

## A History of the Far East Indigenous Peoples' Transborder Activities between the Russian and Chinese Empires

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# A History of the Far East Indigenous Peoples' Transborder Activities between the Russian and Chinese Empires

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper, I discuss how the ancestors of present indigenous minorities in the Russian Far East and Northeastern provinces of China, such as the Heje, Nanai (Gold), Ulcha (Olcha or Ul'chi), and Nivkh (Gilyak), involved themselves in national border issues between China (Qing) and Russia from the middle of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century (Figure 1). I pose a simple question: Why did the

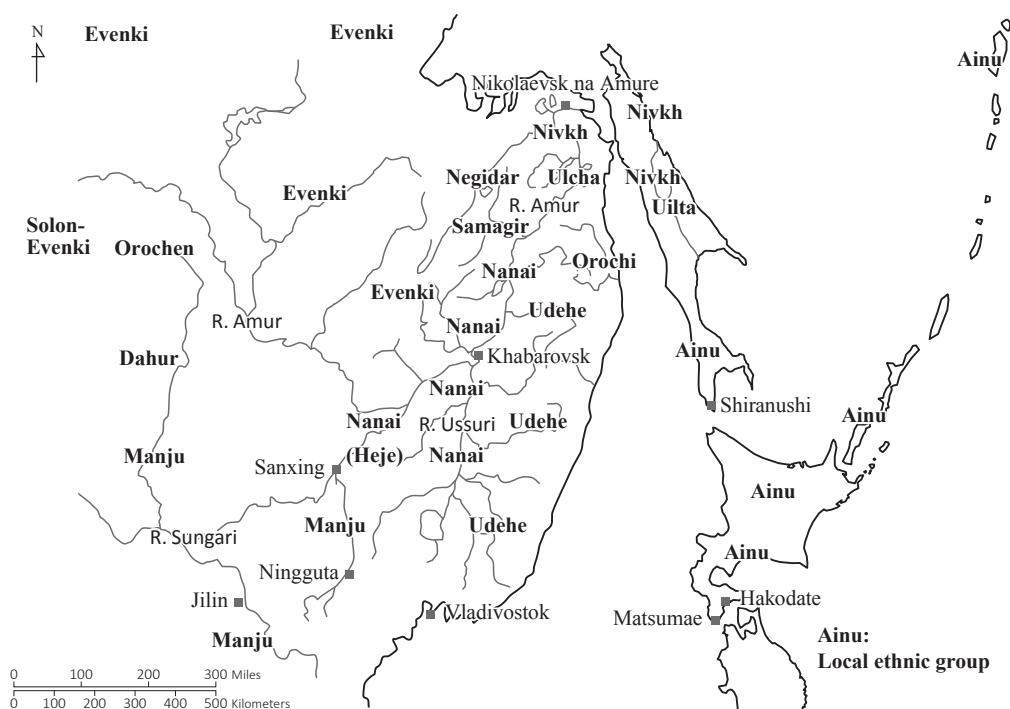


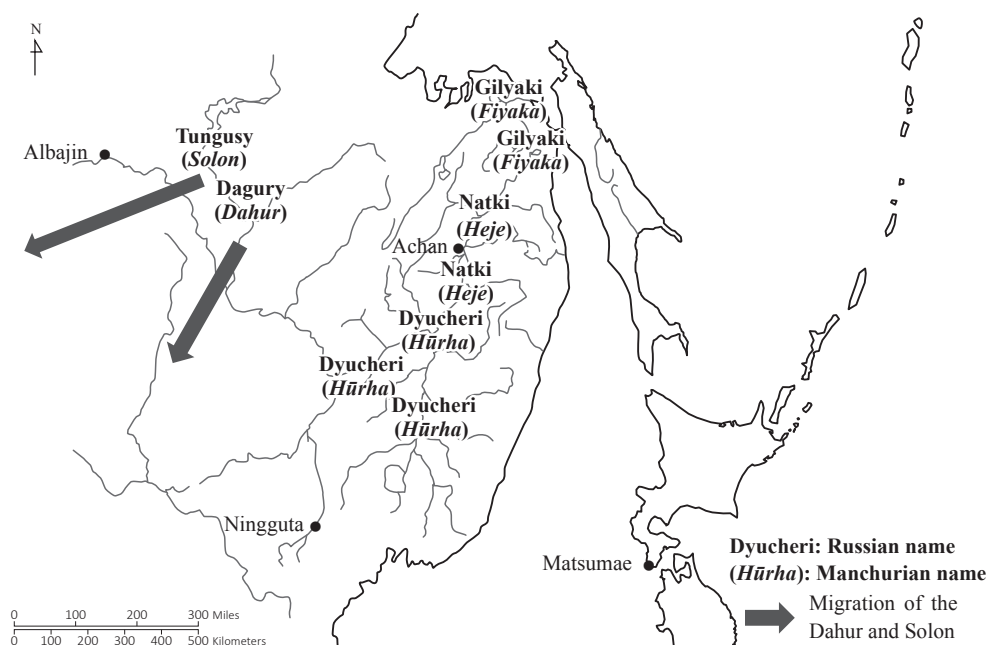
Figure 1 Northeast Asia in the nineteenth century with the location of local ethnic groups

indigenous people not have any concerns with regard to the establishment of the national border between China and Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century, when they had actively involved themselves in the same issue in the middle of the seventeenth century and even had played a decisive role on where the border between these two empires should have been? I will use this paper to answer this question.

Since the publication of E. G. Ravensteins's classical work titled "The Russians on the Amur" (1861), many books and articles have been published by specialists of modern and contemporary history and political science, in English, Russian, French, Chinese, and Japanese, concerning Russo-Chinese relations and border issues. However, I will not count their number, or review them one by one.<sup>1)</sup> They will not be extensively referenced in this article, because they left present indigenous people and their ancestors out of their perspectives.

Some historians and anthropologists have analyzed the local people's activities and movements.<sup>2)</sup> They have often discussed issues related to the ethnicity of the people who lived in the Amur River basin, when the Qing dynasty and Russia fought in this region during the second half of the seventeenth century (1651–1689). For example, Soviet anthropologists, Dolgikh (1958, 1960) and Polevoi (1979), and Japanese orientalists, Anami (1981) and Yoshida (1974, 1984), enthusiastically engaged in this issue, and insisted on the validity of their hypotheses. They focused their questions on the ethnicity of the peoples named Dyucheri (they were called *Hūrha* from the Manchurian side) and Natki (also *Indahūn takūrara gurun* or *Heje*), who had lived in the Sungari, Ussuri, and Middle and Lower Amur River basins in the mid-seventeenth century, based on an analysis of Russian and Manchurian documents. The former lived in the upper basins, and engaged in agriculture as well as hunting and fishing, while the latter lived in the lower basins, and were purely hunters and fishermen. Briefly stated, Dolgikh and Yoshida insisted that the Dyucheri were the same people as the Manchurians, while the Natki were ancestors of the present Nanai. On the contrary, Polevoi and Anami insisted that both Dyucheri and Natki were ancestors of the Nanai (Figure 2).

Though both hypotheses appear to be correct, based on the authors' assertions, their discussion is inappropriate from the present point of view, because they simply and directly compared two different types of categories, that is, they compared an administrative category defined by the Russian Cossacks and Manchurian officials (Dyucheri, Natki, *Hūrha*, and *Heje*) to an ethnic category used by ethnologists (Manchurians and Nanai). We now know that both Dyucheri (or *Hūrha*) and Natki (or *Heje*) were comprised of many subgroups named *hala*, which had some characteristics of a patrilineal clan. Their membership and name succeeded from father to child. Though many were regarded as either Dyucheri or Natki, some were regarded as both. Their names are still used as family names by the present people. The locations, movements, and activities of these subgroups were so complicated that it is impossible to univocally define the ethnicity of the Dyucheri (*Hūrha*) and Natki (*Heje*) with a simple comparison of their locations and some recorded cultural traits. As to this problem, Matsuura's (2006) and Sasaki's (1989, 1990a, 2001) series of articles—which referred to the original archives written in Manchurian, Chinese, and Russian—have greatly helped to clarify the



**Figure 2** Location of the peoples documented in Russian and Manchurian archives in the seventeenth century

genealogical and cultural continuity between the local groups described in archives from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the present ethnic groups.

At the same time, many anthropologists and historians studying the ethnicity of the local people in the Amur River basin overlooked their role in the Russo-Chinese conflict in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Historical records in Russian, Chinese, and Manchurian indicate that the Dyucheri (*Hürha*) and Natki (*Heje*), as well as the Gilyaks (or *Fiyaka* in Manchurian), who had lived in the lowest part of the Amur River basin, played a decisive role in the conflict in the seventeenth century (Sasaki 2006). The Qing dynasty finally defeated the Russians, pushed them away from the Amur River basin, and signed the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, because the local people supported the former's rule and clearly showed hostility against the latter. They had not been “primitive” hunter-gatherers at the mercy of the international conflict, as has often been assumed by historians and anthropologists, but they had a voice and will to select their ruler.

