The fox saw the woman put that bark down on the ground and enter the woods again to cut some bark off another tree. So the fox walked up to the bark she had left on the ground and circled around it trying to figure out how it could turn redder. Finally, the fox urinated on the bark. Then he smeared that onto his own fur coat, just as the women do when tanning the fur for winter. The fox repeated this for a long time, so his fur became entirely red. From then on, people started to catch foxes and use them. That was because the fox hadn’t done it on its own, but had stolen or used someone else’s work. What’s more, from then on, people prohibited working with pieces of bark in the woods, and they all took them home and worked on them at home.”

This story tells the origin of the fox’s fur colour. It also tells how the fox came to be used by people because it “stole” someone else’s work. At the same time, however, it was the fox that taught people to use a mixture of bark and urine to tan the fur. The alder is a mysterious tree. The reason why the bark reddens after it is cut might be because of the chemical substance similar to archil, which turns red in acidic solutions. It also works for stomach-aches, so they might put it into their reindeer blood soup because they know that by experience. Anyway, people found out that the substance in alder softens fur.

While there were still no distinctions between humans and animals, they all thought of how they each should live in order to survive the winter. The fox turned its grey fur coat into red, and humans made clothes out of tanned reindeer fur in order to make the winter liveable. As she told this tale, Maria was softening a fawn’s fur with her hands to make soft winter clothes. The backside of the fur was stained beautifully red, tanned with the same alder bark fluid as it was told in this tale.

10.2 Vakhtangov’s Life

Alekseev’s father, Vakhtangov, is old but is still working in good shape. Throughout the year he gets provisions for himself and his wife to eat by fishing and herding. In addition, he works together with Alekseev’s family and other relatives too. Especially in summer when they go salmon fishing, they camp and fish together. I asked Vakhtangov about his daily life throughout the year.

At that point, on May 15, he was ploughing the fields in front of his house to grow potatoes. In front of each village house, which is provided by the government, there is a garden about 10 meters long and 5 meters wide. People have fenced in the gardens and made them into fields. In his field, Vakhtangov grew potatoes, which he

harvested in October. When I came to this village two years ago, Natalia's daughter, Nina, was digging up the potatoes and bringing them in. Actually, the harvested potatoes were all small; few of them were as large as a fist, and most of them were half that size. I also remember her gathering many small potatoes about the size of a thumb. Nevertheless, potatoes are essential provisions that they can grow themselves, and are a precious source of carbohydrate. They can buy bread or flour – to make bread from – at the shops, but they need cash to buy them. People are trying to be self-sufficient in food as much as possible. Moreover, Russians living in this village have made a greenhouse and even grow vegetables such as cucumbers and tomatoes.

Meanwhile – as he takes care of the potatoes – Vakhtangov starts preparing to go fishing at this time of the year. He prepares the fish net for catching the salmon that are yet to come. He also cuts down a silver birch to make a sleigh. As a matter of fact, people take apart the sleighs and put them away in their storage rooms in May when the sleigh season ends. Then when the river freezes around the end of September or the beginning of October, they put them together again. A few days before, when Natalia and I visited Vakhtangov's hut, there was a construction in front of it; stakes had been set up in the ground, and in between them was a fat log. This is a tool to bend the wood used to make the sleigh. They say making the sleighs is a man's task. Vakhtangov was cutting out the birch tree to make sleighs for this winter. Just as they prepare the food for winter when spring comes, they were already starting to get their winter gear ready.

At the end of May, when the ice disappears from the river, he immediately takes his boat out and goes to see the reindeer. The reindeer come close to the village, so he visits the herd on his boat. He checks the reindeer's health condition and cuts a nick in the fawn's ears to indicate that he owns them.

By May 24, the salmon are returning to spawn. He has a special fishing site across the Pakhachi River about two kilometres upstream from the village. At this site there is a hut built on top of a large sleigh and a high-level storage room built on top of stakes. Vakhtangov and his wife, Alekseev and his wife, his son Slava and Vakhtangov's younger brother and his wife all go there. When I had asked Alekseev about his day-to-day life throughout the year, he had said he goes to a hut about 1.5 kilometres upstream from the village at the end of June to catch chinook salmon (king salmon) and sockeye salmon. They all went fishing together there. The hut built on top of the sleigh is the facility that used to be used as an intermediate base for reindeer herding. However, Vakhtangov's younger brother and his wife live there now. They live here not only during summer, but also through the winter. Usually, Vakhtangov goes back to the village and sleeps at his house, but sometimes he makes a fireplace in the high-level storage room and sleeps there. He says it is warm even at night. Looking to the riverside where they live, you could see seven to eight families

camping there in tents, and three more families on the other side. From Vakhtangov's explanation, I figured he doesn't accompany his son, Alekseev, when he goes 60 to 70 kilometres upstream from the village to catch arctic grayling. Around this time of year, he is engaged in checking the reindeer.

When the fishing season starts, they get very busy, because they must catch and save as much fish as they can for the winter. This is for his family and his dog to survive. The more he catches, the easier their lives. So from June to July, he makes sure he gets enough food for his family. Then he helps out his relatives. Normally, Alekseev and the younger family members catch fish and the elder ones cut them open, take the roe out and dry them. They boil the roe in salt water. In order to make dried salmon, they soak both sides of the salmon in salt water for 15 minutes and then dry it. When August begins, he gathers bilberries on the tundra. Till then, he catches chinook salmon (king salmon), sockeye salmon, chum salmon, humpback salmon (pink salmon), and arctic char, but at the beginning of September, the coho salmon return. However, most people don't like this fish because it has little fat.

He says they need 15,000 dried salmons to feed the dogs annually. This includes all kinds of salmons. They also need 3,000 dried chinook salmon and sockeye salmon for themselves. Since he stocks frozen arctic chars, he says these numbers are not such a large amount. In fact, it is the total amount, including the relatives' portion. When he says "relatives," it includes 20 people in total; besides his own family (2 members), it includes Alekseev's family (7 members), Vakhtangov's daughter's family (5 members), and Vakhtangov's second daughter's family (6 members). If you include Edyk, who passed away this year, it makes 21 members, and if you include the children of Slava (Natalia's son) and Katya (Natalia's daughter), that makes 23. He says they need 150 salmon per person annually. Based on this calculation, they would need 3,450 salmon for 23 people. But because within this group of 23 people, there are 9 children under 10 years old, including 2 infants who are a year old, the amount of 3,000 that Vakhtangov had said seemed rational. Besides these, he kept 12 bags of 70 kilograms of frozen arctic chars for the winter. This adds up to 840 kilograms. They preserve the salmon dry because they can't freeze it in summer. They don't get frost until after the arctic chars return.

When the river freezes in September, they put the frozen fish in the raised storage room they call *milkan*. This is what had been built in front of Vakhtangov's hut a few days before when we visited it with Natalia. I had also seen it next to a *yanana* on the tundra, and in front of Maria's hut. This storage room is elevated to prevent the dogs and animals from eating the food kept inside. So that the animals can't enter it, a fence surrounds the small storage room built on top of stakes. According to Natalia, at the beginning of winter, the fish is piled up inside about 40 centimetres high. This storage room is 1.5 meters long and 1 meter wide. Thus, if you calculate its capacity in water, it would hold 600 litres. The winter supply of

arctic char that Vakhtangov mentioned added up to 840 kilograms, so the two values do not contradict each other. These fish are kept frozen during the winter. Then in May, when it gets warmer, they cut open the left over ones and dry them.

The dogs need a lot of fish as their food through the winter. However, Vakhtangov says 150 dried salmon and salted salmon are just enough for him and his wife. He makes two barrels of salted salmon. Normally, they need 150 salmon per person annually, but as their winter provision, Vakhtangov and his wife only need 150 salmon between the two of them. They eat one salmon made into a soup every two days. In addition, they eat dried reindeer meat. The hunted wild ducks also become part of their provisions.

They use a net for fishing. In the rivers on the tundra, they use a hook called *achiai*. This is made of a nail and is attached to the end of a shaft with the sharp end pointing ahead. They use this if they find a fish in a stream while they're herding their reindeer. People don't like carrying a lot of things with them when they go to the tundra. Therefore, they just take the hooks with them, and when they find a fish in the river, they look for a wooden stick on the spot and make a harpoon there. This is used to catch various kinds of salmon. However, chinook salmon live in large rivers, so they don't use this. *Achiai* is a hook with a string attached to it, which comes off the harpoon when the salmon gets caught on it. That way, the salmon can't get away even if the salmon swims about struggling, because the hook sticks to it. It works the same way as the harpoon the Ainu use, called *marek*. In fact, Vakhtangov says he always walks around with a fishing line and hook in his pocket, besides the *achiai* so that he can catch the fish whenever he wants to on the tundra.

