

Anthropological Studies of the Indigenous Peoples in Sakhalin in Pre-Wartime and Wartime Japan

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I.

Until the end of World War II three indigenous ethnic groups lived in Sakhalin (or *Karafuto* in Japanese): the Ainu, Uilta (*Orokko* or Orok), and Nivkhi (*Giriyāku* or Gilyak).¹⁾ They attracted much attention from anthropologists, ethnologists, linguists, and archaeologists as bearers of unique cultures. The history of the anthropological and ethnological research about them began in the 1850s when the Russian military came to this island with some ethnologists. After the victory in the Japanese-Russian war in 1905, Japanese researchers began to conduct field researches in the southern part of this island.

In this paper I should like to re-evaluate the pre-wartime and wartime²⁾ Japanese anthropological studies in Sakhalin from the point of view of the historical study of indigenous peoples. I shall focus on the field researches of the Uilta people conducted by anthropologists and ethnologists in the 1930s and 1940s, especially on the research by Eiichirō ISHIDA (石田英一郎). E. ISHIDA was one of the leaders of post-wartime Japanese anthropology. His main contribution was a study of Japanese culture in the perspective of worldwide cultural history, while he conducted field research in the middle part of Sakhalin to study the society of the Uilta people in 1941. Generally speaking, that research was not regarded as his main work, but at that time he himself gave it an important position in his anthropological study of the peoples of eastern Asia.

Contemporary Japanese anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists highly appreciate the research that Japanese scholars conducted on indigenous ethnic groups in Sakhalin before the end of World War II. Japanese researchers have not been given opportunities to conduct field research in Sakhalin, since the Soviet Union occupied the southern part of the island. They assumed that the pure, ethnic culture must have been destroyed by the socialist policy. Those reports and articles based on the pre-wartime or wartime research have often been quoted as invaluable and authoritative ethnographic data representing purely traditional ethnic cultures. ISHIDA's article has been thought of as a basic source of ethnographic data on the Uilta society.³⁾

In this paper I will re-evaluate such authoritative researches, because the reports and articles did not altogether exactly represent what the life and history of the given ethnic groups really were, especially in the times of the Japanese colonization in Sakhalin from 1905 to 1945, and because they have often led many readers to a misunderstanding of those indigenous societies and cultures.

The pre-wartime and wartime researchers usually did not pay any attention to the political or, more precisely, colonial backgrounds of the economic and social situations of the indigenous peoples. For example, Japanese anthropologists, ethnologists, and linguists often conducted field researches of the Uilta and Nivkhi in the village named Otasu in the 1930s and 40s. This village was constructed by the Japanese colonial office in 1926 in order to gather non-Ainu native peoples here. The purpose was to assimilate them to Japanese society on one hand, and to restrict their movement to the Soviet territory on the other. But many researchers, including E. ISHIDA, did not refer to the background and process of the construction of this village.

Colonial discourses in the articles of wartime and pre-wartime researchers are also problematic. They often defined the Uilta and Nivkhi as 'aborigines,' 'natives,' 'primitive peoples,' 'primitive hunter-gatherers,' 'primitive reindeer nomads,' or 'natural peoples.' Though some colonial conditions might compel them to live a 'primitive life,' the researchers described their societies as if they had been essentially primitive. The researchers failed to take account of their history, especially the history of colonization and minority policies by Japan and Russia in Sakhalin. According to the discourse of A. SHIMIZU, they represented them as 'eternal primitive' peoples (SHIMIZU 1993).

From the present point of view, it is a matter of course that ethnographic data are not free from the history of the area surrounding the given ethnic group. In the case of the indigenous peoples of Sakhalin, ethnographic data on them were conditioned by the colonial history of this island and by the methodology of anthropology and ethnology in the colonial era. The life of the Uilta in the village of Otasu was deeply influenced by the colonial policy of the Japanese local government but the description in their ethnography was restricted by the current anthropological methodology at that time.

In this paper I will examine specifically E. ISHIDA's research, clarify the historical background of his research, and show how his monograph should be read.

II.

The Japanese colonization of Sakhalin (*Karafuto*) began in the nineteenth century. *Matsumae-han* sent the first mission to the southern edge of this island in 1635. Since then it sent several missions to develop new fishing bases. Some of them reached the middle part of the island already in the second half of seventeenth century. But its political power was not so strong. Even in the second half of the eighteenth century, only the Ainu of the southern end of the island recognized its authority. Most inhabitants of Sakhalin were included into the Chinese tributary system and periodically paid tribute to the Qing dynasty (the last dynasty in China, 1616-1912).

The situation drastically changed at the end of the eighteenth century when Russian warships began to appear on the sea near the Kuril Islands (*Chishima* Islands) and Sakhalin. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the *Tokugawa Bakufu* changed its policy on the northern territories (*Yezo-chi*) from indirect control to direct rule. The *Bakufu* itself governed the *Yezo-chi*, including Sakhalin, from 1807 to 1821 and from 1855 to 1868. During those years it expanded its power to northern Sakhalin, intensified control over the trade activities

of the native peoples of Sakhalin and the Amur basin, carried out a population census, and opened new fishing territories for Japanese fishermen.

