

Socioeconomic Relationships between Herders and Hunters : A Comparison of the Kalahari Desert and Northeastern Siberia

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Socioeconomic Relationships between Herders and Hunters: A Comparison of the Kalahari Desert and Northeastern Siberia

Kazunobu Ikeya
National Museum of Ethnology, Japan

INTRODUCTION

In the existing literature, few studies that have dealt with socioeconomic relationships between herders and other groups from a historical perspective during pre-colonial times and colonial times. Some of the existing studies are presented below.

During the 19th century, east African pastoral communities such as the Maasai were situated at the center of wide and complex networks of exchange and reciprocity. Maasailand was visited by trading parties from neighboring societies; they exchanged grains, beans, tobacco, and a variety of other goods for small stock, milk, meat, and other products (Walker and Sobania 1994: 53; Berntsen 1979).

On the other hand, various socioeconomic relationships between herders and hunters have attracted much interest: for instance, the economic relationship established between these two groups by herders' employment of hunters to raise livestock herds and the social dominance of herders over hunters. As specific examples, much attention has been paid to relationships between the Khoisan and the San (Smith 1998: 77); the Kgalagadi and San (Silberbauer and Kuper 1966, Ikeya 1998); the Herero and San such as the Hai//om (Widlok 2000) in southern Africa, and the Gabbra and Waata in east Africa (Kassam 1985).

The author has conducted studies from historical-anthropological viewpoints on relationships between a herder group and a hunter group in southern Africa (Ikeya 1998), and between the reindeer herder Chukchi and a sea-mammal hunter group in northeastern Siberia (Ikeya 2004). These relationships are examined here from a socioeconomic perspective.

This paper presents common features and differences of relationships between herders and hunters in these societies. The framework of this comparative study shall specifically address the following two phenomena. They had a consignment arrangement as an economic relationship surrounding production and distribution of furs and fells, and a consignment relationship in which an employed herder is asked to breed goats and reindeer.

Interviews, the method of this study, targeted elderly persons in research areas in the Kalahari Desert and Chukotka to trace back group life and interaction

during the 1930s and 1940s, according to intra-group socioeconomic relationships.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE HUNTER-HERDER-TRADER RELATIONSHIP

What is the definition of a pastoralist? It is quite a leap from specialist pastoralist to agro-pastoralist, from reindeer herder to camel herder, cattle herder to shepherd, and so on. I clarify four types of interaction: herder-farmer, herder-hunter, herder-trader, and herder-urban dweller. This paper shall focus on the two relationship types of herder-hunter and herder-trader.

Accompanying expansion of the world economic system from the 16th century, the consumption and supply of wild animal skins and hides expanded from the four main areas of Europe, China, Japan, and the Americas to areas such as North America, Siberia, and Alaska and later, in the 19th century, to Southern Africa. From around 1930, pastoralist societies became involved in wild-animal skin and hide trading; thereby, pastoralists became part of an expanding world economic system.

This study introduces a framework for understanding ethnic relationships (Table 1). Relationships between San hunters and Kgalagadi agro-pastoralists in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana can be classified into three types (Ikeya 1999). One type is a relationship dominated by the San, which was the case in Xade from 1960 to 1970. Another type, which existed in Molapo, is a composite type of relationship in which San and Kgalagadi participated equally in a combination of activities including hunting, gathering, crop-farming, and livestock-raising (Cashdan 1984; Ikeya 1998).

Table 1 The framework of explaining the diversity of relationships between San and Kgalagadi

Study area	Xade, Kgaotwe	Molapo	Metsamaneng
Population	S > K	S < K	S = K
? ~19c	A	B or C	C
19c ~1930s	C	B	C
1930~1940s	C	B	C
1950s	A	B	C
1960s	A	B	C
Source:	Silberbauer (1965) Tanaka (1980) Ikeya (1998)	Cashdan (1984) Ikeya (1998)	

- Notes:** Type A:a relationship dominated by San
 Type B:a combined type of relationship in which San and Kgalagadi equally took part in a combination of activities
 Type C:a symbiotic type of relationship between San and Kgalagadi

The third is a symbiotic type of relationship such as that seen previously in Kgaotwe and currently in Metsimaneng and Mothomelo.