The local people in the Amur River basin like the ancestors of the Nivkh, Ulcha, and Nanai, as I will explain later, maintained their hostility against Russia and the Russians, even in the nineteenth century. Some Japanese explorers, who had conducted an expedition in Sakhalin (*Karafuto* in Japanese) in the beginning of the nineteenth century, like Rinzo Mamiya and Denjuro Matsuda, recorded that people from the Amur River basin and northern Sakhalin (Mamiya and Matsuda called the ancestors of the present Ulcha and Nivkh “Santan” and “Sumerenkuru”) had often shown strong antagonism and negative emotions toward the Russians and the people who were

subjected to the Russian rule (like the Evenki hunters from Siberia). However, when the Russians returned and occupied the Amur River basin and Sakhalin in the 1850s, they were unable to resist the Russian invasion. After concluding the treaties of Aigun (1858) and Beijing (1860) with China, Russia acquired vast territories on the left bank of the Amur River, and in the present Primorsky (informally Primorye) region, and actively promoted the immigration of European colonizers. At the same time, it viewed the original local people as pagan primitive minorities, and deprived them of the right to access the resources they had preferentially used. As a result, they became poor hunters and fishermen, and their societies and cultures appeared to be primitive, likening survivors of the Stone Age.

Why did these people, who had clearly expressed a will which side they would have stood for in the seventeenth century, lose their power and voice in the mid-nineteenth century? Had the Russian military power become strong enough to compel the local people to submit its rule by this time? Were the authority and power of the Qing dynasty so weakened? In this paper I will try to answer these questions, positioning my viewpoint near that of the local people, who were ancestors of the present indigenous people.

## 2. Establishment of the Qing-Russian Border in the Seventeenth Century

The Qing dynasty (1616–1912) is widely known as the last Chinese dynasty. It was China's most powerful dynasty, and controlled the largest territory in Chinese history. It was established not by the Han-Chinese, the ethnic majority of China, but by the Manchurians (*Manju*), one of the northern ethnic minorities. They were formerly called the Jurchen, who were known to be good hunters and powerful soldiers. Their ancestors had established a dynasty (the Jin dynasty, 1115–1234), and conquered and governed the northern part of China. However, since its destruction by the Mongolians, they lived under the control of the Yuan and Ming dynasties in the present northeastern provinces of China and the Russian Far East. The Jurchen people who lived in these dynasties were ancestors of present Tungus-speaking peoples such as the Manzu (Manchurians), Heje, Nanai, Ulcha, Oroch, and Udehe. They were periodically obliged to pay tributes to the dynasties in the form of sable and other precious furs, such as ermine, lynx, and fox. However, they enjoyed the right to own trade businesses in designated cities, which made large profits. The demand for fur, especially for sable, rose in the court in Beijing (the capital of the Yuan and Ming dynasties) and Seoul (the capital of Korea) during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Kawachi 1971: 62–79). The Manchurians' ancestors took advantage of this situation. They accumulated economic, political, and military power through the fur trade with Chinese and Korean merchants (Kawachi 1971: 102), established their own dynasty (*Manju gurun*) again, won the independence of China (in 1616, with the establishment of the *Aisin gurun*), and turned their dynasty into an empire that governed the Manchurians, Mongolians, Koreans, and Chinese (in 1636, renaming it *Daicin gurun* or Qing), and finally conquered China (in 1644).

During this process, the Manchurians brought the people in the Sungari, Ussuri, and Amur River basins (later I will use the term “the Amur region”) under their control,

using both military power and peaceful negotiations. By the year of the conquest of China, the Qing dynasty organized the people on the Sungari, Ussuri, and the middle part of the Amur basin into the tribute payers, offering their chiefs official status and some material benefits.<sup>3)</sup> Thereafter, these people played an important role in supplying the Manchurians with precious furs.

Many political scientists often begin their analysis and discussion of the border issues in Northeast Asia with the second half of the nineteenth century, when Russia, Japan, and China began to be modernized. The origin of, and the prototype for the present issues are assumed to have their roots in the conflicts and negotiations that occurred in this period. However, if we discuss them from the perspective of present indigenous peoples or that of their ancestors, our discussion should commence at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This is a special epoch in the history of Northeast Asia, during which time strong governments that competed with each other for control of this area were established in Japan, Russia, and China. The Tokugawa Shogunate was established in 1603, and subdued the Matsumae clan, which governed the people in Hokkaido, at the southern edge of Sakhalin Island (hereafter Sakhalin), and the southern part of the Kuril Islands. Later, in the nineteenth century, the Tokugawa government had direct control over all the Ainu people on these islands. In Russia, the Romanov dynasty ended its chaotic era, which had continued since the death of the Ivan IV in 1613, and succeeded his policy of conquering Siberia and the Far East. In China, as mentioned above, Aisingyoro Nurhaci, a prominent leader of the Manchurian people, founded the *Aisin gurun* in 1616, which later expanded its power to that of a Chinese empire, namely the Qing dynasty.

It was not by chance that the Manchurian and Russian powers engaged in a military conflict in the Amur River basin in the mid-seventeenth century. Rather, it was a consequence of the simultaneous expansion of these two big powers in Eurasia, which also made the confrontation between Japanese and Russian powers on the Kuril Islands in the second half of the eighteenth century inevitable. Defeated in the conflict on the Amur River, Russia expanded to the east, occupied Kamchatka and Chukotka, and had them under Russian control by the early eighteenth century. Having established military and administrative bases in these areas, Russia initiated the next stage of its expansion. It dispatched expedition teams to Alaska and the Kuril Islands. The purpose of the latter expedition was the quest for sea otter resources, and business opportunities involving trade with the Ainu and the Japanese. Though intense battles between Japan and Russia were infrequent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,<sup>4)</sup> a cold hostility was maintained until official diplomatic relations were established in 1855. During this period, the Russo-Japanese border between the Iturup and Urup Islands was formed in incremental steps, after which it was finally recognized by diplomatic agreement.

Let us turn back to the Russo-Manchurian conflict. Both powers tried to dominate the local people, and to integrate them into their governing systems. Some Russian and Soviet orientalists often insisted that E. Khabarov and O. Stepanov had organized the local people in the Amur region (the Dyucheri, Natki, and Gilyaks) into fur taxpayers in the 1650s, before the Manchurians had done so, and that this fact supported the

legitimacy of the territorial right of Russia over the present Russian Far East (Dolgikh 1960; Melikhov 1982: 36). It is true that some ancestors of the Daur,<sup>5)</sup> Nanai, and Nivkh (Gilyaks) paid the fur taxes (*yasak*) to Russia in the 1650s.<sup>6)</sup> However, this assertion is somewhat odd and unreasonable. First, even V. Poiarkov, who was the first Russian explorer in the Amur River basin, recognized that the Daur and Jucheri had begun to pay the tribute to the Qing dynasty (DAI vol. 3 1848: 50–61) before their arrival at the Amur River, while the Gilyaks had not yet begun to pay. According to Qing documents, in the early seventeenth century, the dynasty began to invite (or force) its leaders to gather the tribute. It had organized the people in the middle Amur, lower Sungari, and Ussuri River basins into tribute payers by 1643, when Poyarkov started his trip to Amur (Sasaki 1990a: 680, 685).

Secondly, according to Russian documents (especially Khabarov's reports), most of the local inhabitants were forced to pay the tax because they had been threatened with guns and canons if they failed to do so, and they had no choice if they wanted to save the lives of family members and relatives who had been captured and taken as hostages by the Russians (DAI vol. 3 1848: 365–366). The Russian military force consisted of Cossacks that even the Moscow government could not completely control. Their conquest and occupation were always accompanied by plunder, murder, and destruction. Khabarov often expressed pride in the results of his brutal activities in his reports (DAI vol. 3 1848: 359–371). His actions caused serious damage and engendered such great fear in the people that the present Nanai, Ulcha, and Nivkhs passed on legends describing the terrible Russians until the twentieth century, almost 250 years after the Russian invasion in the 1650s. For example, two Russian-Soviet anthropologists, L. Ya. Shternberg (1933: 296) and A. M. Zolotarev (1939: 14), recorded some Nivkh and Ulcha legends that described how bravely and smartly their ancestors had fought against the Russian invaders.

Ancestors of the Ulcha and Nivkh maintained their direct hostility and negative emotions toward the Russians until the early nineteenth century. D. Matsuda, who had conducted expeditions in Sakhalin in 1808, and who had established rules and a system for conducting trade between the Santan people (ancestors of the Ulcha and Nivkh), Ainu, and Japanese, recorded a legend about the Russians who had come to Sakhalin ten or more years before his first expedition. According to him, the legend ended with the deaths of the Russians, as the result of a conflict with ancestors of the Ulcha and Nivkh (Matsuda 1808 (1988): 199–200). They disliked not only the Russians, but also the people who were subjected to Russian power. R. Mamiya, a Japanese explorer, who had also conducted expeditions on Sakhalin and in the lower Amur basin in 1808 and 1809, reported that, when the Evenki people (they called them *Kilen*) had come to Sakhalin to hunt animals, the local people had shown them great hostility, and that finally, all of them were dead (Mamiya and Murakami 1810 (1988)a: 106–107, 1810 (1988)b: 184–185).

Even in present days, the word *Locha* or *Locha ambani*, a Nanai term implying Russian people, includes an image of terrible, devil-like people. Chinese authors who edited the history of the Russo-Chinese conflict in the mid-seventeenth century also



called the Russians *Luocha*, using characters that mean a devil of Indian origin, *Rākṣasa* (羅刹).<sup>7)</sup> The local people, as well as the Manchurians and Chinese, have succeeded the image of the “terrible Russians” until recent years.