In September, Vakhtangov goes out to the river mouth of the Pakhachi River to hunt for seals on the shore. Alekseev and his wife Natalia, Natalia's son Slava and his wife also come with him to hunt. When Edyk – Vakhtangov's son and Alekseev's younger brother – was alive, he accompanied them too. They catch 10 seals in total, and store the seal fat in a glass bottle to eat in the winter. It is preserved uncooked. Two years ago, I had seen Maria drying out the seal's fur and stuffing the bottle with its fat. They say seal fat is very tasty, and it tastes even better when it goes off. He also salts down the seal meat and preserves it in a wooden barrel. Before they eat this, they soak it in water for a whole day and then cook it.

When the seal-hunting season finishes, Alekseev goes to hunt land animals. Since Vakhtangov has retired from this job, he doesn't go hunting but goes fishing on ice. The river freezes by October 10, and the ice is there until June. As a matter of fact, since the climate has changed these days, they say the ice melts around May 15. Anyway, when the river is covered with ice, and they feel like a fish broth, Vakhtangov goes to the river and catches fish for some of the families. He catches arctic char and arctic grayling. When he goes fishing, he catches a 70 kg-bag full of fish. There are days when he can't get any at all, but he says he catches them

once every two days. In total, he fishes about six bags full. A full bag weighs 70 kilograms; so six bags would make 420 kilograms.

During the winter, Vakhtangov sometimes goes to check out the reindeer herd. But he says that depends on his physical condition. His son, Alekseev, spends much more time with the reindeer herd. They need 15 reindeer annually to raise the whole family – 23 members in total, as Vakhtangov had explained before, including his younger brother's and his children's families. Besides that, he says they need 7 moose and 20 bears at the most. This does not contradict Natalia's explanation; she said it was difficult to live on 10 reindeer annually, and that she needed moose and fish on top of that. It is best to hunt bears in May and June. Vakhtangov says he sometimes tries hunting them, but doesn't succeed. He is better at reindeer herding and fishing, rather than hunting.

10.3 Day-to-day Life and Kinship

The first point that became clear from hearing about Alekseev and Vakhtangov's day-to-day lives was that both their subsistence activities and the distribution of products were basically done among the kinship group. Particularly if you look at it from Vakhtangov's standpoint, the subject of the activities is his younger brother's family and his children's families. Now, Vakhtangov's younger brother and children are all married and have children, and they all earn their own livings as individual domestic units. Therefore, their relationship makes a herding unit formed through cognatic descent, combining the domestic units. If they managed a reindeer herd together and lived in one place, they would form a *nimiyolgan*.

Currently, they live in different parts of the village. However, when they go salmon-fishing or seal-hunting, they form an appropriate activity group to cooperate. Depending on the activity, the activity groups form and dissolve according to the principle of cognatic descent. Among the reindeer herders of Kamchatka, the ideological social structure is based on a cognatic descent group, and while the stability of a herding unit is one of its characteristics, the flexibility of their groupings is indispensable in forming groups in their daily lives.

The basic subsistence units are domestic units based on the nuclear family, which form the herding unit. Vakhtangov's closest relatives were once members of his domestic unit. Even after they got married and formed a separate domestic unit, Vakhtangov maintained their connections through their subsistence activities. After having saved their winter provisions for himself and his wife, he keeps working for the 23 members of the rest of the relatives, and he accurately knows how much food they all need in total over the year. This indicates how Vakhtangov considers all of them as one cooperative group for earning their subsistence.

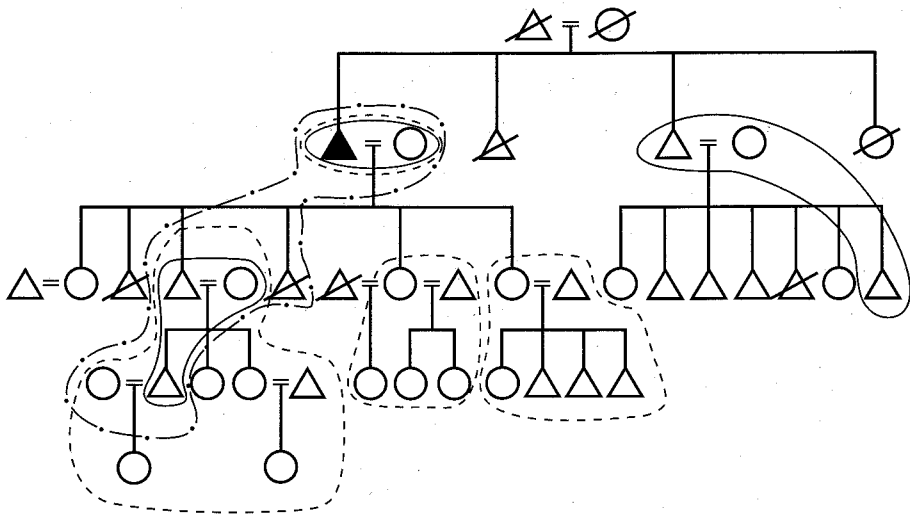


fig.20 Vakhtangov's activities, production and distribution. Solid lines show the members of the groups for the fishing camp, — — — line shows the members of seal hunting camp, and Vakhtangov's production is distributed to all the domestic units indicated by dotted lines.

Actually, Vakhtangov said that they divided the catch equally within the *nimiyolgan* – which means “those who live together.” In fact, these days also they don't only share them among relatives, but with their neighbours. For example, when Vakhtangov's neighbour returns from hunting, he gives Vakhtangov some meat. No matter how much it cost to go hunting, he will never ask him for money. What's more, his son, Alekseev, gives the meat out to anybody. Vakhtangov and Natalia both told me the same thing. They divided the game from the hunt among family members mainly related by cognatic descent, but these days they have expanded the subject of distribution to include their neighbours. As a matter of fact, the subject of distribution basically has not changed; the *nimiyolgan* is mainly formed through cognatic descent. Under the current situation in the village, they have to make a difference between relatives and non-relatives when giving out the meat. Alekseev's explanation that they give the meat to anybody shows how he is trying to protect the traditional principle of distribution. However, in reality, the job of giving the meat out was left totally in Natalia's hands. Except for the neighbour, she distributed the meat to people related through kinship.

The fact that Vakhtangov fishes together with his relatives and tries to ensure their winter provisions seems like a one-sided favour, for which he does not ask compensation. His gift of labour and products seems to me like a stream flowing from parent to child, never flowing back in the other direction. In fact, this principle also fits in with the inheritance of reindeer, because the reindeer are passed on from parents to children – from one generation to the next. In effect, this is a linear flow

of goods without return.

As a matter of fact, they see this differently. Vakhtangov's son, Alekseev, is a reincarnation of Vakhtangov's father – whom he was named after – and Vakhtangov calls him "father." Thus, he is his father, as well as his son. When Vakhtangov contributes to his son, Alekseev, by working and giving him products, he is actually doing a favour to his father in return. The gifts circulate, and reciprocity is formed between Vakhtangov and his father. This is a reciprocal cycling between two people, but if the reincarnation were from one generation above, it would be a reciprocal cycling among three. These small reciprocal relationships combine and repeat to lead to one generation after another.

Their outlook on life and death – in which the dead go to the other world and are reborn again to this world – and their tradition of naming the reincarnated baby after the deceased are not mere traditions, but are customs strongly linked to human relationships built through daily activities of subsistence and sharing game. They understand this one-sided flow of favours as a consecutive reciprocal relationship among families related in the past, present and future. They put this idea into practice by giving gifts and doing favours in their daily lives; they are not only living with their children, but also with their ancestors.

The second point which became clear from hearing about Vakhtangov and Alekseev's day-to-day lives is that their subsistence activities are composed of a complex system of hunting and fishing, in addition to herding. As it has been proved in the Koryak society, because they merge the reindeer herds into one large herd during the summer and leave it to the young herders to take care of, the rest of the people in the *nimiylgan* can go hunting and fishing. This basically hasn't changed since long before the *kolkhoz* or *sovkhos* began until today. In other words, they earn their living mainly by hunting and fishing – the hunting activity system, as seen among the Canadian reindeer hunters – to which they have added reindeer herding.

