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Strange Customs: Incipient Social Differentiation in Kamchatka through the Eyes of the First Russian Explorers

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——初期ロシア探検家の目から見たカムチャツカにおける萌芽的社会分化——

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A new approach to local traditional social organization in Kamchatka is being developed by the author based on comparative studies of complex hunter-gathering and early farming societies as well as on ecological data and an analysis of traditional subsistence economy among the settled and semi-settled Kamchatka fishermen. The development of a highly effective subsistence economy as well as a relatively high population density, large settlement size and substantial population in the pre-contact and early contact periods make it reasonable to include the Kamchatka inhabitants of the early 18th century in the category of ranked societies. Some distinct features of those societies can help to explain the «bizarre» customs of Kamchatka Itel'mens and other populations, which were a surprise for the explorers of the 18th century. A ritual of establishment of partnership in relation to a system of exchange is analyzed as well as connections between hospitality, feasts and some basic characteristics of subsistence economy and social organization. Traditional attitudes to the shaping of identity and its cultural basis are also discussed. The author argues that the Kamchatka cultures manifested an incipient social stratification by the contact period.

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Key Words : Kamchatka, Itel'mens, Koryaks, partnership, social stratification
キーワード : カムチャツカ, イテリメン, コリヤーク, パートナーシップ, 社会階層

筆者は、現在、定住漁撈民や半定住漁撈民に関する生態学的なデータと伝統的生業経済の分析とともに、複雑なシステムを持つ狩猟採集社会と初期農耕社会の比較研究に基づいて、カムチャツカにおける伝統的社会組織に対する新しいアプローチ方法を模索している。18世紀初期のカムチャツカの住民が、既にロシア人との接触以前から、あるいは接触初期に、高度に効率化した生業経済、比較的高い人口密度、広く、大きな人口を抱える集落といった特徴を持っていたことから、彼らの社会を階層性のある社会に位置づけることができる。そして、それらの社会の際だった特徴のいくつかは、カムチャツカのイテリメンその他の諸民族が持っていた、探検家たちを驚かせた「奇怪な」習慣に納得のいく説明を与えてくれる。本稿では、その中から、交換システムと関係して行われるパートナーシップを築くための儀礼を、客に対するもてなしや饗宴と生業経済や社会組織の基礎的な特徴との関係から分析し、さらに彼らの伝統的なアイデンティティとその文化的基礎の生成について議論していく。筆者は、カムチャツカの文化が、接触期以前に彼らの社会で萌芽的な階層分化が始まっていたことを示していた、ということを主張したい。

Kamchatka was one of the last areas to join the Russian Empire, at the extreme north-east of Asia. Everything was strange there for the Russians, everything amazed the newcomers: endless space, an abundance of valuable fish, a grand chain of threatening volcanoes and even a complete absence of amphibians and reptiles (frogs, lizards, snakes). But it was the local inhabitants with their peculiar life style who were of special interest. In contrast to Russians, they practiced no farming, seemed to recognize no authority, had no iron tools, used only stone and bone weapons in battles, consumed mainly fish and deer meat, produced wooden and mud vessels, lived in underground dwelling-houses in winter and in pile structures high above the ground in summer, “had no faith” (i.e. were not Christians), but practiced shamanism intensively. All these “strange” features were already observed by Vladimir Atlasov who led the Cossack conquest of Kamchatka in 1697 (Al’kor and Drezen, eds. 1935: 25–33).

The fast expansion of the borders of the country, the necessity of improving the local administrative systems and establishing a more effective system of tax collection made the Russian central authorities support academic studies in Siberia. To this end the Russian Academy of Sciences, established in 1725, organized several large-scale scientific explorations as early as the first half of the 18th century. The “Great Northern Expedition” (2nd Kamchatka expedition) of 1733–1743 was the most successful, aimed at the investigation of the ethnic composition of the local inhabitants, the origins of particular groups, the natural environment in the areas they occupied, and the characteristics of their cultures and beliefs, customs and languages (Tokarev 1966:



Figure 1 A view of the northern part of the Kamchatka Peninsula

83).