The Qing dynasty took advantage of the people's negative emotions toward the Russians. In 1652, the Manchurian army attacked fort Achan—built by E. Khabarov and his Cossacks—with the local people.<sup>8)</sup> Though this attack was unsuccessful (DAI vol. 3 1848: 365–366; Qingshilu 1985c: 537), in the following year, the dynasty sent a chief of tribute payers, named Geiker Koliha, who was a reliable leader of the people in the lower Sungari region, to appeal to the people living around the fort, to admit the authority of the dynasty, and to pay the tribute. This mission was successful. Ten clans agreed to support the dynasty, to pay fur tributes, and to dispatch their delegations to Shengjing and Beijing. These clans were the Bildakiri (present Beldy), Fushar (Passar), Hecikeri (Hojer), Ujala (Ojal), Jaksuru (Jaksor), Gakhila (Gail), Homiyan (Homi), Choigor (Digor), Tumelir (Tumali), Jorgolo (Jorol) (Qingdai zhongwo guanxi dang'an shilian xuanbian 1981: 7), all of which were in the clan list of the Nanai in the census and ethnography at the end of the nineteenth century (Patkanov 1906: 57, 1912: 956–957; Smoliak 1975: 107). Even today, these clan names are used as their surnames.

E. Khabarov was dismissed as the chief (*ataman*) of the Cossacks in 1653, and O. Stepanov replaced him. Though he enthusiastically went to many places in the Amur and Ussuri River basins to gather the fur tax (*yasak*), the Russians always encountered hostility and noncooperation from the local people anywhere they went, and suffered from a shortage of food and weapons (DAI vol. 4 1851: 35–37, 80–83). In 1658, the Qing dynasty attacked the Russians at the mouth of the Sungari with a large fleet supported by a Korean musket gun troop, and completely defeated them. O. Stepanov was killed in this battle (DAI vol. 4 1851: 176–177; Qingshilu 1985c: 923). Though the captured Russians escaped to their homeland, the Russian side lost power and a bridgehead in the Far East. After the triumph of this battle, the dynasty successfully swept the Russians out, and placed the people living in the lowest part of the Amur region under its control.

In the 1680s, the Russians came again, from the Uda, Tugul, and Amgun Rivers. However, the local people apparently supported the Manchurian army, and pushed the Russians back to the north (DAI vol. 10 1867: 341; DAI vol. 11 1869: 203). Since the 1660s, the main battlefield of the Qing-Russian conflict had moved to the upper part of the Amur River basin. The dynasty, organizing the former tribute payers into the official Manchurian army (the eight-banner system), reinforced its military power in the northern and northeastern fronts, and, in the 1680s, led the final attack on fort Arbajin, the center of the Russian colony on the upper Amur basin. In 1689, the Qing dynasty and Russia concluded an agreement on the border, and signed the Treaty of Nerchinsk in the city by that name. The former had the advantage in these negotiations, and successfully made the latter admit the inclusion of all the basins of the rivers flowing into the Amur River in the territory of the Qing. Today, researchers interpret the agreement as indicating that the Qing and Russia established this border along the ridgeline of the Stanovoi Mountains (Waixinganling Mountains).



### 3. Governing System of the Dynasty in the Region of the Lower Amur Basin in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The Qing dynasty's governing system was based on organizing the people who had lived in the lower Sungari basin, the Ussuri basin, and the middle basin of the Amur River, before the conquest of China in 1644, into fur tribute payers. The tribute payers during this time included the people named Hūrha, and some of the Heje, which included such clans as the Bayara, Merjere, Hei, Thoro, Ujala, Golfogor, Urgunkuri, Gufatin, Geiker, Luyara, and Hūsihari (Qingdai zhongwo guanxi dang'an shilian xuanbian 1981: 7). However, when the dynasty had to reorganize its military organization (the eight-banner army) to reinforce the defensive forces in the northern and northeastern fronts during the Russo-Manchurian conflict, it recruited the former tribute payers into the official army. This recruitment occurred several times beginning in the 1670s, and continued into the 1730s. Almost all members of the above-mentioned clans had been conscripted into the Manchurian eight-banner army by 1732. During this process, chiefs of the clans (*hala i da*) were appointed as leaders (*niru janggin*) of troops (*niru*) that consisted of 300 adult males. As they were able to succeed the positions to their sons and grandsons, they formed a group of middle class officers and bureaucrats in Manchurian society. However, members of the newly organized Manchurian banners were discriminated against, and referred to as "New Manchurians" (*ice manju*) by the "Old Manchurians" (*fe manju*), who were descendants of the original members of the dynasty.

At the same time, the dynasty reorganized tribute payers from other groups of people. As was the case with reinforcements for the Manchurian army, it also enlarged the range of payers several times. To begin with, it organized the people of ten clans like Birdakiri, Fushari and so on living in the Lower Amur River basin below the mouth of the Ussuri River in 1653. They were called *indahūn takūrara gurun*, which meant the people who drove on dog sledges. Later they were called *butifa heje*, or people with unshaven heads (Yan 1985: 251).

After the destruction of Stepanov's army in 1658, the Qing dynasty organized the people living in the lowest part of the Amur River basin and in the basins of the tributaries flowing into the left bank of the river in 1659, 1660, and 1661 respectively (Qingshilu 1985c: 959, 1068, 1088). These people were called *fiyaka* and *kilen* in Manchurian. The former are assumed to be ancestors of the Nivkh (Gilyaks) and a part of Ulcha, while the latter are ancestors of the Kile, Samar, Yukaminka, Udinka, and Donka clans from the present Nanai province, and are part of the Evenki and Negidal people.

After signing the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, in 1690 the dynasty sent four expedition teams to conduct geographical research in its vast new territories. As part of this process, it organized people on the northern part of Sakhalin into tribute payers, including *fiyaka*, *oloncho*, and *kuye*. The last two groups of people were ancestors of the Uilta and the Sakhalin Ainu respectively (Qingshilu 1985e: 645; Matsuura 2006: 4–40). Reorganizing these tribute payers and their increasing number of households continued until 1750. During this process, the dynasty's power reached the southern part of

Sakhalin. In 1732 it organized the local Ainu into three clans: the *Yadan hala* in the Nayoro village on the western coast, the *Šurungguru hala* in the Kotankeshi village (*Kutanggi gašan*) on the eastern coast, and the *Too hala* in the Taraika village (*Dalika gašan*) on the shores of Lake Taraika.

As a result of the enlarged range of the tribute payers, the dynasty organized the people living in the vast area covering the basin of Amur River and its tributaries located lower than the mouth of the Sungari River, and almost all the areas of Sakhalin. These people were ancestors of the present Nanai, Ulcha, Oroch, Udehe, Negidal, Evenki, Uilta, Nivkh, and Ainu. The number of payers was 2,398 households (*boo*), about 170 villages (*gašan*), and 56 clans (*hala*).

The dynasty controlled the people by requiring payment of the tribute, and imposing other important requirements on them. First, the payers were obliged to pay their tributes every year with sable of the highest quality. Sable was a special material that could be used only for the coats, costume ornamentation, and the headgear of members of the royal family, and bureaucrats of the highest rank. In the famous portraits of Emperor Gaozong (the regime of Qianlong or *Abkai Wehiyehe*, reign 1736–1795) drawn by Giuseppe Castiglione, the emperor wears a helmet, the top of which is ornamented with twenty-four pieces of sable of perfect quality.

From the time when the dynasty was first established until 1779, people had to go to the town Ninnguta, located on the middle bank of the Mudanjiang River, and after 1780 they went to Sanxing (or *Ilan hala*), located at the mouth of this river, to make their payments. However, the dynasty built a seasonal branch office for the people who lived in areas such as the lowest part of the Amur River and Sakhalin. It dispatched a delegation of officers, soldiers, and public workers during the summer, to accept the payments and open a market. Though the location of the office moved in accordance with a change of regimes, the most well-used office was built at Kiji, at the mouth of Lake Kiji, which played an important role as a crossroad for the people who moved along the Amur River and came from Sakhalin. Rinzo Mamiya, who conducted an expedition to Sakhalin and the Lower Amur region from 1808 to 1809, reported on a prosperous market at an office built in Deren, which was located a little further up than Kiji (Mamiya and Murakami 1810 (1988b): 135–148).

Secondly, each payer could receive special rewards from the government. Under the regime of the first and second emperors, the rewards consisted of horses, cattle, servants, costumes made of leather, silk, and other materials, houses, and other various kinds of utensils (Manbun roto I 1955: 112–113). During the initial stage of its establishment, the dynasty had to show great hospitality to people from the fur-producing regions, because their furs played a decisive role in its development. During its period of conflict with the Russians, the dynasty also had to offer the local people great honors and profits.

However, though the hospitality provided to tribute payers remained unchanged, the rewards were determined by laws and formulated by precedents once political conditions stabilized in the eighteenth century. The basic rewards were a blue cotton costume (it consisted of a jacket, a coat, and trousers), and two rolls of cotton cloth. In addition, all the payers were given the following: two rolls of cotton cloth, a comb, a spatula, a hood,

a handkerchief, silk and cotton thread, needles, belts, and strings (Sanxing dangan vol. 69 1791: 338; Sanxing fuduotong yamen manwen dangan yibian 1984: 32). As will be mentioned later, the payers were classified into ranks, and received different kinds of rewards in accordance with their ranks. People with the highest status were given more luxurious things, such as silk costumes, in addition to the basic rewards. Though the government at first gave costumes to the payers, in the middle of the eighteenth century it gave them material to make the costumes (rolls of cloth, rolls of thread, buttons, and other materials for ornamentation), in response to a request from the payers (Figure 3).

