The Ainu of Tsugaru

The indigenous history and shamanism of northern Japan

by

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Abstract

This is the first doctoral level Ainu study outside Japan from an indigenous perspective, and the first academic Ainu study ever from a female perspective.

This study examines the indigenous history and shamanism of northern Japan, Hokkaidô and Tsugaru, in the context of the Ainu culture complex. Tsugaru was the last autonomous stronghold of the Ainu people in Honshû, remaining largely independent until it came under the control of the Japanese state, the Edo government, in the seventeenth century. Tsugaru has developed a distinct hybrid culture as a result of gradual intermixing with non-indigenous populations, though an Ainu consciousness has never completely died out in the region.

A comparison between Hokkaidô Ainu shamanism and Tsugaru shamanism reveals the relative recentness of their contemporary characteristics, their shared roots prior to the Edo period, as well as changes in gender roles and aspects of gender inequity. In both traditions, shamanism has been transmitted primarily by the female population, and in the past, indigenous women played an essential role in maintaining social and spiritual integrity. The centrality of women came to manifest itself differently in the two regions, due mainly to differing socio-historical circumstances which transformed two originally similar cultures into divergent forms.

This study questions the stereotypical ethnic opposition between the Ainu and the "Japanese," and sheds light on the intricate relationship among the Ainu and other indigenous groups in northern Japan. It also questions the powerful Ainu male myth and narratives which shaped much of the Ainu's cultural revival movement in the past century.

Firthermore, by revealing a significant level of shared spiritual beliefs and practices between the past and present inhabitants of the Japanese archepelago of Japan and the traditional peoples of Northeast Asia and byond the Bering Strait, the study will point to a need for both Ainu study and Japanese study to be placed within the larger cultural domain, namely, the northern circumpacific region.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> The indigenous people 夷族 who lived all over Ôu [northern Honshû] did not ascend to the heavens, nor did they sink to the underworld. They were assimilated where they lived and became Ôu people. This is an unquestionable fact.....They are all Japanese today, but they are also indigenous people.
>
> Fujiwara 1917 (1998): 542-43

Prologue: Isis in darkness

For most of human history, myth has been the vehicle to transmit and express the central truths of culture and society. And so, I will borrow a myth to explain the purpose of the chapters that follow, on one level parts of a doctoral dissertation, a formal and even somewhat ritualized requirement among the tribes of academe; but more significant, to myself at least, for what they have helped me discover about my own indigenous history and that of my Ainu ancestors.

After his father Geb retired to the heavens, Osiris, god of the Nile waters and Pharaoh of Egypt, ruled the lower world with his sister and wife, Isis, goddess of female fertility. Seth, jealous lord of the barren desert, murdered Osiris and dismembered his corpse, tearing it into fourteen pieces and scattering it over the banks of the Nile. Upon learning of this, Isis set sail in a boat of papyrus. One by one, she recovered the scattered

pieces of Osiris — all but his phallus — and reunited them so that he might thereby be restored to divine life. Later, when Seth was delivered into her hands by her son Horus, Isis pardoned him and let him go free.

My work with the Ainu and their traditions has come to be a journey like that of Isis, to reunite the dismembered parts of a lost but still remembered whole so that they may come to life again. Before I was even conscious of the exact dimensions of the quest, I began wandering the banks of my own Nile, not one physical place but a stream of memories, oral histories, transmitted wisdom, neglected writings, and misinterpreted histories. It might not even be too facetious to claim that the loss of Osiris' penis found its parallel as well, in my struggle to understand and transcend the phallocratic bias of some modern Ainu tradition.

This dissertation focuses on a "forgotten" community, Tsugaru 津軽 , located at the northern tip of the main island of Honshû, where an Ainu heritage has persisted in modified and syncretic forms. Tsugaru represents an indigenous culture, pertaining to the Ainu, whose transmission has rested partly on "blood" and partly on shared world views and practices. The persistence of this culture in Tsugaru has only been possible because of a long series of conscious decisions to ensure its transmission, in the face of varying levels of official hostility, rather than a dependence on fate. Understanding Tsugaru is crucial for Ainu study because it demonstrates the intricacy of the "Ainu culture complex" and reflects the diversity of the indigenous cultures of northern Japan.