The difference between hunting activities and herding activities is that in hunting, they look for a wild reindeer, run after it, stalk it, kill it, dissect it and carry it, while in herding, that procedure is converted into the activity of controlling and breeding a reindeer herd. When the herders migrate with the reindeer herd, choosing the pastureland depending on the season, they protect the herd from wolves and bears, geld the males, control the number of reindeer appropriate for breeding, segregate the females from the herd for delivery, and put markings on the fawns to show the owner. In addition, they train some of the reindeer to pull the reindeer-sleigh. They kill weak fawns, female reindeer that don't look after their fawns, and ill or weak reindeer so that they can keep breeding a genetically healthy reindeer herd. Thus they control reproduction by adjusting the number of reindeer in the herd.

They use sleighs and lassos to chase and catch the reindeer, and knives and spears

to kill them. Since they bring the reindeer near their dwellings and then kill them, they don't need to transport the meat. Women cut up the reindeer meat. Cooking, drying the meat, making preserved food, tanning reindeer fur, and making clothes are all women's tasks. Women's tasks in the hunting activity system do not change in the herding system. Moreover, the task of dissecting the reindeer and cooking the meat, fat and the grease extracted from the bones links directly with the rituals; thus women play an important role in the reindeer rituals.

Looking at their subsistence activities as a whole – not only reindeer herding, but also fishing and hunting as well – it depends on the individual how much weight he places on each activity. If we plot down on a map the spot where they hunt, fish or herd, and measure the straight distance from the village, the goat hunting spot is 20 km away, and the seal-hunting spot is 30 km away. Alekseev and his son, Slava, go goat hunting alone, but their wives and Vakhtangov accompany them when they go seal hunting. When they go salmon fishing about 2 km away from the village, Vakhtangov and his relatives join them as well. But fishing arctic grayling at the beginning of spring in the upper streams of the Pakhachi River, about 60-70 km away from the village, is Alekseev's job. Vakhtangov goes fishing in the frozen river near the village in winter. If we plot the outer limits of each seasonal pastureland from the village, the summer field is 100 km, the winter field is 70 km, the spring

table.6 Subsistence activities, maximum distance from the settlement, and participants.

Activities	Maximum Distance from the Settlement (km)	Participants			
		A	S	V	N
A. Reindeer Herding					
A1 Autumn pasturing	60		+		
A2 Winter pasturing	70	+	+	+	
A3 Spring pasturing	50		+		+
A4 Summer pasturing	100	+			
			+		
B. Hunting					
B1 Goat hunting	20	+	+		
B2 Seal hunting	30	+		+	+
B3 Bear hunting	10	+			
		+			
C. Fishing					
C1 Arctic grayling fishing	60-70	+			
C2 Salmon fishing	2	+		+	+
		+			

Notes: Arctic grayling is *halius* in Russian, *Tymallus arcticus*. Salmon include chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*), pink salmon (*O. gorbuscha*), sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*), coho salmon (*O. kisutch*), and chinook salmon (*O. tshawytsch*). Participants are as follows. A: Alekseev, S: Slava (A's son), V: Vakhtangov (A's father), N: Natalia (A's wife).

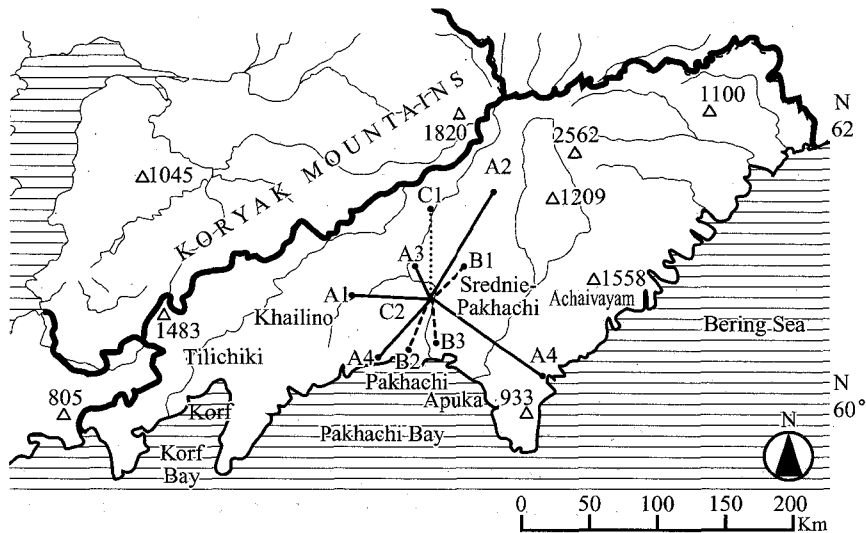


fig.21 Space used for annual subsistence activities by Alekseev and Vakhtangov's domestic units.

field is 50 km, and the autumn field is 60 km away from the village in a straight line. Alekseev lives together with the reindeer herd in winter, but Vakhtangov says that depends on his health. Vakhtangov makes ear-markings on the fawns when the herd comes near the village. Alekseev's son, Slava, drives the reindeer herd throughout the year.

Alekseev's wife, Natalia, currently works at the clinic in the village, but cooks reindeer meat dishes and tans fur at home. Maria works at the dormitory in the village, but tans fur, sews clothes, cuts up reindeer and cooks to make provisional food in her extra hours. They go camping to hunt seals and fish salmon. Men do the actual hunting or fishing, but the women dissect the seals, cut open and dry the fish. Other women go to the reindeer herd to pick out the weak fawns born in spring. Young women such as Nina, who works as an accountant at the *sovkhos*, or Ilya and Tanya, who are schoolteachers, cut up reindeer and cook skilfully – they are obviously used to doing it.

It became clear that the young men do the reindeer herding throughout the year, and go goat hunting far from the village with the middle-aged men. It is always the men in their prime who go far to fish. The old men herd reindeer and fish near the village. Women cut open the fish and make preserved food, cut up seals and cook them, tan furs and sew them into clothes in the houses in the village or at the campsites. Young men work in the areas farthest from their dwellings, while old women and men, women in their prime, young women and children work within the dwellings or near them; the Canadian reindeer hunters use their space in the same way. In addition, they are also similar in the sense that the consecutive tasks

– from getting the animal to consuming it – are chosen by each person according to individual differences.

As a matter of fact, except in summer, before the village was formed, the reindeer herders migrated with the herd in their *yananas*, so the men's jobs herding the reindeer in autumn, winter and spring were done near the dwellings. Therefore, looking at how far the working space is from the dwelling, the herding life is characterized by the fact that animals to-be-eaten exist near the dwelling; this differs greatly from the hunting life. However, the way the young men herd the reindeer at the pastureland far away from the village in summer has not changed at all – from even before the village was formed. After the village was established, people began to spend the winter away from the reindeer herd – with the exception of the herders and a few women. So, now a middle-aged man in his prime visits the reindeer herd regularly to check them.

The choice of jobs according to age and gender is basically done within the subsistence unit. But looking at their daily lives, I have realized that each subsistence unit differs in how much weight they place on different activities. Alekseev herds reindeer, but places more weight on hunting. On the other hand, Vakhtangov places emphasis on fishing and doesn't go hunting as much. Natalia's son, Slava, always goes reindeer herding, but Alekseev takes him hunting and is trying to teach him how to hunt.

This can be interpreted as a choice of tasks among the family – particularly within the herding unit, which is a restricted cognatic descent group. By herding reindeer, they can afford to do other activities and change the ratio of activities depending on each domestic unit. This difference in how much weight they place upon each task is the very reason why they distribute the game or catch among the relatives.

The Koryaks have a diverse way of working depending on each domestic unit; this is something new, which was not observable among the Canadian reindeer hunters. This is a characteristic of the reindeer herders of the Olyutorskii Region. The Koryaks and Chukchees of this region are without doubt reindeer herders. However, they earn their living not only by herding but also by hunting and fishing; within or between the domestic units, they are free to take part in these activities. Vakhtangov had said before, "When a father has more than one son, he makes each of them into separate specialists." This clearly indicates their way of thinking – sharing the activities within the cognatic descent group.