It is the author's view that a symbiotic relationship was first formed between the San and Kgalagadi when the Kgalagadi migrated to the Reserve, and that this relationship developed into a composite type of relationship in places where Kgalagadi outnumbered San, and developed into a relationship dominated by San in places where they outnumbered the Kgalagadi. Whatever the relationship, it is the author's opinion that there are almost no San living in the Reserve who have had no contact with Kgalagadi at some time since the late 19th century (Ikeya 1999).

In contrast, in Chukotka, the reindeer herder population always outnumbers that of the sea-mammal hunters. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Chukchi split into two groups, with one group tending herds of reindeer (reindeer Chukchi) and the other group living along the coast and depending primarily on hunting sea mammals.

There have been several owners of large reindeer herds among the Chukchi, including Gelairgin ("Marmot"), who was known as the Reindeer King, in 1812 (Bogoraz 1901), Yatirgin and Amrawkurgin. However, their relationship to the family tree described below is not clear.

The family tree shown was based on information obtained from interviews with five randomly selected village elders (one man and four women) in Rytkuchi. These village elders were wives or children of past owners of large reindeer herds like Ettuvgi, Tigregay and Enenegwgun, each of which had two or three wives. The fact that all five of these village elders could speak Chukchi more fluently than Russian (In fact, some could not speak Russian at all) is an indication of their strong feeling of Chukchi identity.

AGRO-PASTORALIST K GALAGADI AND SAN HUMAN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN COLONIAL TIMES (1930s – 1940s)

1) Study area

Bechuanaland can be divided into four different territories: the native reserve, ruled by the native chief; Crown Lands, under the rule of Britain; and the land owned by Europeans and African Freehold area (Schapera 1947). This section examines the Bakwena Reserve, located in the central part of Bechuanaland, and the Crown Lands. The author regards Molepolole, the royal capital of Bakwena, to be the central region and the Kalahari Desert villages to be the peripheral region.

The British Resident Magistrate and the Bakwena Chief both reside in Molepolole. Wells have been constructed in Letlhken, to the Northeast of Molepolole, and in Kuke, further north of Letlhken; however, there are no wells further north of Kuke. Kikao Pan, Gomodimo Village, Chukudu Kraal, and Kaotwe Pan are located on the Crown Lands (Figure 1).

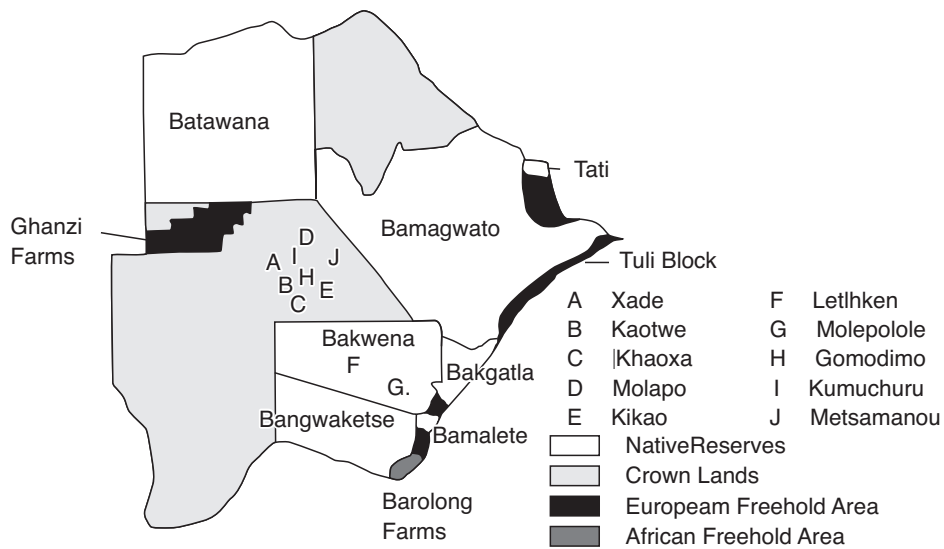


Figure 1 The study area and land owner system in Bechuanaland

2) Socio-economic relationship: availability of skins as a form of tax in the Central Kalahari