This study looks at Tsugaru and its Ainu history and shamanic heritage. It is an attempt to correct the standard view, that this region and peoples are properly no more than a subdivision of Japanese studies, having nothing to do with the Ainu. I will bring to

light the cultural foundations of the indigenous populations of northern Japan, shamanism and other related spiritual beliefs and practices, and examine both their variations and their uniformity. In so doing, this study will contribute not only to the understanding of the Ainu, but also to the past and present inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago, the peoples who have today come to be called the "Japanese."[1] Both the Ainu and the "Japanese" will be shown to share a significant proportion of their spiritual foundations with the traditional peoples of the Asian continent — those of Northeast Asia in particular; and even further, to the Northwest Coast indigenous peoples of North America. These findings will thus suggest common roots for the Ainu and the "Japanese," through the great transcontinental, trans-Pacific population movements of the prehistoric past, as well as the busy trade and cultural exchanges which followed them until national boundaries were erected to obstruct this flow of goods and ideas.

Now, let us begin.

Shamans and Ainu

What follows is a study of the indigenous shamanisms of northern Japan, intended to deepen and extend our knowledge of both indigenous history and culture and the shamanic vocation. One characteristic these two fields share is that they have been "disappearing" for a long time — the so-called "Ainu" and the shaman, not to speak of the Ainu shaman, have been labelled relics of a swiftly vanishing world, not long for the living and thus in urgent need of being seized and dropped in a bottle of formaldehyde.

In the face of an imposed Japanese homogeneity, that defined them out of existence in all but a few limited areas, the study of the Ainu and other indigenous peoples in northern Japan is commonly tainted with either the misplaced urgency of salvage ethnography or the condescending concern of misty-eyed "sympathizers." The former is obviously irritating, imbued as it can be with insensitive and even racist attitudes about savage cultures and dying peoples; but the latter is more insidious, promoting as it does an "Ainu" that is sanitized, sterilized, even emasculated, a Sunday-school puppet whose chief obsession is either living up to the demands of a distinctly contemporary political correctness, or lingering in ostentatious misery as a living advertisement of the evils of the present Japanese government.

As for shamanism, no sooner did it receive its name, from seventeenth century Russian priests, than the first drafts of its epitaph appeared. Like the Ainu themselves, the shamans have been dying for a long time, but they have somehow contrived never to be quite dead. Now, as we will see below, they enjoy a new respectability from modern developments in science.

Research on both the indigenous peoples of northern Japan and on shamanism has suffered from a lack of direct input and feedback from the native side to academic discourse. Nearly all accounts are written from the outside, and a native scholar soon finds that his or her own oral traditions and knowledge are seldom if ever given a proper welcome in academia. The result is that native scholarship comes to be defined by the quantity of ethnographic and theoretical literature produced by non-natives, while the mastery of this literature becomes a prerequisite for dealing with primary sources. For a

native scholar, it is all rather like being locked into a chastity belt until you can pass a examination on the contents of a sex manual written by a team of eunuchs.

Needless to say, we will be trying to do better than this. But before we begin, let us briefly turn our attention to our primary categories. We say "Ainu" and "shaman," but what do these words correspond to in the real world?

Shamanism and shamanizing

The term 'shaman' first saw the light of day at the end of the 17th century. It appears to have been adopted from Evenki, a Tungustic language of Siberia, by a priest of the Orthodox Church of Russia, and to have referred to the 'religious' specialists found in small-scale, 'primitive,' hunting and gathering societies in Siberia. Such specialists were inevitably viewed by missionaries as religious rivals who consorted with demons (Pascal 1938).

In the 19th century, the interpretation of shamanism was strongly influenced by Eurocentric, social-evolutionist perspectives, and anthropologists forged a link between shamanism and an "archaic" way of life (Tylor 1871). This view became part of the general idea that shamanism was a kind of "natural religion," harmonizing with a natural type of economy (Durkeim 1965, Lommel 1967), or a "technique of ecstasy" (Eliade 1964), a "seizure of man by divinity" that allowed direct contact with the divine (Lewis 1971).