However, when the Russian colonial power landed on Sakhalin in the 1850s, the *Tokugawa Bakufu* could not keep Russians out from its northern colony. The *Bakufu* was compelled to conclude a treaty with Russia in 1855, in which the *Bakufu* agreed to share the territorial right over Sakhalin with Russia. From 1855 to 1875 there was no national border on Sakhalin and both Japan and Russia developed their own colonies. The situation was of great advantage to Russia. In this period Russians occupied even the southern part of the island, where not a few Japanese colonies were built, and actually controlled the whole island. In 1875 the Japanese new government and Russia concluded the final treaty about the territories of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, in which Japan gave up the right on Sakhalin to obtain the right of the Kuril Islands.

The two countries never paid even the smallest attention to the situation of the indigenous population in Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands in the negotiation process. The Japanese government forced the Ainu people in these areas to move to Hokkaido or *Shikotan* island, as if only the Ainu had previously been defined as Japanese nationals. But this policy resulted in the critical diminution or extinction of the Ainu population. At the same time, both the Japanese and Russian governments deserted the other indigenous populations, such as the Uilta and Nivkhi, and reduced them to poverty. They were not only deprived of the hunting and fishing territories through the colonial development, but also of the rights and opportunities for inter-ethnic trade activities. Both hunting and fishing and trade had been their main life sources.

In 1905 the southern part of this island became a Japanese territory according to the Portsmouth treaty, which was concluded to finish the Japanese-Russian War. For forty years from this time to the end of the World War II in 1945, Sakhalin was divided between the two countries. According to J. Stephan, this period can be divided into the two epochs: from 1905 to 1925 and from 1925 to 1945 (Stephan 1971: 85, 111).

The first twenty years were chaotic and 'years of transition.' J. Stephan wrote, 'In the twenty years from 1905 to 1925, Sakhalin suffered one invasion, one intervention, and reeled from the effects of a world war, a revolution, and a civil war' (Stephan 1971: 85). Japanese military forces took advantage of the disorder in the Russian Far East caused by the revolution and extended their military power to the northeastern provinces of China and Siberia. The Japanese army occupied the northern part of Sakhalin to demand compensation for the massacre of Japanese people by the Partisans in Nikolaevsk na Amure.

At first, the Japanese government established a military administration in its new territory, which was changed to a civil administration in 1907 (Zenkoku Karafuto Remmei 1978: 309-14, 344). The first law for governing southern Sakhalin came into force in 1910 (Zenkoku Karafuto Remmei 1978: 538). The law defined southern Sakhalin as a special territory, a territory with an intermediary status between the *naichi* (内地, pure home island) and a *gaichi* (外地, pure overseas colony) like Taiwan and Korea. It also defined that the matters concerning the *dojin* (土人, native peoples) should be decided by Imperial orders. In Sakhalin the *dojin* comprised the Uilta (*Orokko* or *Orok*), Nivkhi (*Giryāku* or *Gilyak*), Yakut (*Yakūto*), Evenki (*Kirin* or *Kilin*), and Ul'chi (*Sanda*). The Ainu, the largest native

population in southern Sakhalin, were officially excluded from this category; the local government recognized them as Japanese so as to accomplish their assimilation into Japanese society. Hence, in the census of 1941, for example, the above mentioned five groups were registered as *Dojin*, while there was no category for the Ainu (Zenkoku Karafuto Remmei 1978: 329-32). They were counted as *naichi-jin* (内地人, home islanders) or Japanese nationals. The colonial government could not perfectly control the non-Ainu indigenous inhabitants for the first twenty years. In fact, the Uilta and Nivkhi freely passed the borders to search good pasture for their reindeer and to see their relatives on the Russian side.

The situation changed in the middle of the 1920s as the second period began. The border on the 50th parallel was strictly closed and even the native peoples were prohibited from passing it. The village of Otasu was constructed in 1926 in order to gather and control the non-Ainu native peoples. This change must have had something to do with the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Soviet Union in 1925. The pre-wartime and wartime Japanese government constantly kept to its policy of hostility to the Soviet Union, even though Japan concluded the Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union in 1941. It was a fact that the border area was more stable and calm in the second twenty years than in the first. But military and political tensions were much higher because the border became the place of the power game between Japan and the Soviet Union. Both countries secretly sent their intelligence missions along the border. They trained native peoples, who were familiar with the geographical conditions in the area, and sent them to the other side as spies. In 1942 under the severe wartime political conditions, the Japanese government decided to change the administrative status of southern Sakhalin from a special colony to a complete home island (*naichi*) to strengthen the central control over the peripheral area in the Japanese territory. This decision was put into force the next year. By the end of the war, southern Sakhalin (or *Karafuto*) was no longer an overseas colony.