The German naturalist Georg Wilhelm Steller, who was employed by the Russian Government at that time, and the Russian student Stepan P. Krasheninnikov made their studies in Kamchatka respectively in 1740–1744 and in 1737–1741. Both made detailed observations and managed to collect unique data on the Kamchatka inhabitants, their way of life and customs at the early period of Russian colonization (Krasheninnikov 1755; Steller 1774). At the same time, it is worth mentioning that the local situation had already been somewhat modified by the 1730s, when the first explorers visited Kamchatka. The traditional power systems and social hierarchy were largely destroyed in the course of the conquest of Kamchatka by the Russian Cossacks and the suppression of the last attempts at resistance, especially, the uprisings of 1707–1711 and 1731–1732. The establishment of a new administrative system by the Russians also affected the traditional power and social systems. Besides, the first explorers, overburdened by their own cultural heritage and experience, were not able to understand properly the meaning of many observed customs, which were sometimes characterized by Krasheninnikov as “infamous”, “obscene”, and the like. Nevertheless, the first explorers were rather scrupulous in their observations: they attempted to describe as completely as possible everything that occurred before their eyes and what they were told by their informants. That is why the manuscripts of Steller and Krasheninnikov still serve as valuable sources of material for modern students, although one has to make special efforts to interpret their data properly.

It is especially difficult to understand the social relationships among the

Kamchatka inhabitants in the early contact period, and the meaning of their social behavior and customs. That is why those modern scholars (Simchenko 1970; Vdovin 1990) who have discussed the traditional social structure, have restricted themselves primarily to clan, family and marital relationships and have not been able to come to an agreement concerning various other issues of local social organization. It is possible now to develop a new approach to all these issues, based on a deeper understanding of the evolution of complex social structures in the pre-state period, elaborated by extensive comparative studies (Shnirelman 1986a; 1986b; 1990), as well as on ecological data and an analysis of traditional subsistence economy among the settled and semi-settled Kamchatka fishermen (Shnirelman 1994a). The existence of highly effective subsistence economics as well as a relatively high population density, the large size of particular settlements and populations in the pre-contact and early contact periods make it reasonable to include the Kamchatka inhabitants of the early 18th century in the category of ranked societies, after Morton Fried (1967). Also some peculiar features of such societies can help explain the "strange" customs of the Kamchatka Itel'mens and other populations, which were such a surprise for the explorers of the 18th century.

One of the most unusual customs, described by Steller (1927: 57–58) and Krasheninnikov (1949: 432, 433, 702), concerns the establishment of a partnership between two men. The custom was so interesting that it deserves an extensive discussion. It was as follows. If a man was eager to make a friend, he invited the other to his home, prepared abundant refreshment for him and strongly heated his dwelling house. The host and the guest took off all their clothes while inside. The host treated the guest endlessly and sprinkled the red-hot stone at the hearth with water. The guest tried to eat all the meals and to be patient with the strong heat. According to Krasheninnikov, the guest vomited several times due to over-eating, but nevertheless tried to endure as long as possible. Meanwhile, the host ate nothing at all and enjoyed going out of the house to have a rest from the intolerable heat. This treatment continued until the guest begged for mercy and gave all his belongings to the host, including clothes and dog team. The host set him free only after that, providing him with poor clothes and weak dogs. If the host was especially generous with his treatment, so that the guest could not even look at food for up to three days, the described event resulted in the establishment of friendship ties. After that the former guest waited for his new friend at home, while preparing the same treatment to reciprocate him. If the friend delayed his visit for a long time, the former guest visited him once again and demonstrated with all his behavior that he needed a reciprocal gift. To leave him without that gift was a great insult; that was socially treated as a true disgrace, and the offender was subject to public ostracism.

Krasheninnikov insisted that, with the help of this custom, one could ob-

tain anything, which he approved very much, and modern scholars sometimes treat the custom after him as “a kind of a primitive exchange, practiced through the establishment of friendly relationships” (Krasheninnikov 1949: 432, note 1). However, according to extensive comparative data, it is more likely that the custom in question demonstrated an attempt to extend a social network in search for security against failure or a true crisis. Actually, the custom in question looks like a ritual to establish pseudo-brotherhood, practiced among a great variety of populations. Anatoli M. Khazanov (1972; 1975: 107–111) explains the flourishing of this ritual with the weakening of former kinship ties and the absence of other reliable mechanisms to ensure individual rights and interests during a period of social class formation. He argues that new social ties were perceived in a former way as blood relationships and, thus, the rituals of making friends were necessary to create kinship (or pseudo-kinship) ties between new friends. Sometimes, as was observed among the Scythians, the ritual demanded the mixing of the blood of both persons. However, in some other societies kinship could be established in the course of joint meals, since food sharing provided both partners with the same substance and the same identity (Strathern 1973: 28–29; Butinov 1980). Probably, this was the meaning of the generous refreshment during the establishment of friendly ties among the Itel'mens of Kamchatka.