This Koryak system of activities can be called a "herding-hunting-fishing composite system." I understand these diverse activities as a strategy to stabilize their lives. No matter how large a reindeer herd they may have, it might die out due to bad weather or diseases. In such cases, if they have a hunting specialist, or if they have preserved food from fishing in spring through summer, they can survive

the winter. They consider the herding unit based on the cognatic descent as one subsistence unit – where they produce and distribute foods – in which they combine various activities such as herding, hunting and fishing to make a complex.

10.4 Alekseev and Bear-hunting

Two years earlier, when I had visited Srednie-Pakhachi Village for the first time, Alekseev had tried a number of times to catch bears. He knew there were bears near the tributary of the Pakhachi River a little downstream from the village and he had set some traps there. However, he hadn't been able to catch any. When I returned to the village the second time, Alekseev told me how he had caught a bear after we had left.

After catching a bear, they don't hold any special rituals or festivals. But when Alekseev takes home a bear, his wife, Natalia, brings out an iron dish containing a fire, and puts it outside the door – before taking the bear inside. She then pulls out the bear's whiskers and burns them in the fire. They do this not only with bears, but also with other animals such as goats, as I had seen before. This minor ritual is a greeting to the fire, which means an offering to the fire. It also indicates their notion behind it – i.e. they see the bears and goats as guests that visit people's houses. This reminds me of the Ainu myths; the bear, which is the deity of mountains (*Kimun-kamui*), is invited by the deity of fire, and visits the human's village through being hunted by a hunter. Before the bear enters the house, he greets the deity of fire. The Ainus and Koryaks have in common the concept that hunting is a visit to the human world paid by divine animals.

Then Natalia stuffs the bear's ears and eyes with white rabbit fur. Alekseev says this is to keep the bear's spirit soft and tender like the rabbit fur so it can go to the upper world. He also says they can keep the hunter's spirit gentle like the rabbit's fur as well. Alekseev had explained to me before that the bear was the strongest animal and the rabbit was the weakest. Its ears and eyes having been covered with the fur of the timid rabbit, could it be that the bear forgets the hunter and is filled with feelings of kindness, because it can only see and hear the rabbit?

As a matter of fact, they use rabbit's fur symbolically in rituals with other animals too. I had heard before from Maria that rabbit fur is included in the *inawet* – a symbolic reindeer made up from reindeer's stomach, bullets, tobacco and fat – offered to the sea after hunting seals. Furthermore, when I saw the reindeer ritual held in the autumn land two years ago, I had seen Alekseev offering to his homeland and *Gichigi* an *inawet* that contained rabbit fur together with the cooked reindeer meat, organ parts from the dissected reindeer, and tobacco. When I had asked Natalia why they added rabbit fur to the *inawet*, she had said she didn't know why but that was their custom.

The custom of covering the bear's ears and eyes can be seen among other

Siberian ethnic groups. For example, the Khantis cover the bear's eyes and ears with coins at the bear festival. Furthermore, the Ainu fill the bear's skull with *inau* after they take out the brains. Considering that various forms of apology can be seen widely as I mention later on, it can be said that they cover its eyes and ears so that the bear cannot see or hear the person who kills it. However, what they use to cover them differs – i.e. coins and *inau*. As a matter of fact, the common point in these is that they are valuable gifts. If so, rabbit fur may be thought of as valuable. Rabbit fur may have a symbolic significance as a gift to keep the bear's spirit tender.

Then Alekseev apologizes to the bear, "I'm sorry to have shot you." After he has said this, Natalia skins the bear and starts to cut it up. Apologizing to the killed bear is a widely observable custom among other Siberian ethnic groups – they even justify themselves by telling the bear that Russians killed it, not them! However, the Canadian Forest Indians say they can shoot the animals without hesitation when they see them, because they come out voluntarily to give their meat to humans. Ainu also believe the bear is a deity and that it comes and visits the village bringing with its fur and meat as a gift. They don't apologize after hunting. It fundamentally contradicts the hunter's worldview if they apologize to the animal they have killed. However, as Yuri told me later on, some ethnic groups of Western Siberia consider the bear a divine animal and don't hunt or eat it. As killing a bear is taboo for them, it is natural for them to apologize when they need to kill one. For them, the bears are probably ancestors, and totem animals. But this kind of idea can't be seen among the modern Koryaks at all. So it seemed very interesting to me when I heard Alekseev apologize to the bear he had killed.

After that, the bear's skull is taken to a special place – they put it down on the ground at the foot of an alder tree. If they kill one bear, a single skull is laid down near an alder tree. As a matter of fact, this place is not a fixed spot. It can be anywhere as long as it is at the foot of an alder. However, there is another way of placing the skull. The skull is put inside "an animal's hole." This "hole" is located at a number of special places, as Vakhtangov explained to me in detail later in connection with the Koryak hunting festival.

In addition, Alekseev keeps a bear skull in his bedroom on the floor. This is to keep evil spirits away from the house. He sometimes offers a piece of fat to the skull as an *inawet*. The old man who had shown me the *Gichigi* on the tundra also kept a bear's skull as a guardian spirit. There was a bear's skull inside the bag in which he kept the *Gichigi*.

Alekseev believes that every bear has a family. The male bear may walk about separately from its family, but he says he is a member of his family living in the area. As long as the hunter sticks to the rules and hunts, the hunted animal will part from its body – as the human spirit does – and become another animal. A bear turns into another bear, a goat into another goat. According to Alekseev, since the hunted

animal becomes another animal, the hunter keeps catching the same animal. This belief about the animals is the same as the Canadian hunters'. We can deduce from this the hunter's notion of the cyclical movement of the immortal animal spirits.

I also asked Yuri further questions about bears. Since he knows a lot, I thought he must know something about bears as well. However, he said that in this region there was nothing ceremonial regarding bear hunting. He said they didn't do anything special before or after hunting, but just skinned the bear. He had been in Salekhard in Western Siberia from 1952 to 1957 to attend a vocational college. This city is located on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains and at the mouth of the Ob River. In this region known as Yamal-Nenetskii, people regard the bear as a divine animal. Yuri said they make offerings whenever they see a bear. Once when Yuri found a bear, he went out hunting with his rifle, but after a while people hid themselves in their houses and made offerings. They put reindeer meat and rabbit fur on a plate made of white birch. They make an *inawet* like this whenever they see a bear. Yuri failed to shoot the bear. He was told afterwards that a bear is a divine animal and they never kill or eat them. The way that Yuri told me about the incident indicates that the Koryaks or Chukchees of the Olyutorskii Region in Northern Kamchatka have not built up such customs around the bears.

In fact, from what Alekseev tells me, people used to consider the bear as a divine animal. However, they have stopped thinking that way nowadays. Alekseev added that there is a story told about bears: Once a group of women disappeared. But later, people found out they were with the bears.

I was then able to hear from a man how he had actually caught a bear. A few days later, on our way to school to give a talk to the children, we saw the Koryak man who had kept picking on Bazarov, the Russian linguist, in the trackless trolley at Vakhtangov's son's funeral; so I stopped him. He was a huge man with a beard, but having seen him wrestle I knew he wasn't mean. In addition, I knew they were ceremoniously supposed to quarrel in a loud voice and laugh at each other. To my surprise, he said he had caught a male bear that morning.

He then told me about it as follows:

"As I climbed up the hill, I saw a male bear and a female bear with a cub. But I couldn't get close because the snow was too soft, so I waited there. I prayed to my spirit to make the bear come closer to me. After a while, the bear started to come uphill toward me. I whistled to the bear lightly. In the Koryak tradition, you can't shoot a bear suddenly. You have to shoot it after letting it know. So the bear noticed. At this point, the bear could have done two things – run away, or challenged to fight me. This bear stood upright and started to walk towards me, so I shot him with the rifle just as he stood up. I cut up the bear and wrapped the meat with its fur. As the snow was soft, I rolled this package down from the top of the hill. Then I picked it up at the bottom and carried it over my shoulders. It was 1:30 p.m. when I got to my house in the village."

I could just see this huge man fighting with the bear. I thought he wasn't exaggerating at all when he said he had just returned carrying the bundled-up bear, which would have weighed more than 100 kilograms, over his shoulders.

Bear hunting is a solemn ritual activity performed through a conversation with the bears. Human beings do not kill the bears by force. The bear and the hunter communicate during the hunting process. This is the "rule" that Alekseev refers to – it is a promise between hunters and animals, a spiritual relationship. On the other hand, it is also true that bear hunting is a practical activity, in which hunters can never be too careful. I had already heard how a bear had attacked a member of Vakhtangov's family.