Thirdly, the payers were classified into four ranks: a clan chief, a village chief, a son or younger brother of a chief, and an ordinary payer. The clan chief, called *hala i da* in Manchurian, had the highest rank. The dynasty appointed only 22 persons as a *hala i da* from 2,398 tribute payers. Though it registered 56 *hala* in the regions of the Amur basin and Sakhalin, it did not appoint a *hala i da* in each *hala*. He was rewarded with a court uniform that consisted of a silk coat with some embroidered dragons, a silk jacket, and trousers, blue cotton clothes, some rolls of cotton cloth, a headgear ornamented with a small blue glass ball (a symbol of status) attached to its top, a leather belt, a handkerchief, an ornamental box, and so on (Sanxing dangan vol. 69 1791: 336; Sanxing fuduotong yamen manwen dangan yibian 1984: 31). The status of the clan chief was equal to that of a middle class officer of the Manchurian eight-banner army. When the tribute payers were conscripted into the army, the clan chief or *hala i da* became the head of a troop (*niru janggin*) that consisted of 300 adult males.

Second-level status was assigned to the village chief, who was called *gašan da*. He was rewarded with a court uniform that consisted of a silk coat without dragons, a silk jacket, and trousers, blue cotton clothes, some rolls of cotton cloth, a headgear



**Figure 3** A silk costume collected in Sakhalin (National Museum of Ethnology)

ornamented with a small white glass ball attached to its top, a leather belt, a handkerchief, and so on (Sanxing dangan vol. 69 1791: 336; Sanxing fuduotong yamen manwen dangan yibian 1984: 31). The status of the village chief was equal to that of lower class officers. When he was conscripted into the Manchurian army, he became an adjutant of the *niru janggin*, and was called *funde bošokū*. Third-level status was called *sijigiyan eture* or *deote juse*. The former means a person who has the right to wear a silk uniform, while the latter means the son or younger brother of a chief. These people were rewarded with the same gifts as the village chief.

The fourth-level status was called *bai niyalma*, which meant an ordinary man. He did not have the right to wear a silk costume and was rewarded with the basic gifts described above. However, even the *bai niyalma* were not ordinary people, but rather were privileged, because they were rich enough to make payment with sable every year, and because they could have a lot of cotton clothes and cloth. In regions of the Amur River basin and Sakhalin, where the people had worn fish-skin clothes and animal-skin coats for a long time, the cotton cloth and clothes were regarded as luxurious materials. L. von Schrenck said that, among the Nivkh people (the Gilyaks), the price of a roll of cotton had been one *ya* (*ya* was a price unit of the Nivkh) in the middle of the nineteenth century, and that a piece of sable had been worth one to three *ya*, that is to say, the Nivkh could have bought two or three rolls of cotton cloth with a piece of sable (Schrenck 1899: 278). The *bai niyalma* people enthusiastically engaged both in hunting and in the commercial business of selling their cotton goods. Their population was more than 2,000. We can therefore assume that very large amounts of cotton cloth and clothes were distributed in the regions of the Amur River basin and Sakhalin during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This had a strong impact on their clothing culture, because the cotton materials increased the diversity of clothing styles and ornamentation.

Fourthly, the government registered the people in one of three levels of social organization: *hala* (clans), *gašan* (villages), and *boo* (households). The social organization named *hala* was commonly found among Tungus-speaking ethnic groups like the Manchurians, Nanai, Ulcha, Oroch, Udehe, Uilta, Negidal, and some groups of the Evenki. It was a kind of patrilineal descent group, and a clan-like social organization. Its membership and names had been succeeded through male lines from fathers to children. Some *hala* had common property and sacred places, which were symbols of their unity, and which were used in the case of emergency.

Genealogical relations between members were not always obvious. In the case of a large *hala* like the Beldy, Ojal, Hojel, Kile, and Samar, there were some divisions or subgroups that played the role of an exogamic unit. Such subgroups were called *mokun*. Though people belonging to the same *mokun* could not marry each other, one could look for a partner in the same *hala*, if the partner were a member of a different *mokun*.

Some anthropologists insisted that the fundamental social structure of the Tungus-speaking people should have been called the *hala=mokun* system, and that the members had had to strictly observe its rules (Shirokogoroff 1924: 23). For example, S. M. Shirokogoroff (1924: 84), a Russian anthropologist and a research specialist of the Tungus peoples, said that, in the case of the Manchurians, even the chief of a troop of

the eight-banner army (*niru janggin*) had sometimes been punished by a *hala* chief (*hala i da*), after he had broken the rules of the *hala*. The judgment of a *hala=mokun* court should have been complied with as a first priority. I. A. Lopatin (1922: 187), a Russian anthropologist and specialist of the research of the Nanai and Oroch, reported an archaic *hala=mokun* judgment of the Nanai.

Though Russian or Soviet anthropologists sometimes described the *hala* and *mokun* as a traditional social organization that had developed naturally (Sem 1959: 12–14), it is not appropriate to accept this thesis. Historical research reveals that the Qing government often used *hala* as an administrative structure that imposed rules on the people, and sometimes registered them into the *hala* it had previously defined. In my field research in the Dayerga village in the Amur basin in the Nanai district of the Khabarovsk region of Russia in the summer of 1990, I heard a story about the clan Beldy (*Beldy hala*) from an old person, who was a member of this *hala*. It was the largest *hala* in the Nanai. He explained why this *hala* had become so large. According to him, its original location was near the village Yrri, which was the lowest village of the Nanais, and the Beldy people had expanded their territory to the upper basin. However, in some cases the Manchurian administrative officers, who had come to the Nanai villages to organize the villagers into tribute payers, had registered all the people in some villages as members of the *Beldy hala*. So the population of this *hala* increased quickly, and it became the largest group of people along the Amur River. If his explanation was correct, membership in the Nanai *hala* was not always determined by genealogy; sometimes it was determined by the politics of the Qing dynasty. The Qing government used the *hala* as the largest registration and ruling unit of the tribute payers, and registered the people into 56 *hala*. The *hala* organization was not a traditional, naturally developed social organization, but an administratively reformed and redefined one.

The Manchurian word *gašan* means village. The dynasty registered about 170 villages of tribute payers in 1750. Though some large *gašan* can be identified with the villages seen in the ethnography of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most of them cannot be identified. There are some reasons for this. Villages on the Amur basin were fundamentally stable, because their subsistence was dependent on the fishing that supplied them with a great quantity of stable food resources, and that enabled them to live a settled life. However, they moved their houses, camps, and even entire villages seasonally. This seasonal movement occurred as a result of periodic changes to their subsistence activities. For example, the salmon catch was concentrated in summer and autumn, and martens were trapped for sable in winter. They built permanent villages for winter life, and often set up temporary camps for summer and autumn fishing. Some hunter-trappers went to the forest to catch precious fur-bearing animals and to hunt deer, wild boars and bears during the winter, leaving their families in the villages.

They sometimes moved all their possessions to other places, when they encountered serious misfortunes and crises like long-term poor catches in fishing and hunting, epidemics (smallpox was the most terrible disease for them), and war. Possibly, the *gašan* registered in the documents of tribute payers really existed by 1750. However, some were no longer inhabited, or were extinct by the time of the ethnological expeditions. Many



registered villages were only alive in the documents. In the archives of administrative office in Sanxing (*Ilan halai be i meiren i janggin yamen i bithe*, or Sanxing dangan) one can see twelve documents, in which a list of the clans, villages, and payers' names were included, during the period from 1791 to 1873. Though some changes were seen in the number of the payers and their names during the regime of the Emperor Gaozong (Qianlong, 1736–1795), most of the names of the clans and villages, the number of payers in each village, and even payers' names, were fixed during the nineteenth century. That means that local bureaucrats neither renewed nor re-examined the list of registered clans, villages, and payers, but that they simply copied the decided ones in the documents, and reported them to the central government. For this reason, it is very difficult to identify the geographical positions of the registered villages.

However, some characteristics can be explained by comparing the documents and the Russian Empire's 1897 census. In general, the populations of villages reported in the documents were much larger than those recorded in the census; village sizes were larger under the Qing dynasty than under Russia (Sasaki 2005: 249–259). Though it is difficult to say definitively that this was due to a shortage of the data needed for purposes of documentation, one can assume that the economic and social conditions were much more stable and beneficial under the Qing dynasty than under Russia.

The fifth element the Qing dynasty used to control the Amur basin was its marriage policy. The tribute payers, who paid certain kinds and amounts of fur, had a right to conclude marital relations with Manchurian officers and aristocrats. Men who married daughters of officers or aristocrats could enjoy a higher status than the clan chief, *hala i da*. The obligatory payment for such a marriage consisted of 100 pieces of normal sable, and 12 pieces of clothing made from 17 pieces of sable (instead of the pieces of sable and clothes, the payer could pay with 304 pieces of sable), 2 pieces of silver fox fur of the highest quality called *sahaliyan dobihi* (or alternatively, one could pay with 4 pieces of silver fox fur of second quality, *ciqikiri dobihi*), 2 cushions, each of which was made of 9 pieces of blue fox fur (*boro dobihi*), and 4 cushions, each of which was made of 9 pieces of red fox fur (*suwayan dobihi*) (Qinghuidian 1991: 199; Sanxing dangan vol. 83, 1794: 350). When a person paid with these quantities of fur and fur products in Ningguta or Sanxing, he was taken to Beijing for a marriage meeting. Once a bride had been chosen, the government invited the bride and bridegroom to a bridal ceremony and banquet. When the bridegroom went back home with his wife, the government offered the couple silk costumes with dragon embroidery, cotton costumes, some rolls of cloth, a carriage and horses, food and liquor, and even some servants. Moreover, they had the right to annually receive silk costumes embroidered with dragons, and to visit Beijing occasionally to visit the wife's relatives (Sanxing dangan vol. 83, 1794: 350). In Manchurian, a bride was called *sargan jui*, while a bridegroom was called *hojihon*. The dynasty trusted some *Hojihons* greatly, and used them to administer effective control over the tribute payers. It appointed 21 *hojihon* from 1723 to 1803, according to documents held in Nigguta and Sanxing (Matsuura 2006: 152–153; Sasaki 2008: 67).