As mentioned before, the Japanese local government officially recognized only the non-Ainu indigenous inhabitants as the natives (*dojin*) and provided them with special protection and foodstuffs for assimilation into Japanese society. The construction of the village of Otasu in 1926 was one of such policies.⁴⁾ It seems that the administrative office regarded them as especially primitive. For example, in 1930 the office constructed a special school (*Dojin Kyōikujo*, 土人教育所)⁵⁾ only for children of the non-Ainu native peoples in Otasu, while Ainu children went to ordinary schools with other Japanese children. According to the official explanation, the *Dojin*, the non-Ainu natives, usually had less intelligence qualities than other Japanese nationals, and it was necessary to provide them with a special education. Surprisingly, such an apparently colonial discourse succeeded in being published as late as in the 1970s without any commentary (Zenkoku Karafuto Remmei 1978: 976).

Hideya KAWAMURA (川村秀彌), one of the collaborators of E. ISHIDA, was the principal of that special school. Native pupils and their parents respected him and appreciated his works for the children. But the aim of his education was to assimilate them into Japanese society and to educate them as loyal people of the emperor. So he forced his pupils to speak Japanese in school and taught them Japanese ethics. However, even though they were brought up as Japanese in the school and gave up their own languages and culture, they were often discriminated as *Dojin* by Japanese nationals. Moreover, as I will mention later, they

could not be Japanese nationals.

The military forces took advantage of their motivation to be fully Japanese, and recruited them as secret agents for collecting information about the Soviet Union. In August 1942 the secret agency of the Japanese army recruited some native youths from Otasu to train them as 'Japanese soldiers.' But, in fact, the agency placed them in the border area in Sakhalin to be engaged in espionage activities, and abandoned them as the war ended. Just after the war they were all arrested by the Soviet Union, declared war criminals, and exiled to Siberia with other Japanese captives (TANAKA 1993: 13-6).

Some of them were liberated and 'went back' to Japan or Soviet Sakhalin after several years of hard labour in Siberian prisons, while others died under the harsh conditions of captive life. Even the survivors met a cruel destiny. The post-war Japanese government did not recognize them as official Japanese soldiers. Moreover it did not recognize them as Japanese nationals, because the pre-wartime local government of Sakhalin registered them as Sakhalin natives, not as Japanese. Some of them acquired the Japanese nationality after a long campaign assisted by supporters. But the Japanese government still does not recognize them as having been Japanese soldiers and does not provide them with a pension for military service. It maintains the following: 1) The Sakhalin natives did not have the Japanese nationality. 2) Those who were not Japanese nationals did not have an obligation to be soldiers. 3) The mobilisation paper should only have been given to Japanese nationals to be Japanese soldiers. 4) The paper given to non-Japanese nationals should be of no effect. 5) The secret agency of the army did not have the right to recruit soldiers. 6) The paper of such organization was of no effect, either. So they cannot be recognized as Japanese soldiers (TANAKA 1993: 47-8).

The native people who stayed in Sakhalin after the war also confronted a severe destiny. Most of them lost their family, relatives, and friends in the war and, in addition, they suffered from oppression by the Soviet Union and discrimination by Russian newcomers. The original communities of the native peoples in southern Sakhalin had already been destroyed by the construction of the village of *Otasu*. The Soviet policies for constructing a socialist society deprived them of all rights for living as indigenous peoples. They could not even appeal that they were natives of southern Sakhalin. The Soviet government recognized their ethnicities and indigenous rights only after the years of *Perestroika* (1985-1991).

The history of colonization of Sakhalin by Japan, Russia, and the Soviet Union since the 1850s can be summarized from the indigenous peoples' point of view as a process of a power game, which compelled them to give up their own life, languages, cultures, and identity. Any reports of the anthropological research conducted in this process in Sakhalin should be read with the greatest care, taking account of the history and experience of the native peoples.

III.

The geographical and ethnographic research on Sakhalin by Japanese investigators began in the end of eighteenth century. The *Tokugawa Bakufu* sent missions to Sakhalin four times from the 1780s to the 1800s. The famous investigators Tokunai MOGAMI (最上徳内) and

Rinzō MAMIYA (間宮林藏), who were introduced in Europe by F. von Siebold, were members of the second and fourth missions. European ethnologists and geographers highly appreciated their reports as invaluable ethnographic and geographic data, which represented the pure culture of the peoples before they received the influence from European modern civilization.

Investigations of those early researchers were in fact conducted with the purpose of providing the *Bakufu* with useful data for effective control of the dwellers in Sakhalin. Therefore their reports also should be read in the context of colonialism. However, different from modern anthropologists and ethnologists, they did not put stress on the primitiveness of the native cultures. For example, peoples solely subsisting by hunting are often described as typical primitive people in modern ethnography. But MAMIYA did not consider such peoples primitive. He only described methods and process of hunting in the same way as he described other productive and subsistence activities.

It is also true that pre-modern Japanese researchers looked down on the native dwellers in Sakhalin as illiterate. But they did not define the native lifestyle and culture as primitive. Some rich and intelligent people were respected as leaders of their communities, even in the eyes of Japanese administrators. The pre-modern Japanese researchers only had the concept of strangers or illiterate peoples, while they did not have that of a 'primitive culture' or 'primitive society.'