This section describes only the circumstances of villages along expedition routes, such as Xade, Kaotwe and Gomodimo. It presents information obtained through interviews with elders at seven Central Kalahari villages (Xade, Kaotwe, Kikao, |Khaoxa, Kumuchuru, Metsamanou, and Molapo). That information concerns stocks and transport routes of skins. The following are translations of interviews with elders in each village.

Xade

A (male; est. age 80 years; |Gui) remembered, “Many locusts came to the village during the rainy season while K (the Kgalagadi Chief) was alive. People in the village ate the locusts; after the locusts disappeared, K died in the rainy season of that same year. Locusts, after producing offspring in April, survive through the winter and die in the summer. Locusts continued to come for two years after K died; however, subsequent to that, no great swarms of locusts ever came. But locusts came to Dallnau (where K lived, about 20 km east of Xade) and ate the vines of the watermelons. The people in Dallnau set fire to grasslands around their village to kill the locusts.”

“K (Kgalagadi) owned many cows, which were allowed to graze in the woodlands around Da//nau; when rain fell, they were taken to Teikei Pan to drink the water that had accumulated there. The cows were also taken to Kaegui or Kaetsagoi; when there was no rain, the cows were taken to drink from the well in Letlhken, near Molepolole. M and I were in charge of tending K’s cows. There were many cows, but I don’t know the exact number. O milked the cows every morning, and the milk was put in a pouch

made from animal skins. There were also sheep and goats in the village. Sheep and cows were all kept in the central camp of Dallnau, while the goats were dispersed. There were no donkeys at the time. K also owned a cart, which was drawn by six cows.”

“I ordered his son T to carry leopard, fox and jackal skins to Letlhken as tax payment. T and C used dogs for hunting foxes and jackals, and used rifles for hunting leopards. In the rainy season, skins from these animals were carried to a man called Kosikama in Letlhken by about 10 |Gui and || Gana, each carrying about 10 skins. |Gui G and H also visited C in Xade to trade steenbok skins for tobacco. The route taken from Xade to Letlhken did not pass through Kaotwe, but through Kumuchuru, Kou and Menoatse. This journey took about one week, so the men carrying the skins had to take ostrich eggshells as water containers. Some of K’s goats were sometimes herded to Letlhken to be sold; the money was used to buy cows or a cart to be drawn by cows. Even if a goat died during the journey to Letlhken, Kosikama, who knew K well, would compensate for this.”

From the above, we know that Chief K of Xade collected skins as tax and had the skins carried to Kosikama in Letlhken. However, the relationship between Kosikama and Seloilwa, who also lived in Letlhken, is not clear. The San traded skins with K for tobacco and were also used as porters to carry skins to Letlhken. They also assisted in taking care of the cattle, sheep and goats that belonged to K. Another notable point concerning the San is that they hunted with both dogs and rifles. Based on the knowledge of K’s death in the year of the locust swarm, these activities are thought to have occurred around 1930.

|Khaoxa

P (male; est. age, 75 years; |Gui) reminisced, “My Kgalagadi is G. G’s father, O, is the chief. O has lived in |Khaoxa for many years and paid taxes. He collected skins of steenboks, leopards, cheetahs, foxes, and wild cats; he carried the skins to Molepolole by donkey. Leopards were hunted with rifles. I carried the leopard skins on my back from Koyachi to |Khaoxa, leaving /Kaoha early in the morning and arriving at |Khaoxa at about nine o’clock the next morning. G, who is older than I, also lives in |Khaoxa. As I don’t have any iron pots, I either use cans or borrow iron pots from G, who lets me keep them.”