Once when I was organizing my bags, Alekseev had asked me if I had a sketchbook. Since I couldn't understand why he wanted such a thing, he told me he drew sketches, and showed me his sketchbook – which he had used up – full of drawings. I was surprised at the fact that he drew pictures, but I was even more surprised and moved when I saw what he had drawn. They were so marvellous that I took photos of them. There were 12 of them in total. They were drawn with a fine-tipped ink pen, but two of them were lightly coloured. Nine of them were sketches of bears and hunting, from which I was able to understand how he saw the bears as a hunter. The 12 sketches were as follows:

The first sketch is a drawing of three bears and Alekseev himself. On the top half of the paper, he had drawn bears walking towards him, and a side view of them walking. On the bottom half, he had drawn bears from a diagonal angle with the hunter standing next to them. All the bears were drawn realistically and the movement of their entire bodies was accurately expressed. More accurately speaking, the three bears were depictions of the bear he had drawn. Particularly, the bear drawn from an angle was larger than the others, and he had even depicted finely in which direction the fur was growing. The outline was drawn with a vigorous bold line, which made the bear very realistic. The two bears drawn on the top half had peaceful expressions – it even seemed as if they were smiling. The hunter, Alekseev, was wearing a hat, holding a spear in his right hand like a cane, the leash of the hound in his left hand; a rifle hung across his back diagonally over his shoulders. The hound's uplifted face and pricked ears looked straight ahead at the bear. The bear's paws, and the bottom of the legs were not drawn, because the bear was standing in a grassy place. As a matter of fact, looking at two of the bears, part of the claw from one paw was slightly drawn. Neither the hunter nor the hound had been depicted below their ankles.

The second drawing portrayed the very moment when Alekseev, aiming with his rifle, was about to shoot the bear that was walking towards him, from the foot of a broken tree. The bear was drawn small because it was far from the hunter. Nonetheless, its brisk and lively movement were dearly drawn: the bear reached out

its huge right paw, kicked the ground with its front left leg, with its left foot forward, its body bounding and the fur rolling in large waves as it ran with all its strength towards the hunter. Alekseev, who was aiming at it with his rifle, was drawn from an upper diagonal angle to the right, as if he were looking down on himself. The rifle was pointed at the bear, and his right index finger was just about to pull the trigger. The rifle was depicted accurately down to the finest detail, which showed how thoroughly he knew his most important weapon. In addition, he had drawn the broken tree very powerfully; how it slanted, the shape of the part where it had broken off, how the two branches left there spread out, and how the roots – which firmly supported the trunk as if it were grasping the land – appeared above the ground. According to him, this tree stood far away from the village. In this picture, just as in the first drawing, the bear showed a calm and kind expression in this tense situation.

In the third sketch, he had drawn himself at a distance trying to approach a bear stuck in a loop-trap. The loop-trap was made of a wire, tied to a broad tree trunk. The bear stood up, the loop still around its neck, as it saw the hunter coming close. It growled as it showed its fangs, snarled and, threatening, bared its claws at the closing hunter. It was drawn so powerfully; I could almost hear the growling. The hunter held the rifle with both hands keenly watching the bear's movements. There was an object drawn leaning against the tree's broad trunk near the loop-trap, which he explained was the wreckage of a plane that had crashed. He had accurately drawn a segment of the plane's body with windows.

The fourth sketch, just as the second one did, showed the very moment in which Alekseev was about to shoot a distant bear – he was aiming at it with his rifle. It was different to the second one in that the bear stood halfway up a hill, and there was a hound barking in front of it. The hound's ears were flattened, its jaws were open and it was about to attack the bear bravely. However, the bear remained calm and stood there watching the dog's movements. It was charging itself up to be able to attack the hound with a single blow the next moment it moved. The dog barked repeatedly as it retreated, keeping a fixed distance between itself and the bear so it wouldn't be attacked. While the hound draws the bear's attention, the hunter shoots it. The drawing sketched the moment so well that it made the viewer feel the tension of the scene as if he were there. At Alekseev's foot, as he aimed with his rifle, there was the bag and spear he had taken with him. If the wounded bear attacked him, he would have to use the spear as a last resort. There was a valley with peculiar cliffs that ran between the low mountains that appeared beyond the tundra hill. This place actually existed, as did the places drawn in the second and third sketches. The bear's expression drawn in this picture was also kind and gentle, in contrast to the energy that overflowed from its body.

In the fifth sketch, a giant bear walked in the snow. It lifted its right paw slightly

above the snow, but it moved slowly – it even seemed as if it were just standing calmly there in the snow. Its fat, robust body was covered with a fine coat of fur. It must have been the end of autumn, just before it hibernated. The mountains in the background were covered with snow. The sun was about to rise from between two unusual round mountain tops, and with fine lines he had drawn rays arrowing into the sky.

In the sixth sketch, Alekseev stood with his hound. He carried a backpack, his rifle was slung across one shoulder, his binoculars across the other, and he held a cane in his right hand. This cane was not carrying a spearhead, but if he had found a bear, he would have taken a spearhead out of his backpack and attached it to the cane to make it into a spear. He held the dog's leash in his left hand. The dog pricked its ears and looked straight ahead with a fearless expression. If Alekseev had found a bear, he would have let the hound free to hinder the game. He hadn't drawn his or the dog's feet at the bottom of the sketch, as in the first and third picture. It wasn't important for him to draw the details of the feet: these actually made both their movements more energetic, rather than making them look still. In the background, there was a steep cliff, halfway up which a large rock and four peculiar looking trees were accurately depicted, backed by a single cloud floating in the sky behind them.

The seventh sketch depicted how they cut up a moose. A male moose with large pallet-shaped antlers lay in the middle, and a hunter sitting on a fallen tree was about to dissect it with the knife in his right hand. The hunter was drawn from the back. Another bearded hunter, wearing an unusual hat and carrying binoculars across his shoulder, held a spear in his hand: this was Alekseev. He raised his right hand as he stood behind the moose facing the viewer. Fine lines were drawn coming out of his mouth to show he was shouting something. The hound lay on its stomach in front of the moose and watched it being cut up. The backpack with a rifle lain on top of it were drawn next to the moose's head. A bonfire was being burnt behind the moose and smoke rose high up in the air. Two short sticks were framed together with a long pole, from the end of which a kettle was hung over the fire to boil water to make tea. The other end of the long pole was fixed to the ground with a stone weight. In the upper part of the drawing, facing the viewer, he had drawn a boat tied to the bank. They were cutting up the moose on a riverbank. In this one sketch, Alekseev had depicted quite precisely a single cut from the hunting procedure.

Surprisingly, in the eighth sketch, he had drawn myself. I was wearing a hat with a brim, had a pipe in my mouth, and I held a field-notebook in my left hand; I stood straight, writing something down in my notebook with the pen in my right hand. In the bottom right corner, he had written in Russian "Takasha-san." I asked him when he had sketched this. He said he had drawn it from memory after I had left the village two years earlier. I was surprised to see how accurately he had drawn it, so I asked him if he had drawn it looking at my photo. But he said no. Actually,

when I thought about it, the photos that I had taken two years before were printed in Japan and I only took them back with me when I returned. What's more, they had never taken my photo while I was there two years ago. In other words, Alekseev had drawn this sketch of me only from memory. He then told me this sketch was from the *Tanteginin* ritual, or the reindeer sending ritual for the dead, held after the reindeer come back. It was just after we had arrived in the village with the Russian researchers two years earlier; I was taking down notes of the first reindeer ritual that I had ever seen. A Japanese man must have been interesting for him as well. When I looked closely, the shape of the hat's brim was a little different from the one that I had actually worn. He had accurately drawn the collar on my shirt, but he had drawn a collar to my jacket, which actually didn't have any. In the picture, there were minor errors like this that even I didn't notice until I looked closely at it, but the expression on my face, the features of my body, and more than anything, the way I took down notes in my notebook with a pipe in my mouth, were all very accurately captured and depicted.

He had a sharp eye for detail and a wonderful memory. He said he had drawn all the pictures from memory: obviously, this was natural because you cannot sketch while you hunt bears. From this picture, I learned that Alekseev had been watching me as I had been observing them closely. I also found out that just as they lived in my memory after I left the village, so I lived in theirs.