A policy established under the first emperor, Nurhaci (Taizu), permitted marriages between a tribute payer and the daughter of a Manchurian aristocrat. He allowed people

who had come from the lower Sungari basin to make payment with several kinds of precious fur, as proof of submission, to marry the daughters of his vassals, and he offered them many rewards (Manbun roto I 1955: 112–113). His successors inherited this policy. The Nanai, Ulcha, and Nivkh had memories of such marriages occurring until the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, L. Ya. Shternberg (1933: 300–301) described an interesting story of a bride purchase by the Nivkh, and A. M. Zolotarev (1939: 49) wrote about their relations with Manchurian merchants and officials. It is interesting that, while the Chinese and Manchurian documents describe the marriage policy as a benefit to the tribute payers, the memories of the indigenous people tell us that the Manchurian side asked them to marry their daughters, because they wanted to get greater profits from the fur trade through the marital relationship (Zolotarev 1939: 49).

As a sixth element, we point out the dynasty's jurisdiction and police authority over the people in the Amur regions and Sakhalin. We can find only one description of how these kinds of authority were used in the Ningguta and Sanxing documents (Sanxing dangan vol. 7 1742: 201–210; Sanxing fuduotong yamen manwen dangan yibian 1984: 410–413; Matsuura 2006: 188–220). According to the documents, in the summer of 1742, a murder occurred in the village Kiji, where the dynasty had built a branch office. A *hojihon*, named Ithiyanu, and his son killed a village chief (*gašan da*), his followers from an Ainu village in Sakhalin (Kotankesh located on the eastern coast), and another *hojihon*, and wounded some other Ainu men. The victims of this murder owed a great debt to Ithiyanu, and they disputed making the repayment. Ithiyanu and his son killed the other *hojihon* by mistake.

The provincial government in Ningguta was immediately informed of the incident, and it soon dispatched some officers and soldiers to arrest the murderers and their relatives. Ithiyanu and his son were arrested and sent to Ningguta that autumn. In the following year, 1743, the officers went to Sakhalin to invite villagers and relatives of the murdered individuals to Ningguta, to testify regarding the events that had occurred. At the same time, they offered the victims' clan leaders silk costumes, and the wounded persons were offered some rolls of cotton cloth as compensation. However, they were not satisfied with the official judgment, because the Sakhalin Ainu had a custom of seeking blood revenge in those times. The invitation to the leaders of the murdered side was not successful. However, the government held the murder trial in Ningguta, and the court sentenced the murderers to death. Later, these sentences were commuted to imprisonment.

Though this is the only case that describes the dynasty exercising jurisdiction and police authority, it shows that the Qing government had enough power to effectively rule the people in the Amur region and on Sakhalin.

The ruling system of the Qing dynasty over the people in the Amur regions and Sakhalin consisted of these six elements. The effect of a ruling and its acceptance by the people differed by region (Sasaki 1998: 686, 752–755). For example, ancestors of the Nanai, who lived in the comparatively upper basin of the Amur River, readily accepted the rule and influence of the dynasty. The most symbolic influence of the dynasty was evident in their hairstyle. The Nanai had a style of braided hair with a shaved head, just



like the Manchurians. Their ancestors could be classified into two groups named *heje*, with a shaved head, or with an unshaved head, until the early eighteenth century (Yan 1985: 251). The former lived in the comparatively upper basin, and the latter in the lower. Most of the former had been conscripted into the Manchurian eight-banner army by the 1730s, while the latter were left as tribute payers. However, by the end of that century, the shaved-head style had been adopted in all the areas where they lived. Some Japanese explorers observed that the ancestors of the Nanai (they called them “Korudekke”) had shaved their heads, while those of the Ulcha (“Santan”) and Nivkh (“Sumerenkuru”) had never done so (Nakamura 1801: 2; Mamiya and Murakami 1810 (1810 (1988b): 131; Mamiya 1808 (1988): 214). Later, a Chinese explorer, Tingjie Cao (1885 (1985): 2283–2284), who conducted an expedition in the Lower Amur basin in 1885, also referred to the *heje* with shaved heads (Tanmaozi), but this group consisted of the direct ancestors of the present Nanai. It is well known that the Qing dynasty coerced the Chinese people to shave their heads, using threats and force, to bring them under its control. The shaved head represented complete submission to the dynasty. In addition to the hairstyle, the Manchurian culture was generally familiar to the Nanai. Zolortarev (1939: 49) said that the Sungari and Ussuri Nanai often dispatched their sons to Manchurian schools, to acquire literacy in Manchurian and Chinese. As will be mentioned again later, some village chiefs (*gašan da*) went to Sanxing to get certification of their status, even as late as the end of the nineteenth century.

Ancestors of the Ulcha and Nivkh were much less willing to accept the rule of the dynasty than the Nanai. They only went to Ningguta, Sanxing, and the seasonal office to engage in the trade business. At the same time, they travelled freely across the strait between the continent and Sakhalin, to trade with the Ainu and the Japanese. They were more liberated and ambitious traders. Unlike the Nanai, they have never shaved their heads, indicating that they never completely submitted to the authority of the dynasty. As a result, they were factually independent of its rule after the death of Emperor Gaozong in 1799.<sup>9)</sup>

#### 4. Transborder Activities of the Nanai, Ulcha, and Nivkh in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Except for one border agreed to by the Qing and Russia in 1689, no national borders resulted from diplomatic negotiations in Northeast Asia until the mid-nineteenth century. During the pre-modern ages, Japan and China did not have any defined borders, or any channel through which to negotiate borders. The people living in the Amur River basin and Sakhalin were able to move freely in the regions. However, some self-imposed borders were evident between different groups of people. Of course, they never overlapped with the present national border (Figure 4).

Ordinary Manchurian people were not allowed to pass the mouth of the Sungari and to go down the Amur River, because the government built a checkpoint (*kalon*) to control the movements of people and their commodities (Figure 4 A). Only officers, soldiers, and government officials, who carried special permissions, went down to the lower Amur, to



**Figure 4** Voluntary borders in the Amur region and Sakhalin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (with the location of local groups)

gather the tributes, and to engage in official trade. At the same time, people in the Amur River basin and Sakhalin were not permitted to travel up through this checkpoint either. Only when they went to Ningguta or Sanxing to pay the tribute and to receive their rewards were they allowed to go up.

As mentioned above, the people living in the Amur River basin and on Sakhalin could move freely within the regions. However, one can see some customary borders running through the Tatar Strait (Mamiya Strait), and through the Strait of La Perouse (Soya Strait) during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, the people in the Amur region and northern Sakhalin (ancestors of the Ulcha, Nivkh, and Uilta) have never crossed the Strait of La Perouse to visit Hokkaido. It is as if there were an invisible barrier in this strait (Figure 4 D). They recognized that they could travel safely on Sakhalin, because they had more economic and political power than the local Ainu. At the same time, however, they also knew that the situation was different on the island seen across the sea (Hokkaido). On the contrary, the Ainu who lived on southern Sakhalin and northern Hokkaido had intimate contact with each other, and frequently went across the strait. However, the Hokkaido Ainu seldom crossed the Strait of Tatar to visit the continent, and the Sakhalin Ainu, who had often been to the continent, never, with some rare exceptions, went up along the Amur River beyond the Qing dynasty's branch office (Figure 4 B).

The Tokugawa Shogunate (the Japanese central government) had recognized Sakhalin as the northern end of its territory since the seventeenth century, though it knew that many people on this island had submitted to the rule of the Qing dynasty since the

beginning of the eighteenth century. According to a Shogunate policy, the Ainu people should have been under its control. Therefore, when the power of the Qing dynasty began to weaken on Sakhalin at the end of the eighteenth century, it quickly enlarged the range of its influence, and incorporated all the Ainu on Sakhalin under its rule. Though the Qing dynasty once expressed strong displeasure to the Ainu people that had submitted to Japan,<sup>10)</sup> it did not protest to Japan directly, because neither country had any diplomatic channel through which to negotiate such issues, and because the dynasty gradually lost its concern for Sakhalin. The Tokugawa Shogunate ruled Hokkaido and Sakhalin directly from 1807 to 1821, and from 1855 to 1868, and entrusted the Matsumae clan to rule them during the other periods. However, it did not extend its power beyond the Tatar Strait (Figure 4 C). Many Japanese implicitly recognized a national border running through the strait. For example, when Rinzo Mamiya went across the strait to visit the continent to research the situation of the Amur region, he was afraid of violating a national law that prohibited the Japanese from leaving the country.

It can be concluded that until the nineteenth century, there were some customary borders in Northeast Asia that played an important role in voluntarily controlling people's movements. The modern national borders violated and destroyed these customary borders.

Modern diplomatic border negotiations began at the time of the second invasion of Russia in Northeast Asia in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1849, N. N. Murav'yov-Amurskii dispatched a fleet, led by admiral G. I. Neveliskoi, to the mouth of the Amur River, to construct a military post at the place of the present Nikolaevsk na Amure. Russian power extended its ruling areas from this post, going west along the Amur River. At the same time, Russians advanced to the south, to occupy Sakhalin. They initiated border negotiations with both China and Japan simultaneously.