N (male; est. age 70 years; |Gui) related, “I used to carry skins to O as tax payment; after O died, I continued to give skins to his son, G. However, after G died, since the taxation system stopped, I have been growing watermelons and beans in Koyachi for many years. The only goats and sheep were those that belonged to O. I was in charge of tending O’s goats; I made a small pouch to keep the goat’s milk in. In return for this, O presented me with one or two goats. I have traveled from Koyachi to H’s house in Menoatse to buy tobacco. I have also been to Kikao to trade steenbok skins for tobacco. G and K once traveled from Molapo to O’s house in |Khaoka to buy goats.”

From these interviews with the above persons, we know that skins were also collected as tax in |Khaoxa and carried to Molepolole by donkey. We also know that the San (|Gui) living in Koyachi supplied skins. As with the Xade, San living in Koyachi also raised goats belonging to the Kgalagadi; in exchange, they received some goats from the Kgalagadi.

The colonial period economy and the relationship between the San and Kgalagadi living on Crown lands

Cow hides and wild animal skins were the main export products in Bechuanaland during the colonial era. Most the cattle population in Bechuanaland were raised on Afrikaner-owned farms in Ghanzi and D'Kar, then slaughtered in Lobatse, located in the southeastern part of Bechuanaland. Animal skins that were collected in the Kalahari Desert were processed in Molepolole. This paper, focusing on the latter point, shows that the tributary relationship that existed between the Kgalagadi and Chief Kealeboga, who was the chief of the Bakwena Reserve, later developed into a taxation relationship.

In 1929, the majority of exports in Kweneng District were wild animal skins and products made from those skins. It is thought that wild animals were hunted in bushland on Crown lands outside the Reserve, near the villages of Xade, Kaotwe, |Khaoxa, Kikao, Kumchuru, and Metsamanou; the skins were then taken to the chief of Letlhken, from where they were transported to Molepolole, the capital of Kweneng District. Animal-skin products were produced by 500–600 skin craftsmen who lived in Molepolole.

The relationship that had existed between the people living in the Central Kalahari and Chief Bakwena continued, in part, into the colonial era. Some people continued to take skins to the chief as tax payment. In return, they sometimes received marijuana, dogs, or gold coins from the chief. The resident magistrate of Molepolole always appeared to be concerned about the chief's influence over Crown lands outside the Bakwena Reserve. For this reason, when the taxation system was organized under colonial rule, care was taken to also partially preserve some of the traditional relationship that had existed since the time of Chief Bakwena between the chief and people living in the Central Kalahari.

According to the report by Vernay and Lang in 1930, animal skins were used as tax payment in Kaotwe, which was on Crown lands (Photo 1). On the other hand, according to a later report by Silberbauer (1965), skins were used as products; this report mentions no use of skins as tax payment. However, it is very doubtful whether the people living in Central Kalahari were aware of such a regional taxation system. It is thought that the San used animal skins simply as a means to acquire tobacco and iron products. However, it can be said that skin trading brought iron products, goats and dogs to the San society, thus imparting significant changes to their materialistic culture and occupational activities. Also, most of the San, as was the case for the elder interviewed in |Khaoxa, had close individual relationships with the Kgalagadi. Through their contact with the Kgalagadi, the San had the chance to use rifles and to raise goats and help in the fields that belonged to the Kgalagadi. In return for this work, the San



Photo 1 The San people about 1930

received goats and watermelon seeds from the Kgalagadi.

The Kalahari Desert milieu played host to various relationships between herders and hunters, such as bartering of meat and employment of herders by hunters to raise goat herds, as well as a relationship between herders and traders for the sale of meat.