Moreover, the reports of MOGAMI and MAMIYA were utilized by the *Bakufu* neither for governing the native peoples in Sakhalin nor for constructing Japanese colonies there. The Japanese people began to pay attention to them only after the Meiji restoration when the new government initiated the policy of extending its power to the north. The reports were often read and cited to justify the policy. Many historians, including Umpei OGAWA (小川運平), Kurakichi SHIRATORI (白鳥庫吉), and Shin'ichirō TAKAKURA (高倉新一郎), referred to them to write the history of the Japanese colonization of Sakhalin (OGAWA 1909; SHIRATORI 1970; TAKAKURA 1939). Ryūzō TORII (鳥居龍藏), one of the first generation of Japanese anthropologists, was one of them (TORII 1924).

Japanese anthropologists and ethnologists began to conduct investigations in Sakhalin just after the end of the Japanese-Russian war. In the first twenty years of the Japanese control (1905-25) only several researchers came from Tokyo. Shūzō ISHIDA (石田収蔵) and R. TORII were engaged in the ethnological and archaeological research (ISHIDA 1908, 1910a, 1910b; TORII 1924). Akira NAKAME (中目覺) conducted linguistic research among the Uilta and the Nivkhi in 1912 and 1913 (NAKAME 1917). Sukehachi NAGANE (長根助八), an architect, went to Hokkaido and Sakhalin to observe houses of the native peoples and described their life in detail in 1923 (NAGANE 1925). They witnessed life of the Uilta and Nivkhi before the construction of the village of *Otasu*.

In the second twenty-year period, many researchers visited *Otasu* to observe and investigate the villagers' 'traditional life.' Eiichirō ISHIDA was one of those researchers. While Tetsuo INUKAI (犬飼哲夫) (1941), Yūkō YAMAMOTO (山本祐弘) (1943), Hideya KAWAMURA (川村秀彌) (1940, 1943), Hisaharu MAGATA (澗湯久治) (1981), and Ken HATTORI (服部健) (1941) were voluntarily engaged in research for their own personal study or job, some others visited the village as members of collective research projects. In 1937

and 1938 the Japanese Society of Ethnology (日本民族學會) organized anthropologists, ethnologists and archaeologists for large-scaled research projects for ethnological and archaeological studies in Sakhalin, which were financially supported by the MITSUI (三井) family.

The first of the Society's researches was conducted in 1937 by Masao OKA (岡正雄) and Osamu BABA (馬場脩) with Yasuo KITAGAMAE (北構保男) as an assistant. A group of anatomists from Hokkaido University joined them as collaborators. The main purpose of research was to clarify the ancient history of the ancestors of the Kuril and the Sakhalin Ainu. They carried out archaeological excavations in two areas. One was done in Shumshu Island of the northern Kuril Islands and the other near Lake Taraika in middle Sakhalin. They found sixteen dugout dwellings and two shell mounds, and collected human bones and many products of stone, bones, and ceramics. In Sakhalin they interviewed some Ainu informants and heard about their ancestors who had lived in the villages near Lake Taraika (OKA and BABA 1938: 117-8). The results of this research were published in the official journal of the Society (*Japanese journal of ethnology*) in 1938.

The second research was done in 1938 under the supervision of Kiyoto FURUNO (古野清人) and Osamu BABA. BABA led a group of archaeologists as in the first project, while K. FURUNO, Keiitarō MIYAMOTO (宮本馨太郎) and Akiyoshi SUDA (須田昭義) conducted ethnological research. Their research was not limited to observations and interviews with informants. They brought a movie camera and recorded people's life in 16mm film. Soon after coming back to Tokyo, K. MIYAMOTO read a paper reporting about the research, while he published an article, which was based on the research, in the *Japanese Journal of Ethnology* as late as in 1958 (MIYAMOTO 1958).

IV.

ISHIDA's research was not a part of those projects. He conducted fieldwork in Sakhalin at the request of the Research Department of the Study of East-Asian Peoples in the Imperial Academy of Japan (帝國學士院東亞諸民族調査室), for which he had worked as a research member since 1940. This organization had a plan to publish a series of *Handbooks of the peoples of eastern Asia* (東亞民族要誌) and commissioned more than twenty specialists, each to write an ethnography of a given ethnic group in two years. However, this plan was not completely realized, with only four volumes published in 1944 (Teikokugakushiin 1944). As was written in the preface of each volume, there were so many difficulties in this plan that it was impossible to accomplish it within the stated period. Moreover, the Institute for the Ethnic Study, which had almost the same functions as this organization, was established in 1943 and made the project of publishing the series useless (Teikoikugakushiin 1944: 1). ISHIDA might have been asked to conduct field research among the Uilta for the sake of accomplishing the publishing plan. But his report was published in *the Annual report* of the Institute of Ethnology (民族學研究所), a research institute adjoined to the Japanese Society of Ethnology.