The Russians had to have tough negotiations with Japan, because the Tokugawa Shogunate effectively governed the Ainu on the southern Sakhalin, Hokkaido, Kunashir, and Iturup Islands, and because it had more detailed geographic knowledge and data on these islands than the Russian diplomats. The border on the Kuril (Chishima) Islands was concluded with comparative ease. Russo-Japanese contact on these islands had begun in the mid-eighteenth century, and the border between these two powers was factually settled by the end of that century, using the strait between Iturup and Urup Islands. Both countries just confirmed it in their negotiations. However, determining the border on Sakhalin was very difficult.

From an objective point of view, it was odd that Russia would participate in the Sakhalin border issue, which had originally been a dispute between China and Japan, as mentioned above. Russia involved itself in the dispute using strong military power, with the objective of securing industrial resources and land for the penal colony on Sakhalin. In other words, a modernized Russia came to Sakhalin to acquire new land, not to rule the people. This was a decisive difference from China and Japan's pre-modern policy, which had emphasized ruling the people (Akizuki 1994: 141, 165). However, in the mid-nineteenth century Russia's military power was not yet strong enough to overcome Japan and China's economic and political influences on Sakhalin. Though Russia would

have wanted to seize the whole island, it had to share its territorial rights with Japan. In 1855, the two countries concluded an agreement that set the official border between Iturup and Urup, and people from both countries were permitted to go to Sakhalin. The Qing dynasty did not protest this border, because it had lost interest in any concerns it had previously had with Sakhalin.

By this time, the Qing dynasty had become exhausted from pressures exerted by the European countries. Moreover, the Arrow War (the Second Opium War) broke out in 1856, and by 1860, English and French armies occupied Beijing. At this critical moment, Russia, which did not participate directly in the war, offered peace mediation, and, as compensation for this goodwill gesture, won a vast territory in the Amur region, thereby concluding the Aigun and Beijing treaties in 1858 and 1860, and establishing the border on the Amur and Ussuri rivers. The Qing dynasty lost a large territory as a result of these treaties.

The borders on the Amur and Ussuri Rivers were inconvenient for, and disagreeable to, the local people. These were river people. Their main means of subsistence was fishing. Their main means of transportation were ships and boats. Rivers offered them a rich life, and enabled them to move long distances. A river was not a border or a barrier, but rather, a place of contact, exchange, and tying up. In fact, social or ethnic groups that share a common culture and language have lived on both sides of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers in the Amur region. Borders established through modern diplomatic negotiations often divided these people into several groups. The borders set by a modernized Russia, Japan, and China, separated the people of Nanai, Udehe, Nivkh, Uilta, and Ainu into two groups.

The new border between China and Russia based on the Amur and Ussuri River basins did not take effect immediately. The tribute payment documents were being continuously re-written in 1865, 1866, 1867, and 1873, after setting the new border. Though they were automatically revised by bureaucrats in the office in Sanxing, and do not reflect real payments, the documents confirm that many payers still went to Sanxing, and that enthusiastic officers went to the lower basin of the Amur River to gather the tribute payments (Sanxing dangan vol. 318 1865: 80–103, vol. 321 1866: 382–405, vol. 329 1867: 507–532, vol. 364 1873: 629–654; Sanxing fuduotong yamen manwen dangan yibian 1984: 279–345).

The Nanai, who lived in the comparatively upper basin of the river, were still dependent on the authority of the Qing dynasty at the end of the nineteenth century. Documents stored in the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography Russian Academy of Sciences (Kunstkamera) in St. Petersburg, show us that even in the late nineteenth century, ancestors of the Nanai, living in the villages of Makan (on the left bank of the Amur River), Kibtelin (on the bank of Anyui River, a tributary of the Amur River), Wekusumi (now called Salapul'skoe), and Dolin (now called Troitskoe), went to Sanxing to receive certification of the appointment of the village chief (*gašan da*). There are four supporting documents (registration numbers 5747–177, 5747–178, 5747–179, and 5747–454), written in the Manchurian language. They were issued in 1890, 1889, 1875, and 1894 respectively. Their contents consisted of the name of the

clan (*hala*) and village (*gašan*), the number of registered households in the village, the name of the village chief (*gašan da*), and the date (Table 1). There is also a line of script, of which only half can be read. This line functioned as a tally that guaranteed the authenticity of the documents. According to the collector, A. N. Lipskii, a Soviet anthropologist who had long engaged in research of the Nanai society, these documents were called *pyo*, in Nanai, and carried great authority in Nanai society (Sasaki 1990b: 195–216). I also heard about these kinds of documents during my field research in Komsomol'sk na Amure in 1990. An old Nanai woman said that her grandfather had recognized the authority of such a document.

According to Chinese archives, by the end of the nineteenth century it had become more and more difficult for the Qing dynasty to collect the fur tribute from people in the Amur region and Sakhalin. Only a few people went to Sanxing to pay with furs, and the local government could no longer dispatch delegations across the new border to the lower basin of the Amur River to collect the tributes. By that time, the Russian side had also begun to guard the border strictly. In the late 1890s, the Qing dynasty finally gave up its maintenance of the tribute system, and began to buy sable from people who lived in what remained of the Chinese territory (Guangxuchao zhupizouzhe 1996: 240–246).

Russia accelerated its occupation policy in the Northeastern provinces of China in the 1900s. Though the dynasty had reorganized the provincial governments into modernized units in 1910 (Yilanxianshi 1921 (1974): 49, 127), to correspond to the political situation at that time, this structure collapsed in 1912, with the Chinese Revolution (Xin gai revolution). Later in the twentieth century, the people experienced some chaotic and critical occasions, both on the Russian and Chinese sides of the Amur region and Sakhalin Island. For example, in the former, they experienced the Russian Revolution (1917), the civil war (1917–1921), interventions by the armies of capitalist countries (1919–1921), the Japanese occupation of northern Sakhalin (1921–1925), Stalin's terror (1937–1953), and World War Two (1939–1945), while in the latter, they experienced the rule of the warlords (1912–1928), the Japanese invasion (1931–1945), the civil war (1945–1949), and the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1975).

How the local or indigenous people in the Amur region and Sakhalin responded to the radical changes in political and economic conditions during these periods of crisis and chaos are examined next.

The Nanai, judging from Manchurian, Chinese, and Russian records, were so close to the Qing dynasty politically and economically, as well as geographically and culturally, that it was difficult for them to live without its influence, though the groups that remained in the Russian territory, and those left on the Chinese side, advanced in different ways. The former, who were called “Gold” by the Russians, lost their social status. The Russian government gradually cut them off from the Qing dynasty's political system, and finally, in 1912, the dynasty itself collapsed. The status of the clan chief (*hala i da*) and village chief (*gašan da*) no longer had any authority in a society ruled by Russia. Moreover, the government registered them in the census as a pagan ethnic minority, comparable to other local ethnic groups under Russian rule (the first Russian census was conducted in 1897). Though the government should have protected them

**Table 1** Manchurian Documents of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences  
(certification of the village chief) (Sasaki 1990b: 197–200)

Number	Contents (Manchurian original/ English translation with notes)	Donater	Collected place	Collected year	Collector
5747-177	<i>fushara hala weksumi gašan juwan uyun boo</i> <i>gašan da langfu</i> <i>badarangga doro juwan ningguci aniya ninggun biyai gūsin</i>	Dodi Poskhar (former village chief)	Sikachi Alian (Sakachi Alian)	1936-37	Albert Nikolaevich Lipskii
	Fushara clan (or Poskhar, Possar, Passar), Wexsumi village (or Uksumi, present Sarapul'skoe), 19 households Village chief: Langfu 30th June, 16th year of Guangxu (1890)				
5747-178	<i>jaksuru hala makan gašan uyun boo gašan da lioden</i> <i>badarangga doro sucungga nadan biyai ice uyun</i>	Gujuka Jaksor (wife of Kurbe Jaksor, former village chief)	Naikhin	1936-37	Albert Nikolaevich Lipskii
	Jaksuru clan (or Jaksor), Makan village, 9 households Village chief: Lioden 9th July, 1st year of Guangxu (1875)				
5747-179	<i>evergu hala kibieliin gašan juwan ilan boo gašan da danggei</i> <i>oronde ini jui duya siraha</i> <i>badarangga doro i tofolhon aniya ninggun biyai orin uyun</i>	Pintokan Oninkan (son of the village chief Duya Oninkan)	Daiga (Daierga)	1936-37	Albert Nikolaevich Lipskii
	Eyergu clan (or Neyergu, this clan was included into the Oninkan clan), Kibtelin village, 13 households Village chief: Duya, a son of the former chief Dangege, succeeded his father's place. 29th June, 15th year of Guangxu (1889)				
5747-454	<i>bildakiri hala dolin gašan juwan juwe boo gašan da komu</i> <i>badarangga doro orici aniya ninggun biyai ice</i>	Podali Bel'dy (son of the village chief)	Serenda	1936-37	Albert Nikolaevich Lipskii
	Bildakiri clan (Bel'dy), Dolin (Troitskoe) village, 12 households Village chief: Komu 1st June, 20th year of Guangxu (1894)				



politically and economically, it left them defenseless against epidemics and bandits. To some degree, they were permitted to cross the border and engage in trade, and to contact relatives and friends outside the country. However, this was allowed because the government did not give them full citizenship. Under these conditions, they suffered from impoverishment, starvation, and population decreases. Moreover, their image and status as poor primitive ethnic minorities was conducive to discrimination and prejudice by the European immigrants that had quickly become the majority in the Amur region after the 1870s.