REINDEER HERDER AND SEA-MAMMAL HUNTERS IN CHUKOTKA IN PRESOCIALIST TIMES (1930s – 1940s)

1) Study area

The site of the surveys carried out by the author is Rytkuchi Village (69° N and 171° E), located at Chaun Bay in Chaun District, a bay leading to the Arctic Ocean, in the northeastern part of Siberia. The population of the village in 1997 was 493, of whom 323 (65%) were Chukchi and the remainder mainly Russian, Ukrainian, etc. (Ikeya 2001).

According to historical records kept in the village museum, in 1930 two Russian hunters, who were brothers, lived where the village is now located. The records show that they first came to the site of the present village in 1920, but there is no record of where they came from. From 1931 to 1932, a village was established around the site of a bird research center that had been set up by the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union. The village was moved to the present site in 1933–34; a school, school dormitory and bread factory were constructed. (Ikeya 2001)

The first census was conducted in the village in 1939. In 1940, the first kolkhoz

(collective farm) was established. In 1941, a teacher from Moscow came to the village, and a cultural center and clinic were set up. The first sovkhos was established in 1957. A census conducted in 1959 showed that the majority of the 80 inhabitants of the village were Russian. Twelve brigades were established in 1965, each owning a vezdikhod (all-terrain vehicle) and a tractor. In 1980, the manufacture of traditional Chukchi crafts was started in the village; a museum was opened in the village in 1986.

2) Socio-economic relationship: Trading between Chukchi and Americans in the 1930s

The following directly-quoted accounts of changes in Chukchi society in the first half of the twentieth century are from interviews conducted with six elders (Cases 1–6) in Rytkuchi village (Ikeya 2004: 272–274).

[Case 1] Lyudmila (female, born 1945)

“My mother knew a few English words such as ‘one’, ‘two’, ‘three’, ‘soap’, ‘rice’, ‘money’, and ‘tobacco’. My mother told me that when I was 5 years old, she used to barter arctic fox and reindeer pelts for such things as an iron pots, axes, kettles (photo 2), tea, candy, and tobacco in bazaars near Pevek. In winter, she would travel to the bazaars by a reindeer-pulled sled. At that time, there were some Americans in the trading business living near Pevek, but there were no Russians. There were no houses in Pevek at that time, and the area was used by the Chukchi for grazing reindeer.”

“At that time, just like now, there were summer base camps and winter camps. Women, children and old people stayed in the summer base camps, although some women went with the men to tend the herds of reindeer because, since most men had two or more wives, there was a shortage of male herders. My grandfather had a large herd of reindeer and employed many herders.”

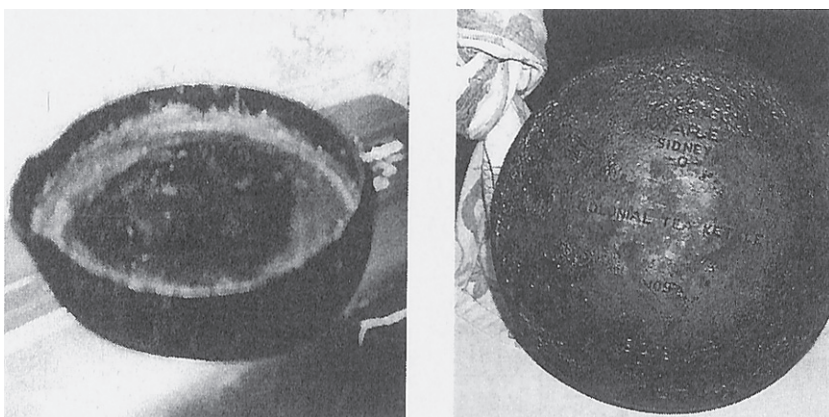


Photo 2 A kettle obtained from ‘the Americans’.