Moreover, some features of the custom in question are similar to the rituals of the natives of the Northwest Coast of North America. As it has already been demonstrated, the Itel'men custom included a dual purification: an internal one, with the help of vomiting, and an external one, in the course of sweating and wiping with a bunch of grass. Both actions led to a pacification of the spirits and provided a successful and prosperous life, according to the beliefs of the Northwest Coast Indians (Drucker 1965: 85–86). It is well-known that fire was treated by the Itel'mens as a powerful purification force; they worshiped fire and made sacrifices to it during a large annual ceremony (Steller 1927: 68; Krasheninnikov 1949: 417–124). To put it another way, through the custom in question a man purified himself of everything alien and evil, and opened his heart towards a new friend. This is made clear from the potlach-like (Drucker 1965: 55 ff.) character of the custom under discussion, which included a whole cycle of reciprocal treatment and gift-exchange. An exchange of personal belongings, including clothes, is especially meaningful since to a certain extent they were identified with the owner and maintained his image among the Kamchatka inhabitants, as will be demonstrated below. As a result, partnership relationships were established between the new friends, and, as was noticed by Steller (1927: 58), each could rely on the gratuitous friend's assistance in case of emergency.

Partnership was practiced not only within the homogenous cultural realm, but also between people from groups with different ways of life. To put it

differently, an inter-communal or inter-cultural division of labour was commonly practiced in Kamchatka. The early explorers (Steller 1927: 24; Krashennikov 1949: 369) paid attention to the local traditional exchange patterns, although they could not understand their full meaning. Thus, they recorded exchanges both between the Itel'mens themselves and between them and the neighbouring Koryak reindeer herders. According to their observations, people exchanged those goods which they had in abundance for those which were in short supply: for instance, the Itel'mens supplied the Koryaks with furs, dog skins and dried amonitos, and obtained reindeer products (skins, skin clothes, and the like) in return. Besides, the coastal inhabitants were eager to get fresh reindeer flesh from the reindeer Koryaks in spring, when their own stores of fish and meat were about to expire. From their side, the coastal people supplied the reindeer herders with sea-mammal fat and skins, which were valuable to them (Bilibin 1934: 10, 18–22). Of course, this was a gift-exchange rather than a market-exchange: the early explorers stressed that an exchange was arranged in the form of a “friendly union” or “as an establishment of friendly relationships”.

Traditional exchange between the coastal Itel'mens and coastal Koryaks, on the one hand, and the reindeer Koryaks, on the other hand, continued until the 1950s, as I discovered during my visit to Kamchatka in August 1992 (Shnirelman 1992a; 1999). The reindeer Koryaks descended to the coast in winter and made exchanges with their particular exchange-partners (Kor. “tumme”) among the local inhabitants. The partners were about the same age. The coastal people supplied the reindeer herders with sea-mammal flesh or belts made of their skins, and received in return one or several reindeer carcasses.



Figure 2 Skin processing with a flint scraper (Reindeer Evens)

As was demonstrated by Bilibin (1934: 19), the various particular exchanges were far from equivalent, although they never resulted in any dissatisfaction or frustration among the partners. It was not particular acts of exchange but social relations in general which were really meaningful for the local inhabitants since they rescued people from sporadic failures.

What was the basis for the “friendly unions” which were mentioned by the first explorers? Besides the aforementioned partnership, marital relations played an important role. Judging from my Koryak informants, the Kamchatka natives recognized the negative genetic consequences of marital relations between close blood relatives. That is why they preferred to look for marital partners in distant villages, and frequently even among other ethnic or cultural groups. Thus, the reindeer Koryaks (Chavchuvens) welcomed marriages with the Chukchees, the Evens and the coastal inhabitants, Nymyllans. They considered the offspring of interethnic marriages to be more healthy and, to prove that, referred to their own reindeer herding experience, which demonstrated the usefulness of interbreeding domesticated deer with wild ones “for blood refreshment”.