At the same time, when social paradigms of ultimate truth shifted from religious to "scientific," the heresies that remained unacceptable to the enlightened mind were transferred from the class of impiety to that of insanity. A shaman's contact with spirit beings,

for instance the souls of the deceased, his/her ability to enter into a trance state, his/her performance of glossolalia, and the manifestation of other skills and conditions not normally observed by other humans, helped the original religious denunciation of the shaman to evolve into a psychological interpretation which assumed shamanic practitioners were mentally abnormal, victims perhaps of "arctic hysteria" (Czaplicka 1914, Shirokogoroff 1935, Hallowell 1941, Belo 1960). In order to justify the role of healer he or she often takes, some scholars referred to the shaman as a *formerly* insane person who had been successfully cured, a "cured madman" (Ackerknecht 1949, Halifax 1982). Still others have attempted to use concepts and arguments from psychiatry to demonstrate the "archetypal nature" of shamanism (Perry 1974).

Although many studies have questioned the correctness of labelling shamans mad, or formerly mad (Heinz 1988, 1989; Klimo 1988, 1989; Inglis 1989), it remains an established norm in western medical institutions and among medical practitioners in the mental health field. Often the outcome of such a bias is not only a failure to provide contextually effective medical treatment, but also what amounts to cultural genocide (Walker 1989,Alsup 1989).The interpretation of shamans as abnormal has also given rise to a comparative legal perspective in cases where shamanistic practice has been included within an established system of legal practice (Salzberg 1993).

These classical definitions of shamanism, based on the Siberian model, were dominant until recently, when studies of shamanism in complex, sedentary, 'modern' societies rendered them not only narrow but useless. The definition of a shaman can be general enough to include what are otherwise known as mediums or channelers, healers (Heinze 1988, 1989; Klimo 1988, 1989), or artists (Ridington 1983, Levy 1989). Shaman-

ism stubbornly refuses to disappear, and by its persistence it has called into question the assumption that it is a relic of the past that will die on contact with the modern world. In some Asian communities, for example, shamanism has survived from prehistoric times to the present (Chang 1982; Overmyer 1976, 1996). Many students of shamanism today share the view that although the role, function, and ability of a shaman may be culture-specific, shamanism is a universal religious experience which provides its participant the experience of direct contact with the metaphysical and the belief in the survival of souls (Cardena 1989; Hamayon 1994; Heinze 1988, 1989; Pattee 1989). This, in my view, is an acceptable working definition of shamanism, at least for the purposes of this study.

Unlike most of those who engage shamanism in the academic arena, I came to live what I study. I was born in the port city of Hakodate 函館 in southern Hokkaidô, where I inherited an indigenous heritage from my grandparents on my father's side. My grandmother is from northern Tsugaru in the prefecture of Aomori 青森, the last stronghold of the Ainu people in Honshû, and she still spoke some Ainu and followed indigenous spiritual traditions at home. On my grandfather's side, my great-grandmother is also from Aomori; she made and wore Ainu dress, claiming it as part of her tradition, and her elder sister was a traditional shamaness practicing full-time in Aomori. I did not grow up knowing about my background, since it was a taboo topic for my father, who had established himself in "mainstream" culture. Yet even prior to confirming my Ainu and shamanic ancestry, I had already been, seemingly by chance, initiated by an Ainu master shamaness from Nibutani, Aiko Aoki, who saw something in me I had not been fully aware of.

My understanding of my own traditions has not been noticeably furthered by the religio-academic debate on the shaman's nature, calling, and mental stability: for one thing, I am tolerably certain that I am not insane. I define and use the term "shamanism" for the purpose of this discussion, but it is strictly an academic convenience. There may be shamans, but from the indigenous standpoint in the real world, there is no exact correlate to "shaman*tsm*."

Three recent developments in the study of shamanism have been of great assistance, developments which have situated the shamanic vocation within the realm of natural science: health science, environmental science, and the "hard" or "pure" sciences such as physics.