Left: kettle base used as a frying pan

Right: lettering on bottom, ‘COLONIAL TEA KETTLE SIDNEY’

Thus, according to the account by Lyudmila of the situation in the 1930s, there was trade between the Chukchi, who raised reindeer, and Americans living near Pevek. Reindeer pelts were bartered by the Chukchi for such things as iron pots, axes and kettles from the Americans; the Chukchi also learned some English words used for trading.

[Case 2] Rekurin Boris (male, born 1930)

“I was born near Baranikha, located by the Paunchua River. My family later moved to the upper reaches of the Patu River. When we went near Keperveem, I can remember collecting wood from the forest to make a house and sled. Since I was a child at the time, I did not actually have the chance to meet any Americans, but I was able to see the things that Americans used for trading, such as pipe tobacco, tea, kettles, pots, and rifles (Photo 3). Rifles were the most highly valued items. The Chukchi used arctic fox and reindeer pelts to trade for these items. Foxes were caught using wooden traps in winter, when the quality of the fur was best, and wolves that had been caught in traps were shot with rifles bought from the Americans. My father did not have a large herd of reindeer, and we ate fish such as trout (kharius) and salmon as well as reindeer meat. Reindeer meat was also bartered for seal meat from Chukchi fishermen in Ayon. Seal blubber was spread on dried or frozen reindeer meat before eating. Seal skins were used to make summer boots. Walrus tusks were used as handles of whips used when riding in reindeer sleds, and walrus skins were used for the soles of summer and winter boots. At that time, tags with the owner’s name were attached to the ears of all reindeer when they reached two years of age.”

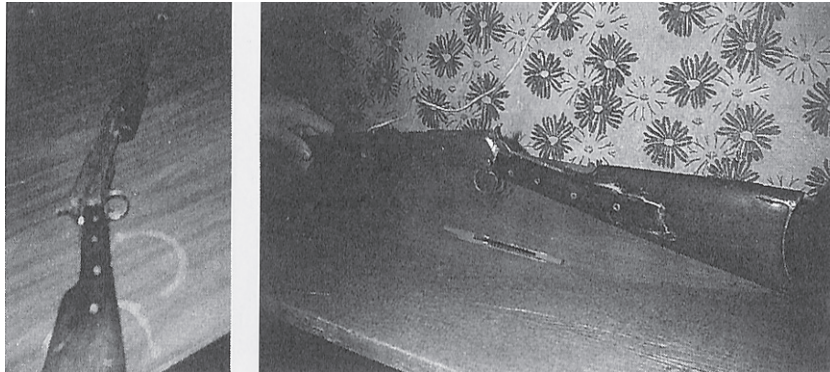


Photo 3 Winchester rifle obtained from ‘the Americans’.

Maker’s data: ‘Made in U.S.A. Winchester Repeating Arms Co., New Haven’

This account by Rekurin Boris of the situation in the 1930s indicates that Chukchi who owned only small reindeer herds also traded with the Americans. Other interesting facets of this account are that traps were used to catch foxes, and that rifles bought from the Americans greatly changed the hunting methods of the Chukchi.

[Case 3] Pepev (female, born 1908)

“I was born in Markova. My father’s name was Ettuvgi and my mother’s name was Omruqay. My father had a large herd of reindeer and traded hides at bazaars near Pevek. Before I was married, I moved to various places together with the herders, but I stayed in the base camp after I was married and had given birth to a baby. I am not sure where my grandfather came from, but I heard that he migrated from somewhere near Markova to Chaun. I don’t know exactly how many reindeer he owned, but I heard that he divided his reindeer into three herds and that he employed many herders. I have never seen any Americans, but I can remember many things that were bought from the Americans, such as hard tobacco, hard black tea, shovels, and Winchester rifles (which both my father and husband had). The Americans came by dog sled and bought arctic fox and reindeer pelts. My first marriage was to a man named Enenegwgun, who had his own herd of reindeer. After Enenegwgun died in Letuveen, I was remarried to a man named Aygent and later again to a man named Tigreqay, who was the leader of the area we lived in. Tigreqay died in 1983.”