The Soviet Union's development program somewhat improved their economic conditions, which had worsened under the Russian Empire. However, their lower social status remained unchanged, even in Soviet society, because the policy had been premised on the belief that their culture and society had been "primitive." Moreover, the socialist campaign and indoctrination had erased their history, and memories of life prior to the Russian occupation of the Amur region. Today, in the twenty-first century, few people know anything about their ancestors, even several generations back, though they still have some relics of the Chinese dynasty's tribute system such as silk costumes, cap ornaments, peacock tails ("Hua jiao" that were sometimes given to *Hojihon*), and Chinese silver coins (Figures 5 and 6).

The Nanai who remained on the Chinese side—called "Heje" by the Chinese—participated actively in the political movement. Some of them were appointed as high-level officers in the Manchurian eight-banner army. For example, a leader of the *Geiker hala* clan (whose name was Geiker Quanlian) was named commander of the army that fought against Russian invaders in the Sungari basin in 1900 (Yilanxianshi 1921 (1974): 51–52). In 1909, he was promoted to the most senior position in the local government in Sanxing (*Ilan hala meiren i janggin*) (Yilanxianshi 1921 (1974):148). Leaders of other clans, such as the *Luyara hala*, *Hūsihari hala*, and *Šumuru hala*, were also commanders in the Manchurian army. The Heje people on the Sungari and Ussuri River basins were organized into the Manchurian eight-banner system in 1714 and 1732 respectively (Jilintongshi 1900 (1986): 1032, 1033; Qingshilu 1985f: 548; Qingshilu 1985h: 458).

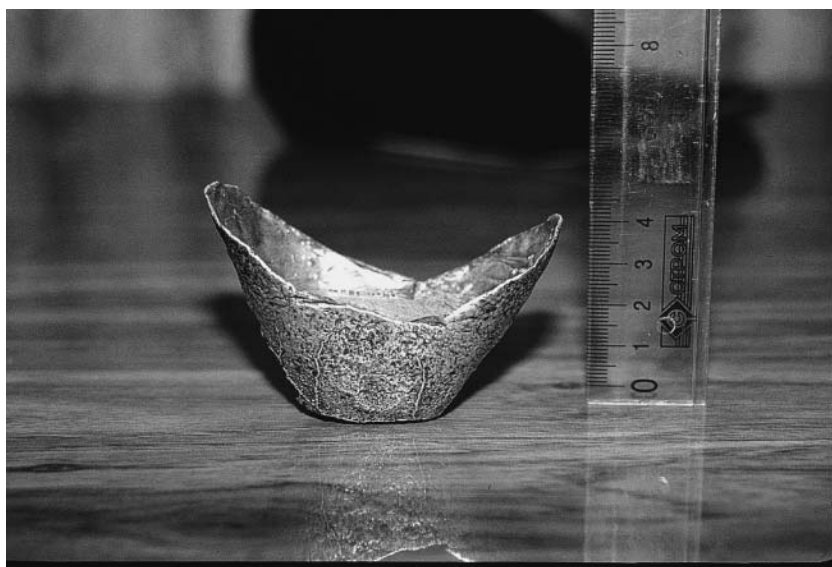
As early as the seventeenth century, ancestors of the Nanai or Heje people were differentiated into three broad groups, and from there, into social classes. The three broad groups were: members of the Manchurian army, the tribute payers, and others. The first two groups consisted of privileged classes, within which the people were differentiated into several subclasses, such as commanders of troops (*niru janggin*, *funde bošokū*, and so on), clan and village leaders (*hala i da*, *gašan da*, and *sijigiyan etule*), and ordinary soldiers and payers (*bai niyalma*). The other people consisted of those who participated neither in the army nor in the tribute system. In many cases they worked as servants under the privileged or rich people, or lived on subsistence fishing and hunting.

As a whole, the people left on the Chinese side were from the first group, while the second and third groups comprised the majority on the Russian side. Therefore, the Heje people on the Chinese side enthusiastically fought against the Russian invaders as a defensive force. Later, when the Japanese army invaded the Northeastern Chinese provinces in the 1930s, they rose up against the invaders once more.





**Figure 5** A sheet of silk cloth, cap ornament, and peacock tails  
(In Kondon, Solnechnyi district, Khabarovsk region, Russian Federation)



**Figure 6** A silver coin (In Kondon, Solnechnyi district, Khabarovsk region, Russian Federation)

However, the Heje people on the Chinese side also experienced the loss of social status, that is, from being members of the privileged class, to being among those discriminated against. The collapse of the Qing dynasty and the rise of Chinese nationalism played a decisive role in this diminution in status. The Japanese colonialist invasion that had begun in 1931 quickly impoverished them. In the 1940s, the Sungari, Amur, and Ussuri Rivers, which were the traditional living spaces for the Heje people, became the forefront of hostilities between Japan and the Soviet Union. The Japanese army forced the Heje to move away from the rivers, to accommodate its defensive strategy. Though the colonial government tried to offer them different ways of life, the people suffered serious starvation, because they were deprived of their main source of subsistence (according to our research in the villages of Jiejinkou and Sibai, in 2011 and 2012).

After the establishment of the communist government in 1949, conditions stabilized. However, the social status of the Heje people did not fundamentally improve, because communist policy adhered to values in the Soviet Union's socialist policy, which was premised on the understanding that Heje society and culture were "primitive."

Contrary to the Nanai, the Nivkh and Ulcha, who had lived in the lowest part of the Amur River basin and the northern part of Sakhalin, were comparatively independent of the influence of the Qing dynasty, because they were geographically and culturally far removed from the Manchurians. They did not shave their heads for symbolic reasons, nor did they rely on the tribute system, but instead, used it to increase their profits by trading with Manchurian officers and Chinese merchants. Their geographical position promoted their participation in trade activities, and they functioned as intermediary merchants between China and Japan. They acquired silk and cotton products through tribute payments and commercial exchanges on the Chinese side, and sold them to Ainu, in exchange for furs on Sakhalin. When the Tokugawa Shogunate established a new trade system on Sakhalin in 1809 (Matsuda 1822 (1972): 192, 217–219), they sold directly to Japanese traders at the branch office in Shiranushi located at the southern end of Sakhalin.

The Nivkh and Ulcha traders were well aware of the price differences for silk, cotton, and fur in China and Japan. For example, they bought two rolls of cotton in exchange for a piece of sable on the Chinese side, while they sold a roll of cotton in exchange for several pieces of sable on the Japanese side. When they sold a roll of silk or a silk costume to the Japanese, they earned a much greater profit (Sasaki 2010: 527–533). Nivkh and Ulcha societies were also differentiated into several classes, according to economic conditions. Some of them became extremely wealthy through the intermediary trade. Leopold von Schrenck (1903: 34–35) described some rich Nivkh, who were called *kolla nivkh*, or rich people. According to him, they possessed some items recognized as being of high value—such as old Manchurian armor, a bow reinforced by whale beard, a coat of lynx fur, and a big Japanese iron pot—or employed several servants, had several wives, and conducted the bear festival several times. These rich people often played the role of village or regional group leader, and were even respected by Japanese and Manchurian officers. Though some of them were appointed to

the position of clan chief (*hala i da*) or village chief (*gašan da*), the Nivkh people did not acknowledge the authority sometimes associated with this type of status, unlike the Nanai, but only used it to get more economic profits and a more prestigious reputation in their society.

When the Russians returned in the mid-nineteenth century, unlike the other people, the Amur Nivkh did not show them overt hostility. They were conscious of the Russians potentiality as business partners, because they were fond of commercial businesses (Mamiya and Murakami 1810 (1988)a: 85), and they were the only people who could compete with the Chinese merchants in the Amur region (Schrenck 1899: 286–287).

As mentioned above, the Nivkh and Ulcha have some legends about trips made to China to purchase a bride (Shternberg 1933: 300–301; Zolotarev 1939: 49). I heard about bride purchase trips to Sakhalin during my field research in Duji village in 1997, and a trade trip to Sanxing in Kalima village in 2001. In the former case, an old woman told me that her grandmother had been the Ainu her grandfather had taken from Sakhalin. In the latter case, an old man said that his ancestors had taken various kinds of fur and sturgeon cartilage to sell to Chinese merchants, and that they had also taken silk and cotton clothes, metal tools, ceramic wares, and some kinds of food with them. According to his memory, the trips continued until the 1930s.

However, business conditions began deteriorating in the 1850s. The Chinese side provided them with fewer things than before, because of the weakening dynasty. Though the Japanese side generously bought their commodities until 1868, Japan suddenly closed its branch office in Shiranushi. In this year the Tokugawa Shogunate collapsed, and was replaced by the new Meiji government, which was less interested in Sakhalin than the Shogunate. In 1875, the new government transferred its territorial rights to Sakhalin to Russia, in exchange for the northern Kuril Islands. The cessation of trade with the Japanese caused serious damage to the Nivkh and Ulcha's trading activities. They lost their best customers. They could no longer earn large profits from the intermediate trade between China and Japan. Moreover, the value system had been turned upside-down by the change of ruler. Property, which formerly had value—such as the old Manchurian armor, the bow, and the Japanese iron pot—lost their value, and became trash, or, at most, antiques. Just as the Nanai lost their social status with the collapse of the Qing dynasty, the Nivkh and Ulcha lost their property as a consequence of the policies of modernized Japan and Russia.