The ninth picture was a mysterious one. In the middle of the picture was a close sketch of a woman's face. Her rich hair parted in the middle and came down below her ears. She had narrow, well-defined eyebrows, large almond-shaped eyes, round black pupils and beautiful bow-shaped lips. Her slender face resembled Nina's. She looked straight ahead in silence – she wasn't smiling or angry. She didn't show her feelings, but she seemed intelligent and I could feel the kindness inside her heart. At first, Alekseev said she was his wife. But when I asked him if she was Natalia, he said no. He said she was a woman he knew. Indeed, the name written in Russian below her face was not "Natalia." Her face had been faintly outlined in the middle of the picture, drawn so as it would just be contained by one of the peculiar round mountains. In between the two round mountains, the sun was about to rise, spreading its rays into the sky. He hadn't drawn a tundra hill at the foot of the mountains like he did in the other sketches, but had drawn two lines gently curving toward the bottom to make a contrast with the mountain ridge. Beneath these, he had drawn many fine slightly coloured lines slanting to the bottom of the sketchbook. It looked like the sea. In the middle of this floated a ring-shaped pendant with semicircular objects, four small round objects and a hole for a chain. In between the mountains and the coastline, cut off both from the mountains and the sea, was a narrow stretch of land like a recumbent woman's body. And the woman's face was placed right in the centre of all this. I didn't know the story that went behind this picture. However,

I could at least figure out that Alekseev was not only interested in hunting bears. He had sensed the tender feelings not only of the bears, but also of people, and had expressed it. I could feel a common sentiment behind his depiction of the two expressions of the bear and the woman. It was something intellectual, powerful, but gentle and kind.

The tenth picture was a rough sketch of a bear. Only the face – looking forward – and its slightly raised right paw were depicted in more detail. The whole body was outlined with a simple line – with the least detail. The bear's deep sentiments – gentle but full of dignity – were expressed through the two small eyes that looked straight at you, the mouth that was kept shut, the broad jutting nose, and the small pair of smooth, pricked ears. None of the paws and feet, except the right paw, were drawn. However, there was so much movement to the body that it seemed as if the bear was going to slowly walk out of the sketchbook toward us. Alekseev had drawn the lively and energetic heart of the wild bear.

In the eleventh picture, he had drawn from a diagonal angle a giant bear standing on the tundra. The shoulders rose high, the stout paws were planted firmly on the ground, and its large face looked straight ahead; they all blended in as one with the tundra and mountains in the background and stood firmly there. Its white face seemed to tell that this bear was the old master of the tundra. This picture was slightly coloured, making it into a landscape painting. The mountain range in the distance was almost identical to the fifth sketch, which showed not only the fact that it was a place that actually existed, but also that it was a special landscape for Alekseev that he liked to draw. But in contrast to the fifth sketch, where the bear was walking in the snow, in this eleventh drawing, the bear stood in a grassy field – I could see the season had changed in between these two pictures.

In the last picture (the twelfth), there was a giant bear lying in the grass with its paws splayed out in front and its head pointing ahead: it had just been killed, and Alekseev stood beside it. The bear had its eyes shut calmly and its ears were drooped. Its tongue had slipped out of the side of its mouth. The bear had stopped breathing, drooped its body and had thrown itself out on the ground. Nevertheless, the giant body – so much larger than the hunter's – gave off an air of dignity just as if the bear's spirit still existed there. Alekseev stood at an angle looking to the front; he was still holding the rifle in his right hand and he lifted his hat with his left hand. Similar to the seventh sketch showing the cutting up the moose in which he was shouting something as he raised his right hand, he was shouting something out into the distance in this picture as well. The two round mountains in the background were the same as those in the fifth and eleventh sketches, but drawn from a different angle – the two mountains crossed over each other in a different way – indicating that this picture was drawn from a different location.

As I have explained, the twelve sketches that Alekseev had drawn were realistic,

because they were the memories of those hunts that he went on in reality. I learned from this that he was a self-possessed observer with an outstanding memory. The very reason why he had drawn the bear's movements and expressions with such life was because that was where his interest focused on the most as a hunter. He would watch the bear's movements carefully, aim at the bear's heart the next moment and pull the trigger. In addition, I learned from these sketches that he didn't only observe the game. Alekseev had also drawn himself in the picture. He was looking at himself objectively – or in a self-transcendent way. The hunter moved in accordance with the bear's feelings and movements. He was not just looking at the bear; he was looking at the relationship between the bear and the hunter.

In that sense, the sixth sketch, in which he had drawn the hound blocking the bear's way and Alekseev aiming at the bear, is even more interesting. He was not only observing the relationship between the bear and the hunter, but was also calmly watching the relationship between the bear, hunter and hound. Moreover, in the picture of the moose's dissection, he had accurately drawn one of the hunting scenes. He has, ordered in his mind, all the scenes of hunting down to the finest detail. He once explained to me that he mentally rehearses the procedure of hunting before he actually goes goat hunting. He said that once he decides on what to catch, he would not shoot at another animal, even if he meets one on his way. In his mind, he has made a promise only with the targeted animal, and he faithfully carries out that promised hunt. What it really takes to be a hunter is to focus mentally on a particular animal, and to carry out precisely the plan that one has made.

In one of the sketches, he had drawn himself standing next to the killed game, shouting something as he raised his hand. He is not confronting the bear or moose. He is standing there with the bear's spirit, in the midst of joy being freed from tension. The bear and hunter are not standing in opposition anymore. The bear is his now, and even Alekseev seems to have unified with the bear. Is he shouting in joy toward someone? No, he is shouting to himself and to the bear, which must be his guardian deity. This dialogue of conflict and unity is the essence of hunting. As I learned from hunting bears with the Canadian Indians, hunting is a spiritual exchange between the hunter and the game, as well as a field to experience the "original oneness" – in that sense, it is a ritual in itself.

Among Alekseev's sketches, there were some that depicted generalized images, different from specific hunting scenes. For instance, the giant bear standing in the midst of the landscape, or the bear's face looking out of the picture. The picture of the woman's face that formed part of the landscape might be included as well. They express what his idea of a bear or of a woman is. Just as the mountain range that he often draws, or the sun with its rays spreading in the sky, these are something most significant for him. In these pictures too, he had drawn the bear's expression as calm and gentle as they were drawn in the specific hunting scenes.

As he had said, after he kills a bear following the “rules,” the bear is reborn to be another bear. Therefore, he shoots the same bear. That bear is the male bear of the family that lives in that area, and is also the master of the tundra. There is no wonder that I could see a common sentiment in the faces of the bears, whether they were a depiction of his general image of a bear or the record of a specific hunting scene. The tender and calm expression indicates that the bear is not the hunter’s enemy. The bear has friendly feelings toward him. Better said, Alekseev has friendly feelings toward the bear. Just as I felt an infinite closeness to the bear, which became a part of me when I hunted it, Alekseev has put the skull of the bear he killed in his bedroom, and has made it a part of him as his guardian deity. The bear is not Alekseev’s enemy, but is his closest friend. This is the very essence of the relationship between the hunter and his game.

10.5 Shamans and Bears

The bear can be a subject of fear for people, and at the same time be a close friend. This is an undeniable fact especially in the daily lives of those who are not hunters. Shamans sometimes use the bear’s power to surprise people, or to cure people’s illnesses.

People refer to the shaman as “an experienced person.” In addition, as I had already seen at previous rituals, “ordinary people” who were not fulltime shamans clearly played a shamanistic role as well – they served as spiritual mediators between this world and the supernatural world – at death rituals and reindeer rituals. Among them, there were people who were considered as specially gifted shamans. Yuri called them *angangel-nan*. *Nan* means “person” and *angangel* means “a person with a special sense.” Yuri said he had never seen a shaman, and he thought they only existed in books. But Vakhtangov, Alekseev’s father, said he had actually known two shamans in the past – one was a man, the other a woman. Vakhtangov also called them *angangel*. First, Vakhtangov told me how the male shaman knew how to turn himself into a bear.

One day, Vakhtangov was with a herd of reindeer, and his parents were at the village. When he was about to return to the village, the sun had already set. The shaman said to him, “I’ll accompany you.” For some reason, Vakhtangov could walk very fast. However, when he looked back, it wasn’t the shaman who was behind him; a horrifying bear was running behind him. So Vakhtangov ran away from it. The next morning, the shaman came to his house and asked him, “How did you feel yesterday?” The shaman had been teasing him. Vakhtangov said this happened in 1946.