According to this account of the situation in the 1930s by the daughter of the owner of a large reindeer herd, trading with Americans was conducted not only near Pevek, but also in more inland areas.

[Case 4] Gurgotseyvun (female, age unknown)

“I was born near what is now the camp of Brigade No. 9. My father told me that he saw two Americans traveling by dog sled at the upper reaches of the Anadyr River. The Americans were carrying tobacco, tea, pots, and Winchester rifles to trade for arctic fox pelts. My father owned many reindeer, but they were taken to a sovkhos in Anadyr after he died.”

This account of the situation in the 1930s is further evidence that there were some Chukchi who owned large herds of reindeer, and that there was trading between the Chukchi and Americans.

[Case 5] Rultuge (female, born 1910)

“I was born in what is now the camp of Brigade No. 2. Tigreqay was my cousin. He had three wives and employed many herders. He was originally at Lesnoy (the present location of Brigade No. 5), but he moved to Karanapa (the present location of Brigade No. 9) when the ground at Lesnoy froze after a snowfall and there was no food for the reindeer. Omrogurgun was at Putyuveem River (the present location of Brigade No. 1); Tagratgurgun was at Lesnoy, but later moved to the Ettuveer River. These three men all owned large herds of reindeer, many of them inherited from my father. My husband did not have many reindeer but managed to make a herd from the reindeer owned by family members. The reindeer all had ear tags showing the name of the owner, and the reindeer were passed down from a father to his children. I remember seeing them. In autumn, I sometimes saw the dog-pulled sled in the Chaun. They came

from the coast of the Biringsuki to exchange the skin and oil of seals for reindeer meat. I was very impressed at their behavior that they addressed the dogs, saying ‘Pu Pu Pu Pu’. They visited the more remote camps to take poles to use for shelters.”

This account by Rultuge of the situation in the 1930s indicates that there were considerable differences in the sizes of reindeer herds owned by Chukchi, with large herds being tended by hired herders and small herds being tended by family members. The significance of the ear tags is also clear from this account. According to Rultuge’s account of the situation in the 1930s, there was also trading between reindeer Chukchi and maritime Chukchi.

[Case 6] Anna (female, age unknown)

“I can remember a group of 8 to 10 Americans who came by ship to a small fishing settlement. Many Chukchi from reindeer camps came to trade with the Americans. One man living in the fishing settlement, who was not Chukchi, acted as a go-between in the trading. I can remember that the Americans only took pelts from reindeer that had been slaughtered. Chukchi from reindeer camps also brought Arctic fox pelts to trade with the Americans. As my parents had been killed, I was brought up by my uncle (my mother’s brother). According to my older brother, who was born in 1936, my grandfather lived on the coast of the Biringsuki and hunted seals and walrus. Reindeer and fox pelts were traded with the Americans for such things as pots, tobacco, tea, canned butter, Winchester rifles, steel traps, and shovels. There were no longer any American traders when I started elementary school, but I do remember seeing some Americans in the autumn before I started elementary school.”

This account by Anna of the situation in the 1930s indicates that there was also trading between maritime Chukchi and Americans. The use of a non-Chukchi man as a go-between in the trading is interesting. Items obtained from the Americans mentioned in the account by Anna are similar to those mentioned by the other five elders. Since reindeer Chukchi also traveled to the coast to trade with the Americans, an ethnic network of Americans, maritime Chukchi, and reindeer Chukchi was formed at that time.

CONCLUSION

This report elucidates common features and differences of relationships between herders and hunters in these societies. The results can be summarized as follows (Figure 2).