## 5. Conclusion

In previous sections I reviewed the histories of the local people in the Amur region and on Sakhalin Island, where three countries—China, Russia, and Japan—have played political games since the seventeenth century. When the history in these regions is reviewed from the people's perspective, we realize that they have always actively involved themselves in the issues raised by these countries. Their movements and activities determined the outcome of the Russo-Chinese conflict in the Amur region in the mid-seventeenth century. Their intermediate trade activities promoted the movement

of commodities and economic development in the Amur region and on Sakhalin in the eighteenth century. As a result, the sable they trapped supported stylish fur fashions in the court of Beijing, and Chinese silk from northern areas (*Ezonishiki*) contributed to the sophistication of pre-modern Japanese culture.

The situation in the mid-nineteenth century was, at first glance, different from that in previous centuries. It would seem that the borders in Northeast Asia were determined without any involvement by the local people. However, a detailed analysis of the documents and people's memories reveal some common phenomena. The people did not tolerate the changing conditions passively. Instead, they did their best to maintain the political-economic system that had greatly benefitted them, and, when they understood that it would be impossible to retain it, they tried to adapt to the new system. As mentioned above, the local people in the Amur region and on Sakhalin Island wanted to continue the tribute payment system, at least immediately after the new border had been established. Some Nanai people, even those who were on the Russian side, did not acknowledge the authority of the Russian government, but were still dependent on the authority of the Qing dynasty. The people who remained on the Chinese side became commanders, officers, and soldiers, who fought against the invaders. Nivkh merchants enthusiastically engaged in commercial activities between Sakhalin and Sanxing, even at the beginning of the Soviet regime. We can conclude that the local people (near ancestors of the present indigenous ethnic minorities) also played an important role in the politics and economy of the Amur region and Sakhalin after the mid-nineteenth century.

However, the people were not able to block the placement of a new border that imprisoned them in different countries' territories. Nor could they prevent their loss of social status, infringements on their rights of access to resources by colonizers, interference in their trade activities, changes to their value systems, or their own impoverishment. As a result, they were labeled as poor indigenous minorities, and associated with a "primitive" society and culture. In practice, they were obliged to be those people. Anthropologists found them in this situation in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, described them in detail, and generalized their descriptions of them as representing the essence of their society and culture, while ignoring their history. All the anthropologists from that time—such as B. Laufer, L. Ya. Shternberg, B. Piłsudski, I. A. Lopatin, V. K. Arsen'ev, N. I. Kreinovich, R. Torii, and Liao Sunsheng—adopted this approach.

In comparison to the seventeenth century, we can assume that the countries did not need the local people's support after the mid-nineteenth century. In other words, the modernized countries were independent of the local people who lived in the regions they occupied. This difference seems to be a result of the country's structure, and the kinds of resources that the country needed from the regions.

I will not discuss the structure of a modernized country in detail in this paper. Instead, I will only make several observations. Modernized countries wanted to develop new resources that could support their industrialization in the new territory. However, the local people who had lived there for a long period of time were useless for achieving this purpose, because they were so deeply adapted to the pre-modern political and economic

system. They would have opposed a modernized policy, which could have been a threat to their prosperity. In fact, the Nanai paid the tribute for more than thirty years after the new border was set, and the Nivkh continued their unique businesses in China until the 1930s. These activities could have been barriers to Russia's modernization and development policy. Moreover, they could have countered the legitimacy of Russia's territorial rights over the Amur region. Modernized countries had to defeat not only the pre-modern countries, but also the local people who supported the latter. In the case of the Amur region and Sakhalin, the local people, ancestors of present-day indigenous people, were one of the feudalistic relics that a modernized country should have actively overcome. In other words, the indigenous people in these regions were not survivors of the Stone Age or early metal ages, but strong rivals of the modernized countries.

Many countries, including Russia, China, and Japan, have sought to become modernized and industrialized since the late nineteenth century. To accomplish this, these countries developed regions inhabited by indigenous populations, ignoring their requests, and damaging their unique cultures and societies. Some countries use their military and political powers to deprive the local people of their original rights, property, social status, and even history, since these traditional social, political, and economic institutions could potentially threaten their development policies. As a result, the people were obliged to be a poor, "primitive," ethnic minority.

Anthropologists are equally responsible for this situation. They supported and even promoted distribution of the modernizing countries' preferred discourse regarding indigenous populations, and the representation of their "primitiveness" through printings and museum exhibitions. Therefore, present anthropologists, to begin with, have to revise and reconstruct the history of the indigenous people, using different kinds of documents and materials, and to relativize the ethnographic descriptions written in the last century from the historical context. The study of border issues offers significant potential for the reconsideration of various problems such as ethnic matters, as well as those of international relations, and modern political history.

## Notes

- 1) I should have mentioned J. Stephan's three major works: *Sakhalin: A History* (1970), *The Kuril Islands: Russo-Japanese frontier in the Pacific* (1974), and *The Russian Far East: A History* (1994). They are representative works on the Far East pre-modern and modern history, focusing on the Russo-Japanese and Russo-Chinese border issues. As he was not a direct stakeholder in the issues, unlike Japanese, Russian, and Chinese scholars, his works are considered to be comparatively neutral and reliable. Unfortunately, however, he did not give much attention to the stance of the local people (direct ancestors of the present indigenous people) in the border conflicts between Japan, Russia, and China in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Therefore, I did not refer to his works in this article.
- 2) I classify the terms of "local people" and "indigenous people" strictly in this paper. The former widely implies the people who have lived in a region or an area permanently, or from generation to generation, and who recognize the region or area as their homeland. On the



contrary, I identify the latter as the people, who are defined as “indigenous people” by modern national laws, and their recent ancestors. In many cases, the latter will be used in the context of modern international or interethnic relations.

- 3) It was the tradition of the Chinese dynasties to offer the tribute payers many rewards that greatly surpassed the value of the tribute in quality and quantity, in order to demonstrate their authority and power. Though the Qing dynasty provided the tribute payers with such things as horses, cattle, servants, costumes made of leather, silk, and other materials, houses, and other various kinds of utensils in the initial stages, (Manbun roto I 1955: 112–113), in the 1650s it changed its policy to offering the payers clothing products such as silk and cotton costumes, some rolls of cotton cloth, leather shoes, leather belts, needles, some rolls of cotton thread, and combs (Qingdai zhongwo guanxi dangan shilian xuanbian 1981: 7).
- 4) A battleship of the Russian-American company attacked some Japanese posts in southern Sakhalin, northern Hokkaido, and Iturup Island in 1806 and 1807. This attack was precipitated by unsuccessful diplomatic negotiations between a Russian delegation and Tokugawa Shogunate in 1804 in Nagasaki (Hora 1973: 219).
- 5) The Mongolian people lived on the Zeya River and in the upper Amur River basin in the seventeenth century. They emigrated to the present northern part of Heilongjian province and Inner Mongolia during the Russo-Chinese conflict in the seventeenth century.
- 6) V. Poiarkov, who succeeded in the expedition in the Amur River basin in 1643, and E. Khabarov, who occupied the middle and lower Amur River basins from 1650 to 1653, collected *yasak* on their trip along the Amur River (AI vol. 4 1842: 67–77; DAI vol. 3 1848: 50–61, 258–261, 352–354, 359–371, 371–373). O. Stepanov, who was Khabarov’s successor, tried to organize them into the *yasak* payers from 1653 to 1658 (DAI vol. 3 1848: 523, 528; DAI vol. 4 1851: 80–83, 100–120).
- 7) For example, a book named “Pindin luocha fanlu” (『平定羅刹方略』) was published in the eighteenth century.
- 8) Prior to the first battle between the Russian Cossacks and the Manchurian army, the local people (the Jucheri and Natki) organized 800 warriors to attack fort Achan, in October 1651. The Russian side consisted of 106 Cossacks, and fought back with guns and canons. As a result, the latter killed 170 local warriors, and captured many people as war prisoners. Therefore, the local people asked the Qing dynasty to send reinforcements (DAI vol. 3 1848: 365–366).
- 9) In 1799, the local people, who had had some problems with the dynasty, destroyed the branch office in Kiji (Nakamura 1801: 20). The office was moved to the upper basin, and located in Deren at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Rinzo Mamiya visited the office and market in Deren in 1809 (Mamiya and Murakami 1810 (1985)b: 135–148). When L. von Shrenck and R. K. Maak conducted their field research in 1854–1856, the office was settled at Pivan, located on the opposite side of the Amur River, in the present Komsomol’sk na Amure (Schrenck 1903: 58; Cao 1885 (1985): 2286). The dynasty had to move it upstream because of its weakening power.
- 10) For example, Nayoro documents Nos. 3 and 4 show us the displeasure of the Qing dynasty’s side against the Ainu people, who would not come to pay the tribute, and the reaction of the Ainu side (Ikegami 1968). The Nayoro documents consist of twelve letters. Document No. 1,

written in Manchurian, gives advice and suggestions to a person that wants to be a *hojihon*, and No. 2, also written in Manchurian, certifies the succession of the position, *hala i da*, of Nayoro village. Nos. 3 and 4 were written in literal Chinese. The former requires the chief of *Too hala* in Taraika village to pay the tribute, while the latter is in reply to the former. Eight other documents, written in Japanese, are letters and memorandums from the Japanese explorers who visited Nayoro village in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Ikegami 1968).

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