ISHIDA's trip to Sakhalin was made in July and August in 1941, i.e. just before the Pacific War began. The purpose of his research was to clarify the clan system of the Uilta people,

which he assumed to be their fundamental social system. In his article, he insisted that any Japanese policy to control them would be unsuccessful without a precise understanding of their clan system. It was useless to implant the Japanese family system among them (ISHIDA 1941: 344). He no doubt conducted the research with the purpose of providing policy makers with useful data about the native society.

In July 1941, E. ISHIDA stayed in Otasu for two weeks. During this period he had interviews with some Uilta informants. He collaborated with the principal of the only school in the village, Hideya KAWAMURA, to get information about the migration history of clans and the marriage system. Beside the field research in that native community, he conducted additional research in the *Dojin Jimusho* (土人事務所, native office) in the village of Shisuka to copy demographic data of the natives, and also obtained information on kinship terminology of the Uilta in the library of Hokkaido University in Sapporo.

Just after returning from the research, ISHIDA published an article 'The Clan System of the Orok in Japanese Southern Sakhalin (1)' in the journal of *Annual report of ethnology*, vol. 3 (ISHIDA 1941). According to his initial plan, this article was to consist of the following ten chapters:

1. Preface
2. Discovery of the Uilta
3. Migration and distribution of clans
4. Clans and marriage
5. Family, succession, and property
6. Kinship terminology
7. Productive activities and clans
8. Jural functions of clans
9. The clan in belief and religious rites
10. Changes in the organizations and functions of clans

As he added instalment (1) to the title of the article, he published only the first four chapters in the article. He wrote that he stayed in the native community for too short a period to accomplish the plan. He could have written other chapters if he had conducted a second fieldwork. His research of the Uilta society was left unfinished.

Although it is incomplete, I highly appreciate this article for the following reasons. First, ISHIDA reviewed all the previous studies about the Uilta society from the comprehensive study of L. von Schrenck in the 1850s to the field researches of the Japanese ethnologists in the 1930s. Generally speaking, Japanese researchers often did not pay much attention to previous studies, especially to those of foreign researchers. In fact there were few studies about the society of the Uilta conducted by European ethnologists. But the ethnography of Schrenck (1883, 1899, 1899) and the reports of I. Polyakov (1883, 1884) are fundamental materials. I ISHIDA's article is more reliable than others for this reason.

Secondly, he referred to the reports of Japanese investigators before the Meiji restoration. As I mentioned before, the *Matsumae-han* and *Tokugawa Bakufu* had sent several missions since the middle of the seventeenth century to search for new fishing grounds and to investigate the socio-political conditions of the inhabitants of Sakhalin. Some missions

reached the middle of this island and met the ancestors of the Uilta. After the *Bakufu* established the governing system over the dwellers of Sakhalin, the Uilta themselves often came to the trading post built on the southern end of Sakhalin to meet Japanese traders and administrators. Reports of the research missions and administrators not only indicate previous dwelling points of the Uilta people since the seventeenth century but also provide us with precious ethnographic data. Especially those of Rinzō MAMIYA and Koichirō NAKAMURA (中村小市郎) were the best. E. ISHIDA quoted them in this article to show what fine ethnographic data the pre-modern Japanese investigators provided. It was his contribution that he for the first time reviewed the reports of R. MAMIYA and K. NAKAMURA in an anthropological perspective. But, I think, he should have critically re-evaluated them from his own point of view.

Thirdly, he intended to systematically describe the Uilta society in detail, based on his own field data. Though his initial plan was not accomplished, he was able to clarify the dwelling sites and migration routes of each clan and the basic rules of the marriage system before the Japanese and Russian colonization. As far as I know, there is no other study of the society of the Uilta that is comparable to ISHIDA's.

Finally I appreciate his attitude to his collaborators, especially to the local (non-indigenous) collaborators. For example, he owed his fundamental knowledge about the Uilta society to the principal of the special school, H. KAWAMURA, who was familiar with their society and culture through his long experience of educating their children. ISHIDA highly appreciated KAWAMURA's knowledge of their migration history, social principles, hunting and fishing methods, and so on. He edited KAWAMURA's data about hunting and fishing techniques of the Uilta and Nivkhi and published them with a preface in the *Japanese journal of ethnology* (KAWAMURA 1940).

V.

Despite those excellent points, I cannot appreciate all his research and articles. There are some defects from the present point of view.

First of all, I must point out that ISHIDA did not mention anything at all about the socio-political background of the construction of Otasu and its influence on Uilta society. It may be because the pre-wartime and wartime Japanese political situation did not permit him to write on those topics. However, even if it was the case, he could have written on the topics after the war. I examined the list of his publications in his *Complete works*, vol. 8 (ISHIDA 1972), and did not find any article about the process of the construction of the village. He certainly realized that the Uilta and Nivkhi had played an important role in the political relations between Japan and the Soviet Union as inhabitants of the border area (ISHIDA 1941: 343). But he did not see the social, economic, and political situation of the Uilta people in Japanese Sakhalin as an anthropological problem.