1) Characteristics of Hunter-Herder relationships

In both cases, few purchase-and-sale relationships for livestock were found, but fur-trading relationships were common to both groups. Various socioeconomic relationships between herders and hunters are also apparent, such as the economic

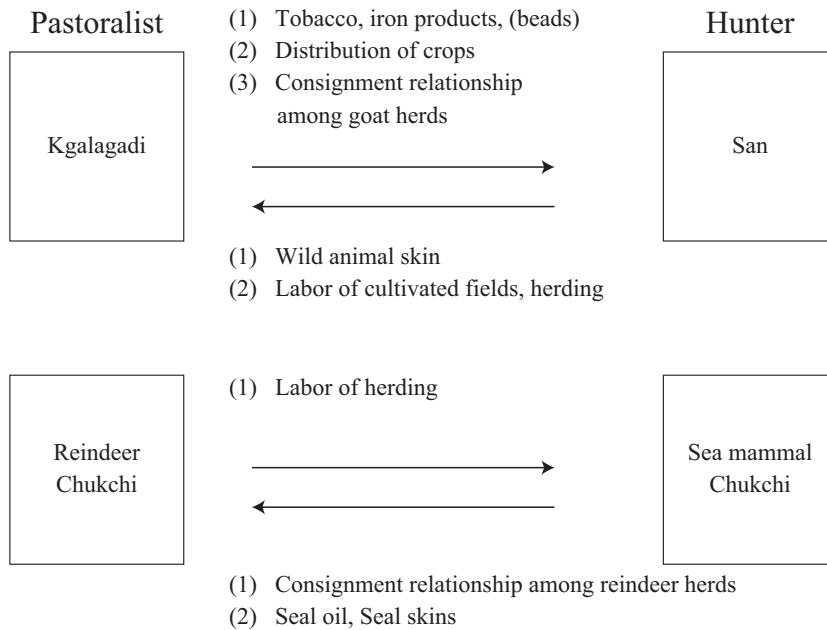


Figure 2 Interaction between Pastoralists and Hunters

relationship established between these two groups through employment of hunters by herders to raise livestock herds, and the social relationship in which herders dominate hunters.

It is clear from these accounts of circumstances in the 1930s that trade with Kgalagadi and Americans was an important economic factor in the lifestyle of the San and the Chukchi at that time. Items obtained through trading with the Kgalagadi and the Americans, such as rifles, pots and axes, greatly changed the San and Chukchi lifestyle. Also, various factors related to trading with Americans, such as the use of rifles to protect reindeer from wolves and the commercialization of reindeer pelts, contributed to ownership of large herds of reindeer by some Chukchi in the 1930s.

2) Two types of consignment relationship

In the Kalahari Desert, various relationships have been established between herders and hunters, such as bartering of meat and employment of hunters by herders to raise goat herds, in addition to the relationship between herders and traders for the sale of meat. In Siberia, the opposite kind of relationships were established between herders and hunters, namely the bartering of meat and oil, and the employment of herders by hunters to raise reindeer herds, in addition to a relationship between herders and traders for the sale of meat and hides.

NOTES

- 1) The Chukchi are an indigenous people of the the Chukot Peninsula in northeastern Russia. The population of Chukchi in 1989 was about 15,000 (Vakhtin 1994: 34). In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Chukchi were classified by ethnographers into two groups, with one group tending herds of reindeer (Reindeer Chukchi) and the other group living along the coast and depending primarily on hunting sea mammals (walruses, seals, etc.) for their subsistence (Maritime Chukchi) (Bogoras 1901). However, due to the spread of socialism in the Soviet era, many of the Chukchi now work on state-run farms (sovkhoz).
- 2) The first census was conducted in the village in 1939. In 1940, the first collective farms, called kolkhoz, were established. In 1941, a teacher from Moscow came to the village, and a culture center and clinic were set up. The first sovkhoz was established in 1957. A census conducted in 1959 showed that the majority of the 80 inhabitants of the village were Russian. Twelve brigades were established in 1965, each owning a vezdikhod and a tractor. In 1980, the manufacture of traditional Chukchi crafts was started in the village. A museum was opened in the village in 1986.

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