According to Vakhtangov, this shaman was called Mangayat and died in 1949. He lived nearby – however, when he said “nearby,” considering the period of time, he must have meant the Mid-Pakhachi-Kolkhoz, which was established halfway up

the Pakhachi River. Then the shaman's relatives moved to Khailino Village, located near the Vivenka River. But they died as well, and now nobody remembers that shaman. They say he was a *Nyemlan*, or a Coastal Koryak. Then Vakhtangov told me another episode about this shaman.

One day, Vakhtangov became sick – he had caught a cold. The shaman said to him, “Let me cure you.” The shaman invited him to his house and started to dance. Vakhtangov was sitting in the middle of the room when he suddenly heard a bear's voice from the corner of the room. It wasn't the shaman who was making that noise. The shaman was singing and dancing as he played the drum. Then he heard plates clashing, but there was no one in the house. He slept the whole night through. It was very frightening to listen to the noise. He didn't remember what happened – he just slept through that whole night and the next day. It was in the evening when he woke up. He was feeling very well – the sickness had gone away.

Then Vakhtangov talked about the female shaman. She was called *Aimit* and was a Kelek from the Apuka region. The Kelek are Fluvial-Koryaks living near the river mouth of Apuka River. They are said to speak a language slightly different from the other Koryaks. A distant family relative of that shaman was said to be living in the village, Srednie-Pakhachi. One day, Vakhtangov's grandfather (the brother of his father's father) got ill. He had a fever, but because he was very strong, nobody could keep him still in bed. Five men were not enough to hold him down, and he ended up breaking many things. Even the doctors couldn't do anything about it. Then the elderly female shaman came and said, “We can't help him. It is better for him to go to the upper world.” After discussing among the relatives, they decided to follow the shaman's advice. She told them to get her a spoonful of water. Then she put on the hood attached to her jacket, and mumbled something. She poured the spoonful of water into his mouth. It made him sleepy and he passed away immediately. This happened in 1994.

Then Vakhtangov told another story about a shaman. It was either in 1977 or 1978. A man came from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii and asked a woman in the village to wash his clothes – this woman was working at the school in the village. But she refused to use the washing machine for him. Then he said to her, “You will end up washing your clothes by hand tomorrow!” Then on the following day, her washing machine broke down and she had to wash her clothes by hand.

Vakhtangov said this man was probably a shaman too, because he could foretell the future. This episode tells how they still believe in the existence of shamans, who have special abilities. The ability to control people's lives or to convert themselves into bears has something in common with foretelling the future. On Vakhtangov's part, he reveres the shaman in his day-to-day life in the same way he reveres the bears.

10.6 The Koryak Hunting Festival

Vakhtangov is an *Olyutor-nen* – i.e. he is from the Olyutor Region. Linguistically speaking, there are eight Coastal Koryak dialects, and he speaks the Olyutorskii dialect, which is one of them. Actually, people living in Srednie-Pakhachi Village speak either the Olyutorskii dialect or the Chauchuwenskii dialect, the latter of which is a Reindeer-Koryak dialect. This dialect is taught at school as the standard Koryak language, and is widely spread among the various regions. Alekseev's wife, Natalia, speaks Chauchuwenskii dialect and is registered as Chukchee. Yuri's family and Maria are also registered as Chukchees. In fact, the groupings Chukchee and Koryak are artificial ethnic classifications that the former Soviet Union created; in reality, the two groups are culturally and linguistically very close.

Natalia thinks she speaks Chukchee, because she belongs to the ethnic group "Chukchee." According to Bazarov, however, when you actually listen to her talk she's not speaking Chukchee, because you can't pick up the "r" sound, which is supposed to be heard in the language. Bazarov says that Stebnitskiy (a linguist) has proposed a theory saying the Chukchee "r" sound is converted into a "ye" sound in the Chauchuwenskii dialect, which is a reindeer-herding dialect. Indeed, Natalia pronounced the Chukchee "r" as "ye." Therefore, the language Natalia speaks is not Chukchee or an Olyutor dialect, but Chauchuwenskii dialect distinctive to this region.

The Chauchuwenskii dialect is used by reindeer herders. But the word *Chauchuwa* (*Chauchuveni*, *Chauchu*), from which the name might be originated, didn't originally signify one linguistic group. It means "things to which people show respect" or "wealthy people." These people possessed many reindeer, and helped those who didn't have any, or had only a few. They gave female reindeer to such people, because they would birth many fawns. If a poor person was given a reindeer and so became wealthy, he could then give some of his reindeer to other poor people. These people are called *Chauchuwa*.

In other words, *Chauchuwa* was originally a classification based on a way of life – i.e. they are people who herd reindeer. On the other hand, the Coastal Koryaks are called *Nyemlan*, which means people who live in one place permanently. This name derives from a living-pattern classification, not a linguistic one. There are also Koryaks living near the Pakhachi River mouth. They make a living by fishing, and thus are *Nyemlan*, but they are also called *Pokai-u*, or "people of the Pakhachi" at the same time. In this case, they are named after the place where they're living.

According to Bazarov, a linguist, the Moscow School advanced the theory that there is an Olyutorskii dialect to the Koryak language. On the other hand, the Leningrad School proposed that the language used around the river mouth of Apuka River is a Kelekskii dialect, which they think differs from the Olyutorskii dialect. According to Natalia, both Chukchees and Olyutor-Koryaks live in the villages

within the Olyutor Region. Even the Evenks from the west live in some of the villages. For example, Koryaks, Evenks and Chukchees live in Khailino Village near the Vivenka River in the west. In the same way, Chukchees, Koryaks and Evenks live in Achaivayam Village halfway up the Apuka River in the Northeast. The Koryaks living in this area are called “the river people.” In Apuka too, at the mouth of the Apuka River in the east, the three ethnic groups live together, using a mixture of the three dialects. Vakhtangov says that most of the Koryaks living in the Tilichiki Village at the Vivenka River mouth are Coastal Koryaks. He says the Reindeer-herding Koryaks from the Tilichiki Village migrated to the Pakhachi Basin. In fact, Vakhtangov used pasturelands in the coastal tundra between the Vivenka River and the Pakhachi River to herd his reindeer. Accordingly, it can be said that the people of this village have become a *Chauchuwa* – people who live by herding reindeer and who have various dialects and traditions as their backgrounds, and who are in the process of cultural fusion through marriage, shared life in the village, and school education. So this whole culture is what I call the “Olyutorskii Complex.”

However, the important point here is that “Olyutorskii Complex” is the name of the entire culture, and when you look at an individual or a family, they do not necessarily conform in their details. Their main livelihood activity is reindeer herding, but they combine hunting and fishing together and form a “herding-hunting-fishing composite system” of activities. What’s more, the percentage of each activity depends on the family or individual. The following might explain this. Vakhtangov and Alekseev knew well about hunting and fishing, whereas Yuri and Maria knew more about the reindeer. In addition, even though they were both Olyutorskii-Koryaks, Alekseev the hunter had a close relationship with bears, whereas his father, Vakhtangov, was scared of them. Moreover, Yuri wouldn’t admit that there was much significance in bear-hunting itself. Reindeer-herding activities and rituals closely unify the cultures of the Olyutorskii-Complex, but in contrast to this, they greatly differ when it comes to hunting.

Vakhtangov talked about a hunting-festival, which is not practiced very frequently anymore. Natalia or Maria, who were originally *Chauchuwa*, didn’t know much about it. So this must be a hunting-festival held by the Olyutorskii-Koryaks.

This autumn festival is called *Angitt-nguinik-nnalungo*. *Angit* means “festival,” *nguinik* means “wild animal” and *nnalungo* means “fur.” Thus it means “the wild animal’s fur festival.” It is held after the first snow of the year. When it snows for the first time in the year the next hunting season begins, so it also means that the previous hunting season has ended. A month before the festival, Vakhtangov sends messengers to invite all the neighbours. The messenger does not say the specific date, but just says, “When it is full moon.” The festival had to be held a little before full moon; it couldn’t be held afterwards. Elderly people take part in the festival for a long time. Currently, there is another festival called *Koyanaitawiginin* in which

people kill reindeer. This was the *Koyanaitatek* I had seen before, in which they welcomed the reindeer that returned from the summer pastureland and offered a reindeer to the autumn land. However, the “wild animal’s fur festival” was different from this, and was held when it snowed for the first time; this festival is seldom held nowadays. Vakhtangov said the festival had died out together as the older people passed away.