Judging from his descriptions about the society and culture of the Uilta, it is obvious that he intended to interpret them in the broader context of the history of cultural contacts between the indigenous peoples of northern Eurasia and North America. For example, in his preface to KAWAMURA's article, he wrote as follows:

The Orok and Gilyak living in the Japanese territory of Sakhalin are ethnologically very interesting peoples. The hunting-fishing techniques and customs are not only common between the two peoples, but also shared by peoples in northern districts of Europe, Asia, and America as a result of the long history of ethnic contacts. Moreover, those ethnic groups have some elements of fishing customs in common with the Ainu and Japanese. (ISHIDA 1942: 63)

These sentences indicate that the history of contacts between the indigenous peoples was an important problem in his perspective, but that the political history of the area, in which the given ethnic groups were living, was beyond his perception. In other words he pursued only the supposedly 'pure culture' or 'traditional society' free from the influence of 'civilized' societies or colonizing countries.

Moreover, he defined these indigenous cultures and societies as 'primitive.' This is clearly shown in the following description at the head of his article:

When our country leads and supports any minor primitive people, it is the most urgent task for it to understand the essential characteristics of their lifestyle and culture. Without it, any friendly advice and equipment will be unsuccessful in winning their hearts, and will cause their antipathy against the country. The more often one comes in contact with minority peoples like the Orok and Gilyak, the deeper he can understand the meaning of the proverb, 'Even a tiny insect has a small soul.' (ISHIDA 1941: 333-3)

In these sentences he compared the Uilta and the Nivkhi to a tiny insect. It is a matter of course that such comparison is no longer allowed today. Moreover, he consistently called the Uilta by the name of '*Orokko*' (Orok in English), although he knew that they called themselves as 'Uilta.' The name '*Orokko*' in Japanese and '*Oroki*' in Russian were of Ainu origin and adopted by researchers as an ethnonym. But it conveys a sense of discrimination and no one uses it in Japan nowadays.

It is unjust to say that he should be held personally responsible for all these defects. It is more adequate to say that even ISHIDA was not free from current anthropological or ethnological perspectives at that time, in which the cultures and societies of indigenous hunter-gatherers in Siberia and North America were marked as 'primitive.' No anthropologist, ethnologist, or historian paid attention to the positive roles those indigenous hunter-gatherers played in the history of the areas where they lived. In their perspective, the indigenous peoples were so primitive and weak that they always suffered from the strong influence of civilized countries and people.

ISHIDA provided us with invaluable information about the former territories and migration routes of the Uilta clans. Until Otasu was constructed, some of the routes were used for visiting relatives and hunting sables in their own territories in the north. In the pre-wartime and wartime anthropological perspectives, his data could be interpreted only as indicating a migration system of the reindeer nomads (the Uilta were hunters and reindeer breeders) or a rule of the usage of hunting territories. But if one takes account of the fact that the fur trade was one of the important economic activities of native peoples in Sakhalin under the political and economic control of the pre-modern Chinese Empire and the Japanese *Bakufu* government, one can interpret them in another way. For example, the ancestors of the Uilta

were also involved in the commercial system of north-eastern Asia. From the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, Ainu villages located near Lake Taraika and the mouth of River Polonai made up one of the central regions of trade with Japan and China in Sakhalin. The Uilta people migrated to the south not only to seek good territories for reindeer breeding and hunting, but also to find trade partners. It was more convenient for them to live in the southern part of the island in order to trade with the Ainu and Japanese. In the nineteenth century the Uilta traders often went even to the trade posts built on the southern edge of the island by the *Matsumae-han* and the *Tokugawa Bakufu*.

As quoted above, ISHIDA was interested in the hunting techniques of the Uilta and Nivkhi only as evidence of cultural contacts between ethnic groups of northern Eurasia, North America, and the Japanese archipelago. But if he had analysed them as a system and interpreted the data in the context of the political and economic history of Sakhalin, he would have written the preface of KAWAMURA's article in another way.

The Uilta and Nivkhi rarely set traps for large animals like bears⁶⁾ and wild bores. They used traps for hunting sables, foxes, squirrels, river otters, and so on, i.e., for hunting fur-bearing animals. The hunters did not use traps for the hunting of prestigious animals like bears, on the one hand, while they tried to capture the fur-bearing animals with the greatest care not to injure them, on the other. The smallest damage lessened the value and the price of the fur and the profit for the hunters.

The fur, especially the sable fur, had a strategic value for China, Japan, and Russia to politically and economically govern the Amur region and Sakhalin. The court of the dynasties in Beijing was one of the centres of consumption of sable fur since the thirteenth century. The Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties paid much attention to governing the Amur region and Sakhalin as areas of fur production and constructed a special governing system to collect the sable fur from the inhabitants of these regions as a tribute or a commodity. It was a Chinese tributary system in which the emperor would surely reciprocate the tribute payers with presents much better in quantity and quality than the tribute.