Nowadays the Koryaks are considered by the Russian ethnologists as consisting of two “ethnographic” groups: Chavchuvens (reindeer herders) and Nymyllans (shore-dwellers). However, the Chavchuvens themselves have their own view of ethnic classification. They consider a Chavchoven to be a rich reindeer herder, and true Koryaks to be just reindeer herders. On the other hand, they treat the Nymyllans as the “different people” since they practice a quite different way of life. The Chavchuvens are proud of their own dialect and do not like their children to be taught in Nymyllan at school. They



Figure 3 The Koryak reindeer herders



Figure 4 The Koryak reindeer herd in the upper Palana river valley

believe that the Chavchuvens appeared in the world somewhat earlier than the Nymyllans since, according to their legends, man and deer were quite close to each other from the very moment of Creation. This helped the reindeer Koryaks to consider themselves as somewhat superior in respect to the coastal settled inhabitants. As Krasheninnikov (1949: 450. See also Bilibin 1934: 20) noted, the reindeer Koryaks called the coastal dwellers “servants”, and the latter had to tolerate that since they depended on the herders for their supply of some vital products.

Nevertheless, according to my information, the settled fishermen, the Itel'mens, consider themselves more advanced in terms of culture and social relationships than the reindeer Koryaks. It is interesting that, in contrast to the modern ethnopolitical classification which, being based on language affiliations, distinguishes between the Koryaks and the Itel'mens, the traditional folk classification is based on way of life, and in the past the reindeer Koryaks (Chavchuvens) used to oppose themselves to shore-dwellers, namely the Itel'mens and Nymyllans, in general. This was first revealed by Steller (1927: 13), who noted that the Koryaks called the Itel'mens “Nymyllans”. Krasheninnikov (1949: 448–449) also stressed the similarities between the coastal settled Koryaks and the Itel'mens in both culture and way of life. On the other hand, he (1949: 449) was inclined to identify the reindeer Chukchees with the reindeer Koryaks. Thus, in his classification of the Kamchatka inhabitants Krasheninnikov was sometimes closer to the folk classification, which emphasized a way of life and culture, rather than language or self-awareness.

Indeed, the coastal inhabitants differed from the reindeer herders in their



Figure 5 A summer fishing camp of the Nymyllans

life-style, language (IteI'mens) or dialect (Nymyllans) as well as in certain cultural features. One of the main differences, which has survived to the present day, concerns burial rites. The coastal dwellers, who were Christianized rather early, bury their dead in coffins below the ground. In contrast, cremation is still practiced among the reindeer Koryaks and Chukchees as first reported by Krasheninnikov (1949: 459, 735). When explaining this ritual, the reindeer Koryaks tell that a spirit can fly away freely in the case of cremation whereas in the case of inhumation it suffers tortures because the worms eat the corpse. People are still devoted to their burial rites: if both spouses originate from different groups (say, from Chavchuvens and Nymyllans), they will be buried differently.

The local rule demands that people be loyal to the culture of their local community, rather than to their ethnic or regional cultures alone. In particular, when married Koryak woman visits her parents in the village of her childhood, she must change her dress and put on her old clothes. Only in this way she can return to the "we-group", otherwise she will be perceived as an "alien". My Koryak informant stated that while being redressed that way she felt younger, and turned back to her former image. At the same time, she had to behave quite differently in her husband's village especially, since she was of Koryak origin and her husband of Even origin. In former times the identification of clothes with the person could be observed among the IteI'mens as well. According to Steller (1927: 56), the clothes of a deceased person had to be thrown away; if somebody put them on, he or she could die.

Be that as it may, in contrast to a clear trend to intra-group marriages

among the large ethnic populations in contemporary Russia and in adjacent republics during recent decades, inter-ethnic marriages are still very popular among the numerically small peoples of the North and, in particular, in Kamchatka. The reason for this is an attempt to extend one's own social, i.e. kinship, network which is still very important in terms of security, rather than just an eagerness to "refresh the blood" (although the people themselves use the latter explanation). As was argued elsewhere (Shnirelman 1994a), the tradi-



Figure 6 Fishing by net in Kamchatka (Nymyllans)



Figure 7 Fish storage hut (Itel'men)

tional Itel'men fishing economy was rather efficient: it allowed the production of enormous food stores and thus served as a reliable basis for relatively large settled communities with mean size of about 100–200 persons. However, this did not guarantee the Itel'mens from sporadic hardships or even famines once in several years, which occurred for various reasons: climatic fluctuations, cycles of salmon development, and the like (for this sort of ecological crises in wider context see Shnirelman 1992c: 29–30).