When the festival starts, they take out an animal’s fur and skull, which they keep inside the house up till then. They take them out to the pathway outside their house. They also save pieces of meat or fat from a seal, goat and bear especially for this festival. Women do the cooking, while many people gather. First of all, a woman offers food to the *Gichigi*. Then everybody starts eating. The women make a fire with the *Gichigi*.

When they finish their meals, the guests lavish praise upon the host about his children. The host holds this festival after his sons have hunted many animals such as foxes, goats, or bears. According to what I heard from Natalia later on, they apparently held the festival when a son hunted for the first time. The guests would say, “How marvellous of him. He is magnificent!”

On the following morning, they take the fur and skull to a special place. It takes about an hour to get there by reindeer-sleigh or dog-sleigh. There is a rock there where people make offerings; thus it is called *inauate-nin*. It is where there is what Alekseev referred to as “the animal hole” to keep bears’ skulls in. There are a few places like this. One is located on the coast near the Imka River; it is at the bottom of a cliff. The skulls are placed next to the rock on the beach. They include the skulls of seals, reindeer, bears, fox, wolves, and other kinds of sea mammals. People handle these skulls with care. When hunters go there, they all have to leave something behind, such as knives or bullets. Vakhtangov says that you can see under the water the numerous things that people have left behind. The other place is located near the river at the foot of Shaman Hill in the upper streams of Pakhachi River. There is a large rock there, which must have tumbled down from the hill. If a hunter carries a seal near the river, he is not allowed to throw away its skull on the tundra. He has to put the skull in this special place.

Vakhtangov explained the significance of this ritual as follows: “We are not allowed to kill many animals in our tradition. So in order to relieve people’s concerns about those who do, many people are invited, and they pay tribute to those people.” Then explained why they place the skull in a special place.

“I believe in nature. Nature provides me with many animals. So I have to give back to the nature what I took from them. I take with me skulls and bullets to the place of offerings and return them to nature. I tell my children, ‘If you find five goats, kill two and let three go.’”

Vakhtangov said he thinks about nature when he makes an offering to the

Gichigi. The word “nature” that he used here was the common noun in Russian, which means “nature.” However, the meaning of the word was not the common definition of nature in a biological or physical sense. He meant the whole of “nature” including the supernatural significance that is a part of it. “Nature” for them is substantial but spiritual at the same time, just as the word “river” or “land” has a spiritual meaning for them.

Referring to this festival, which is obviously an animal-sending ritual after hunting, Vakhtangov said, “The animal put at the place of offering goes to the upper world. This is the same for humans. But the animals go to the upper world forever and never come back to this world. When people die and go to the upper world, they can meet those animals.” As a matter of fact, people had the same idea about the reindeer; they commonly believed they were sent to the upper world where they were needed for people’s life there in the country of the dead. His idea is different from that of his son, Alekseev’s. Alekseev said that a hunted animal is reborn again to become the same animal. But the concept of what became of a wild animal once it was killed differed from one person to another. I thought Alekseev’s way of thinking was the authentic worldview of hunters, and that Vakhtangov’s idea was an altered version influenced by reindeer-herding, because for him even hunted animals were thought of as a means to support people’s lives, just as domestic reindeer were. In fact, Vakhtangov must have pointed out the essence of the ritual when he said, “we return to nature what we took from it.” In addition, the custom of placing animal skulls at a special place to send the animal’s spirit off is a practice common to the Northern Peoples as a game spirit-sending ritual – like the Ainu Bear festival.

When Alekseev hunted goats and bears, he offered an *inawet* to the fire or land beforehand. Then after the hunt, he offered the animal’s fat to the fire and ravens. The game was welcomed at the house as a guest. After people ate the meat, they kept part of the skull and fur, which they returned to “nature” by holding the “wild animal’s fur festival” at the end of the hunting season. The whole hunting festival is backed by their worldview that wild animals visit the human world to offer them meat and fur before they return to the animal’s world again.

In addition, the interesting point here is that the special place where they place the animal’s skull is called “the animal hole.” The hole beneath the special rock is the entrance to the animal world. I had already seen reindeer bones being buried underground, or stones being put over a symbolic reindeer made of antlers, bones and branches. The stones symbolized the land itself and also kept down the symbolic reindeer. Is the animal world right here in this land? Or considering the special rock at the foot of Shaman Hill, could the animal world be inside that hill? Or thinking of the rock near the cliff on the coast, could the animal world be in the sea right beneath the cliff? People didn’t have a clear answer to this. They usually said they didn’t know where the animal world was, or some said they thought it was somewhere in

the upper world.

We must also pay attention to the fact that the “animal hole” is also called “the place to offer an ‘inawet.’” They placed bullets and knives at the special place with the *inawet*. The idea that bullets which killed animals were also an offering to them, and that they got its meat and fur in exchange seemed too convenient for humans. But when you think about it, the worldview of hunting itself, in which the animal spirits visit the human world with meat and fur, is an idea invented by humans. It is not contradictory to say that the giving of bullets and knives as offerings is a part of their worldview of hunting. In fact, when the Ainu kill a cub at the Bear Festival, they shoot an arrow beautifully decorated with flowery wood shavings at the cub. It is a gift or a souvenir for the cub; with those gifts, the cub is believed to journey to the spiritual bear country.

Now, to whom are they offering the *inawet* of bullets and knives? I had already seen people giving bullets or whatever they could offer as a return gift when they were given part of the game’s meat. The person who gives out the meat in this case would be the hunter. If you apply this structure to the relationship between humans and animals, humans who are given meat and fur would naturally give back the giver an *inawet* in return. The giver in this case could be the individual animal spirit, or could there be a master spirit behind it? We now have to take in consideration the other major characteristic of this ritual. They keep the skulls and fur of the animals that they hunted during the season and return them together to nature. This makes us guess the presence of a spiritual master who receives them all. Alekseev said there were two ways of handling the hunted bear’s skull. One was to place it at the foot of an alder, and the other was to place it in the “animal hole.” Putting the hunted bear’s skulls at the foot of an alder – which can be anywhere – signifies sending off the bears’ spirits. On the other hand, putting the skulls in the “animal hole” is the very way of practicing the ritual at this festival; could it not be interpreted that all the individual animals are sent together with the *inawet* to the master animal, which originally offered the animals to humans? Therefore, the *inawet* is probably offered to the master spirit, rather than to each animal. The master spirit that I refer to here is “nature” in Vakhtangov’s sense.

They acknowledge some kind of spiritual presence, though rather vague, in the land or sea. This reminded me of what Zoya had told me about the gods on the tundra. She said there were gods – she use the word “god” in Russian, but it might make more sense here if we said “spiritual being” – in the land, rivers and sea in the same way there was a master spirit among the reindeer. She also said that the land-god lived somewhere in the mountains. If we think of the land-god as the master spirit of goats, bears and other wild animals, or if we consider the sea-god as the master spirit of sea-animals, such as seals, the target to which people sent off animal spirits and offered the *inawet* would definitely be these master spirits.

There are master spirits of the animals in the land or sea, which offers animals to humans and receive the *inawet* in return. Hence, the relationship between humans, master spirits and animals is close to being reciprocal, as it is in the relationship between humans, *Gichigi* and reindeer, or between humans, *Koyavagin* which is the creator of reindeer's lives, and reindeer. They build a reciprocal relationship between the master spirits by giving them reindeer or animals as offerings or gifts. However, the people's ideas about master spirits are not clear. Even the concept of the land-spirit or sea-spirit is ambiguous, and they don't see in it a sharp deification or a role. In hunting, the relationship between humans and animals is very strong, as we saw between the hunter and the bear. Nevertheless, if we ought to assume the presence of a master spirit behind it, that would be the vague idea of the whole of "nature," as Vakhtangov said.

Moreover, the important fact in this festival is that people praise the son who succeeded in hunting for the first time. This festival also plays a role of a rite of passage to accept him as a full-fledged hunter. This is a combined festival of two things: an animal spirit-sending ceremony, and the human's rite of passage. This sending ceremony, which is partly a cyclical rite – the hunting season ends and a new hunting season begins – overlaps with the rite of passage, in which a youth ends his boyhood and starts a new phase of life as a hunter. This is not contradictory, as far as the symbolic significance of the ritual is concerned. The entire ceremony indicates that the boy has become a hunter, and will enter a new world of humans and nature. Hunting is a fundamental relationship between humans and nature. Hunting is one process of the rituals that take place between them. Young boys learn about this through the rite of passage.