The governing system stimulated the trade activity of the inhabitants. Even the Manchus, who built the Qing dynasty, were one of the peoples who acquired large economic and military power through the fur trade. The Qing dynasty once battled with Russian Cossacks in the seventeenth century for protecting its right to territories on the Amur basin. In that process, the dynasty organized the peoples of the region as tribute payers and provided them with many material benefits. Moreover, the dynasty gave some of them a special status almost equal to that of upper-class bureaucrats in the dynasty court.

This policy developed a commercial economy in the region. Some people became native traders and their business zone extended from the Lower Amur basin to the southern end of Sakhalin. Even the Japanese became their customers in the eighteenth century. The economic development in the Amur basin influenced the peoples of Sakhalin. The ancestors of the Uilta were no exception. As mentioned above, in the nineteenth century they often went to the Japanese trading post on the southern end of the island with Chinese commodities obtained from traders from the Amur region. They earned much profit from business with the Japanese.

The ancestors of the Uilta were also often engaged in fur animal hunting to buy Chinese

commodities from the Amur traders. But their techniques were not unique. They shared some techniques and pieces of equipment with the native peoples of the Lower Amur basin and the Primor'e region, as well as the Nivkhi and Ainu in Sakhalin. As described by ISHIDA, this fact has often been used to explain as serve as evidence to indicate the cultural contact between the indigenous peoples. But, another interpretation is more plausible in light of the above-mentioned historical background. The cultural contact was inevitably brought about by the commercial activities of fur traders who sought fur of extremely high quality. In other words, the peoples of the Lower Amur basin and Sakhalin developed and shared common techniques and equipment in order to maintain a certain level of quality of fur to meet the requirement of the Chinese court and merchants.

The importance of fur animal hunting in the economic activities of the indigenous peoples of Sakhalin did not change even after the collapse of the pre-modern Japanese and Chinese governments. It is because the governments of Russia, the Soviet Union, and modern Japan also gave those peoples a role in providing them with precious furs, which they in turn exported to Europe and America. The peoples began to use modern iron traps in the 1930s and 1940s, but at the same time they maintained the old techniques and traps, which they had devised in the pre-modern ages to hunt fur-bearing animals of the highest quality. The hunting methods and equipment that many researchers recognized as part of the traditional cultures evidenced political and economic contacts of the indigenous peoples with the surrounding countries, as well as the cultural contacts among the indigenous peoples themselves.

VI.

The urgent task currently expected of the anthropologists studying the indigenous peoples in Siberia and the Russian Far East is to re-examine the peoples' history and to reinterpret their societies and cultures. Those obsolete adjectives that described them as 'primitive, backward, unhistorical, non-literate, isolated, natural, and self-sufficient' are entirely irrelevant. In fact, the social and economic systems of the Uilta people were not closed to the outside world, and their productive activities were not always nature-oriented, either. Certainly, they practiced a sustainable use of animals and plants, while they also tried to capture as many fur-bearing animals as they could. Isolation was not a trait of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Russian Far East, but that of the anthropological and ethnological studies made of them.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, when the basis of the contemporary social/cultural anthropology was established in England and America, theories and methodologies have been constantly tested and criticized on the basis of field data. However, such tests and criticisms were impossible in the study of Siberian indigenous peoples. Discussions among scholars had been restricted by the socialist dogma of the Soviet Union since the 1930s, and were liberated only after its collapse in 1992.

Siberia and the Russian Far East have been long closed to foreign anthropologists and ethnologists, especially to those of Western countries. Those who want to be engaged in the studies of the peoples of these areas had to refer to the works of the restricted Soviet

ethnologists⁷⁾ or otherwise to research reports of the old-style ethnologists before the Russian Revolution. In the case of Far Eastern peoples, one could refer to reports by European, American, and Japanese anthropologists, like ISHIDA who conducted research in the 1930s and 1940s. But theoretically they were not much different from those by Soviet ethnologists. Siberianists could not share a common idiom with other anthropologists studying non-communist areas. As a result, they could not catch up with changing anthropological theories and, at most, only reproduced functionalist and socialist discourses. I have also been restricted by this theoretical situation of Siberian studies until 1990.

When I conducted field research among indigenous peoples in the Lower Amur basin in 1990, when the Soviet government began to open Siberia and the Far East to outside researchers, I was amazed by the huge gap between the peoples' actual life and the descriptions in the ethnography. This shock was further enlarged when I tried to analyse historical documents written by Japanese investigators before the Meiji restoration. I noted that the pre-wartime Japanese anthropologists and ethnologists, as well as the Soviet ethnologists, had only observed the 'traditional' parts of people's life and that they had described them as an essentialized system. They did not describe all aspects of the people's society and culture, but, in fact, they often politically chose the objects of observation and description. It was particularly the case in the work of Soviet ethnologists.

In the case of ISHIDA's research in Sakhalin, his primary purpose was to contribute to the control over the native peoples by the Japanese government by providing it with fundamental data about the Uilta society. And he presented their society as 'primitive,' following the policy of the Japanese local government in Sakhalin. It was inevitable that he did not mention the political background of the construction of Otasu. The reference to the historical records of the pre-modern Japanese investigators was not enough to show the real history and life of the Uilta people, either, though it should be highly appreciated. ISHIDA had no idea that they had shared the common history of the pre-modern East Asian world with the Japanese and Chinese.