Over the past decade, a number of findings about the functions of the brain, neural hormones and chemicals, and the human immune system have revealed a complex psycho-physiological mechanism stimulated by shamanic processes. What has been called the state of possession or 'trance' is now studied vigorously by students of altered states of consciousness (ASC) (Jilek 1982, Inglis 1989, Ludwig 1968); the function of neurotransmitters such as ekaphelhn and endorphins, the body's self-manufactured opiates influenced by successful shamanism and alternative healing methods have been discovered (Inglis 1989, Henry 1982, Kane 1982, Katz 1982, Pomeranz 1982, Prince 1982 a, b, c, Saffaran 1982); and near-death experience research has revealed brain functions relevant to what has been called "direct religious experiences" (Persinger 1987, Tachibana 1994 a, b). There is also a growing literature concerning the effectiveness of shamanism and alternative modes of healing which suggests beneficial aspects of their application in clinical settings (Brala 1989, Jilek 1982, Palmer 1989, Siegel 1989). The shaman's ability

to enter into different states of consciousness such as trance and lucid dreams can now be seen as something innate in every human, rather than a mysterious "gift" given only to certain half-cracked members of exotic indigenous groups.

The study of shamanism as an alternative therapeutic system might well lead to breakthroughs in western medicine, when and where the limits of modern mechanistic medicine reveal themselves. Tillichi (1967) has called for a reevaluation of the modern concepts of health. He proposes a multi-dimensional concept of health to enhance the multidimensionality of life — mental and physical phenomena cannot be separated. All old news to myself and my teachers, of course but it is pleasant to have our insights validated rather than dismissed.

Equally important in understanding and enhancing health is the relationship between human behavior and the natural environment. It has been noted that allopathic medicine neglects the role the environment plays in human health (McCarron 1994). Here, shamanism provides a vital model of culture-nature symbiosis. A major contribution in understanding shamanism as an effective life-sustaining mechanism has been made by the ecological anthropologist Irimoto and his colleagues, who have examined the dynamic interaction between religion and ecology among circumpolar indigenous communities (Irimoto and Yamada eds. 1994). Defining ecology as a holistic way of understanding human life, Irimoto proposes a new paradigm which enhances the processual and interactive nature of the relationship between religion, biology, society and ecology (Irimoto 1994). This approach allows us to say that shamanism must be placed in a temporal and spatial context, as a process, not an unchanging ideal, whose surface manifestations are transformed rather than dying out and being re-invented. The social-

ecological approach enables us to see the multiplicity of negative effects brought to an ethnic group by the destruction of its natural environment (Pentikainen 1994).

Most recently, researchers in "hard" natural sciences, such as physics, have turned their attention to developing hypotheses and models that might explain the universal mechanics of shamanic phenomena. The majority of this work has been done in Japan and China by researchers such as Shigemi Sasaki of the University of Electrocommunications and the Psi Energy Research Committee in Tokyo, who has taken a physics-based approach to the measurement and analysis of traditional concepts such as ***ki*** 気 (Ch. *qi*; "transformative energy") and various forms of so-called "exceptional sensor perception" (Sasaki 1995, 1997 and so on). He and others have been able to identify certain conditions and variables that are prerequisites to the occurrence of such phenomena in natural and laboratory settings.[2] A number of similar studies have been done by Hardt at the Biocybernaut Institute in the USA, who has concentrated on measuring and optimizing brain function (Hardt n.d.).

This is the shamanism I will be discussing below, a culturally-defined mechanism which facilitates healing in body and mind and, in so doing, integrates a participant with his/her community and the divine environment that surrounds it. A shaman is then a person who communicates with spirit beings, and restores balance between the human world, the natural environment, and the Order beyond, the so-called sacred and divine. It is not a quirk, or a consolation prize for the mentally or physically ill, but has been, can, and should be a natural product of optimum human cognitive ability. It is to this end that I will relate its history and practice among the indigenous peoples of northern Japan.