It is well-known that hospitality served as a universal means to withstand hardship in traditional societies. The data collected in Kamchatka in the late 19th century (Sliunin 1900) demonstrate that the volume of fish catches varied greatly among different communities within the same population or among different populations even during unfavourable times. Thus, the unfavourable year 1892 did not affect the Penzhina Itel'mens. On the contrary, their catches even increased in comparison to previous years. Under these conditions the general survival and viability of local inhabitants could be based only on the efficient mechanisms of redistribution of the available foodstuffs. The traditional Itel'men communities of the pre-contact or early contact periods lacked any centralized authority that could establish and run these mechanisms (Al'kor and Drezen, eds. 1935: 31; Steller 1927: 22; Krasheninnikov 1949: 366, 406). On the other hand, hospitality was practiced extensively there and maintained its importance until very recently. It is worth mentioning that people used to visit primarily their maternal relatives or affines.

Hospitality manifested itself, in particular, in regular feasts arranged by some communities for others to celebrate some important events: marriage, appropriation of a large beast, for instance, a bear, and the like (Steller 1927:



Figure 8 Drying salmon on racks (Itel'men)

28, 58, 60; Krasheninnikov 1949: 427). Thus, all winter round whole Itel'men communities visited each other, and the generosity of the hosts was evaluated mainly through the quantity of distributed food. Krasheninnikov (1949: 368, 427) noted that the hosts treated the guests to such an extent that the latter vomited several times during the visit. And while describing the situation of the 1740s, Steller (1927: 46) referred to the Itel'mens themselves who complained of the hardship: "The happy days have gone: we vomited three or four times a day formerly but now we very rarely vomit even once". All these Itel'men data are very close to the practices of communal prestige feasts among many horticulturalists such as the Yanomami of Venezuela (Chagnon 1968) or the Highland Papuans of Papua New Guinea (Reay 1959: 86 ff.), where gluttony was an usual aspect of a properly organized event. Obviously, as among the latter groups, the Itel'men feasts and ceremonies were important for the strengthening of social bonds, in particular, for the establishment of marital relationships, the recruitment of allies, the exchange of valuable information, receiving necessary goods through gift-exchange, and the like (Shnirelman 1986a: 404-405).

A manner of a feast making might seem odd to the Europeans unexperienced with the local customs. One of the favourite meals which the Itel'mens served to their guests was fermented fish heads. In general, the Itel'mens practiced two main recipes for fish processing: drying and fermenting (Shnirelman 1994a). Fish was fermented in special pits separately for humans and for dogs. Nowadays the Itel'mens ferment fish heads together with spawn and milt in small barrels especially for feasts. The Itel'mens and many other indigenous peoples of the Russian Far East consider fermented fish heads a delicacy. On the contrary, the Europeans felt an aversion for this meal; they could not stop observing the intolerable rotten odor which one could detect from a distance and through which one could recognize the proximity of an indigenous village (Al'kor and Drezen, eds. 1935: 31; Steller 1927: 38; Krasheninnikov 1949: 393, 394; Ditmar 1901: 325). Even now the Itel'mens do not like to tell strangers of their thirst for fish heads and, if they do, they express a feeling of a shame. However, as I was informed by local physicians in Kamchatka, fermented foodstuffs (berries, grasses, and fermented fish) provided indigenous peoples with valuable vitamins. The latter were necessary to withstand some local diseases including, especially, tuberculosis, which is still widespread and even growing at high latitudes. It is worth mentioning that the fermentation of fish is well-known also in Iceland, rather than only among the northern peoples of Russia. Obviously, various peoples independently of each other worked out an optimum diet in order to cope with the harsh Northern conditions. I must also add that, according to my Russian informant who lived in the Russian Far East for many years, one can accustom himself to fermented fish, after which it seems delicious, and more tender than the regular

kind.

As among the horticulturalists, the Itel'men feasts had a competitive aspect. The latter manifested itself both at the inter-personal level, as was demonstrated through the brotherhood ritual, and at the communal level. The latter was observed by Krasheninnikov (1949: 402): "...if somebody served his guest less food than he had to, this was perceived as a great insult which had to be avenged through the slaughter of the whole community where that hostile act had occurred". Here a common characteristic of ranked societies is demonstrated, which was described in the past primarily with data on horticulturalists, and which was called "fighting with food" (Young 1971).