No evidence available to me does indicate that the Japanese local government or military forces directly utilized ISHIDA's data and article to control the villagers of Otasu and to recruit native youths for the army. But it is true that the descriptions and discourse created by pre-wartime and wartime anthropologists and ethnologists, including E. ISHIDA, disseminated the perception of the indigenous peoples in Japanese Sakhalin as 'primitive' or 'Natural peoples' among the Japanese.

It is easy to criticize the colonialism comprised in the articles, reports, and ethnographies written by pre-wartime and wartime anthropologists. But one cannot pass them by, when one studies the history of the indigenous peoples in Japanese Sakhalin, because they represent one side of the people's life at that time. As I mentioned above, one must refer to them with the greatest care like historical documents.

Generally speaking, articles, reports, monographs, and ethnographies written by anthropologists and ethnologists are recognized as references, not as historical texts, in the anthropological study. Usually they are referred to in order to examine and criticize theoretical ideas they present, but they are seldom quoted to reconstruct the society and culture of a certain period. Ethnographic facts in anthropological articles have been often

recognized to be free from the passage of time. They have been generally assumed to represent essential and unchangeable parts of the society and culture of an ethnic group, not their historical situation at a given time.

However, that is not correct. Even if a cultural trait was seen in various times in the same ethnic group, its roles, functions, or meanings were not always the same. They change as time passes. One should interpret any cultural trait in the historical context of the time. Therefore, ethnographies by anthropologists should be read as historical texts and the data presented in them should be interpreted in the historical context of the time when the authors conducted their research. In other words, one should examine the reliability of the text of the ethnography, the process of its creation, and the theoretical, ideological, and disciplinary backgrounds of the author. Moreover, the ethnographic data must be checked against other kinds of documents and materials, which were preferably written by authors of different disciplines. Finally, one should interpret them in the context of the regional history in which the people described in the ethnography were living.

ISHIDA's research and his article have been highly appreciated as a unique study of the Uilta society in social anthropology. His description is certainly reliable. But if one examines his descriptions and compare them with various documents and studies which reveal facts that ISHIDA never mentioned, one can present a description of Uilta society that better reflects their actual life.

Notes

- 1) According to the census of the local government in 1940, five kinds of 'natives' (*dojin*) were living in Japanese southern Sakhalin, i.e., Uilta (*Orokko* or Orok), Nivkhi (*Giriyaku* or Gilyak), Evenki (*Kirin* or Kilin), Ul'chi (*Sanda*), and Yakut (*Yakuto*, italics indicate Japanese names). However the Evenki, Ul'chi, and Yakut were not indigenous to Sakhalin, but rather immigrants from the continent. The population of each ethnic group was as follows (KAWAMURA 1940: 3):

	Households	Men	Women	Both
Uilta	48	126	165	291
Nivkhi	20	51	48	99
Evenki	5	17	11	28
Ul'chi	5	14	7	21
Yakut	1	1	1	2
Sum	79	209	232	441

- 2) In this paper the term 'pre-wartime and wartime' means the years from 1930 to 1945. As I will mention later, the border of Japan and the Soviet Union in Sakhalin was always strained in those years as both countries had been in a state of hostilities, though the peace was kept on the surface till August 1945.
- 3) For example, S. KURODA, a specialist of social anthropological studies of the Uilta and Nivkhi, recognized ISHIDA's article to be the one and only social anthropological study of the Uilta people (KURODA 1979). There is another article about the clan system of the Uilta (ŌTA 1935). But it is a preliminary report and its description is not so systematic as ISHIDA's article.

- 4) The population of the village of Otasu was as follows (KAWAMURA 1940: 1-2):

	Households	Men	Women	Both
Uilta	14	40	49	89
Nivkhi	14	37	32	69
Evenki	0	2	2	4
Ul'chi	4	7	3	10
Yakut	1	1	1	2
Sum	33	87	87	174

- 5) About 60% native children were studying in the *Dojin Kyōikujo* in 1940. As to the dwellers of the village of Otasu, all children of school age were studying. The number of pupils was as follows (KAWAMURA 1940:37-8):

	Boys	Girls	Both
Nivkhi	6	6	12
Uilta	2	12	14
Ul'chi	1	1	2
Evenki	1	1	2
Sum	10	20	30

- 6) The Nivkhi sometimes used big box traps for capturing bears (Taksami 1967: 122).
 7) Soviet ethnologists have paid less interest in the society and culture of the Uilta, compared with their studies of other Tungus-speaking peoples and the Nivkhi. I can list up only some articles of B. A. Vasil'ev and A. V. Smolyak (Vasil'ev 1929; Smolyak 1965, 1975). They described the material and spiritual culture in detail, but they only showed a list of clan names and some marriage rules as to their society.

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