Having but a few other sources or symbols of wealth, the Itel'mens attempted to impress their guests with the quantity of food. That is why the early observers used to stress their immoderateness in eating up to gluttony. And sometimes social demands, derived from the prestige economy, were even in conflict with the necessities of the subsistence economy, and the Itel'mens served much more food for the guests than they were able to in terms of their own food resources. This also could result in hardship even during favourable years, and to survive until the warm season people had to live on the bark of some trees or to rely on the assistance of their reindeer Koryak partners. Hence, the "carelessness" and "wastefulness" demonstrated by the Itel'mens, their "frivolous" waste of their winter stores on guests, that were a surprise for the first European observers (Steller 1927: 45-46; Lesseps 1801: 92-93), were common features of a society which had begun to develop a prestige economy linked to the process of social differentiation.

Unfortunately, one has very few and fragmentary data to study this process among the Itel'mens. Nevertheless, they are sufficient to argue for incipient social differentiation among the Itel'mens of the late 17th-early 18th centuries. All the early observers agreed that there were informal leaders in the local communities, who could influence people through their authority and persuasion rather than through any formal order. The Russians called them "the best strangers" (Al'kor and Drezen, eds. 1935: 34), and in some respects they might be compared to the New Guinea big men. It is not easy to discover the qualities which allowed a person to achieve leadership, but it is known from the early sources that old men (i.e. 50 years of age and older) were highly respected and enjoyed authority in local communities. They played a crucial role both in public and legal decision making. Also a leadership in warfare was in the hands of brave warriors (Steller 1927: 22, 70; Krasheninnikov 1949: 366, 699. Also see Shnirelman 1999). The Itel'mens also distinguished between rich and poor (Steller 1927: 66). Wealth was calculated, in particular, by the number of wives and dog teams in the household. Krasheninnikov (1949: 692, 708) noted that the Itel'mens identified riches with number of women and stressed that "that man could be called wealthy among them who

had a good wife and dogs, and was well nourished and dressed”. Possibly that is why the Itel'mens used to capture each other's wives and dogs, resulting in bloody clashes.

Rich people were respected among them (Al'kor and Drezen, eds. 1935: 31), and probably wealth was an important quality which helped a person to become a leader. In any case the pattern of incipient leadership development among the Itel'mens was very similar to that which is well-known among many horticultural communities (Shnirelman 1986a; 1990).

The frequent inter-community wars are one more common feature of the period of incipient social stratification (Fried 1961; Shnirelman 1986a: 405–407; 1994c). All the early observers agreed that inter-community wars were not uncommon among the Itel'mens: the latter knew how to wage war properly, they had specialized weapons and armour, warfare leadership and even primitive fortifications (Al'kor and Drezen, eds. 1935: 27, 32; Steller 1927: 22, 23, 27; Krasheninnikov 1949: 402–406). One of the main goals of the local wars was the capture of prisoners to use for heavy manual labor or as concubines; food stores were seized as well (Steller 1927: 22; Krasheninnikov 1949: 402, 692). A special term, “karuad”, was traditionally used by the Itel'mens for servants, originally prisoners of war (Krasheninnikov 1949: 698). This is evidence of the pre-contact origin of the institution in question, although it was Russians who stimulated its flourishing in the early 18th century (Okun' 1935: 7–10). Krasheninnikov (1949: 701) mentioned that one of the ways of creating dependence was assistance with food at a time of hardship: “...before our time if somebody had fed somebody at a time of famine, he could make a serf of the latter”.

Thus, the first Russian explorers have left extremely valuable narratives on the state of the traditional Kamchatka cultures in the early 18th century. Although they could not understand the true meaning of some customs and rituals, they tried to describe them as scrupulously as possible, adding almost none of their own comments. This greatly helps modern scholars to reconstruct the social structure of the Itel'mens at pre-contact and early contact periods and, in particular, to come to the conclusion that their societies were very much like those of horticulturalists in terms of certain economic, social and demographic dimensions. Their economic base was fairly sufficient to support relatively large settled communities and to stimulate a prestige economy and the development of incipient social differentiation. To put it another way, they can be included in the group of so called complex societies which embraced many other highly efficient hunters, fishermen and gatherers (Shnirelman 1992b; 1994b) rather than traditional food-producing societies alone.

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