To me, one of the problems with the study of shamanism is to demonstrate that a shamanic tradition does not necessarily die out when it is denounced by the indigenous population or fails to meet the "classical" standards set by the experts. How do you deal with the issue of change? If you say there are traditional criteria that no longer apply, it does not mean the tradition is thereby discontinued. As many students of indigenous shamanism in contemporary societies state, the problem is in our minds, expecting a tradition frozen in time, seeking a prototype which all too often has existed nowhere but in the imagination of salvage ethnographers, in spite of the complexity of the social and political processes which influence the survival strategies and responses of traditional shamans adapting themselves to contemporary globalizing societies (Balzer 1999, Hopal 1999, Ingerman 1999, Tiukhteneva 1999, Mader 1999). Van Deusen, for instance, discusses how oral historians/storytellers play a key role in shamanic cultures and their revival, and how the distinction between storytelling and shamanizing blurs in some indigenous societies (Van Deusen 1999). Her point is of particular relevance to this study, as well as to myself and my experience.

The transformation in the study of shamanism might be compared to the paradigm shift in the field of linguistics by the transformative school led by Chomsky in the 1950's. Rather than simply observing surface phenomena, we look at the deeper layers of underlying assumptions, values, and principles which underpin the cultural genre of a particular shamanic tradition. Instead of regarding these traditions as dead and gone, we can see them to be *dormant* in some areas and capable of revival given a change in circumstances. Hence, Micheal Herner, for example, has created Core Shamanism, and his institution, the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, has instituted an Urgent Tribal Assistance

program to respond to requests from traditional societies to help them restore shamanism and healing. At least some scholars, including Townsend, consider Herner's work "authentic" and valid, and feel that it has the potential for at least partially reviving traditional shamanic systems (Townsend 1999: 226).

Shamanism has been particularly prone to outside manipulation — up to and including suppression — and in many cases, the peoples concerned, including at least some of the Hokkaidô Ainu, have been brought to the point of denying that they practice it. Nevertheless, societies under severe pressure can and will find a way to preserve their sacred traditions if they so wish. For example, Balzer reports that one common strategy of shamans under Soviet repression was to "go underground" to practice shamanic acts in invisible, private, and thus safe places, such as forests, or to perform spirit invocations without key shamanic instruments such as drums, after the drums were confiscated, sent off to museums, or burned (Balzer 1999: 94). As we will see, among the Ainu in Hokkaidô, midwives came to be the keepers of the shamanic flame.

As a result, the contemporary Ainu in Hokkaidô have come to possess a dual standard and a dual structure for spiritual matters, the "official" and the "non-official." The former involves public ceremonial events which take place in communities, in which male elders function as ceremonial masters. These are propagated as "real" Ainu tradition to the outside world by the ceremonial masters, and often go hand in hand with media attention and tourist promotion. The latter, on the other hand, are much smaller-scaled and have shamanic ends; they are organized by shamans, or involve them. The powerful Ainu males tend to denounce the "authenticity" of such ceremonies, insisting that they

remain outside the Ainu tradition proper, and that "real" shamans have all but disappeared.

In regions such as Tsugaru, where no "real" Ainu are supposed to remain according to official Japanese declarations and policy statements, indigenous shamanism survives under the surface label of Japanese customs, sometimes affiliated with Buddhist temples and other organized religions. Why is shamanism thriving here, at the southern edge of the official Ainu area, divided from Hokkaidô by only a few miles of sea — an area the Ainu mysteriously vanished from one by one when they became "Japanese," the home for what appears to have been the magically disappearing Ainu, vanished at the convenience of the Japanese government?

The modern Ainu and their neglected roots

The next chapter, Chapter Two, will be devoted to the history of the indigenous peoples of northern Japan, and I do not wish to foreshadow every detail of it here. However, the discussion will go more smoothly if we do with Ainu as we have done with shamanism, and give a brief review of the associated definitional problems. These are both external and internal: the misunderstandings of outsiders, picking the bones of what they assume to be a corpse, and the distortion of the tradition under modern pressure, which among other things has led to major gender issues within the Ainu community.

Traditional studies of the origin and the definition of the Ainu are as unsatisfactory as those on shamanism — possibly worse. Ainu studies have suffered from disciplinary and national boundaries, the lack of a collaborative framework, a lack of native input, and

imperialism. To this day, there is no accepted scholarly consensus on who the Ainu people are and what their traditional territories included. The definitions that can be found are highly flexible, depending on the criteria used and the standpoint of the person making the definition. However, one generalization can be made: the main problem is always where to fix the southern border of the Ainu territories, and how to define the relationship between the indigenous population of Honshû and that of Hokkaidô.

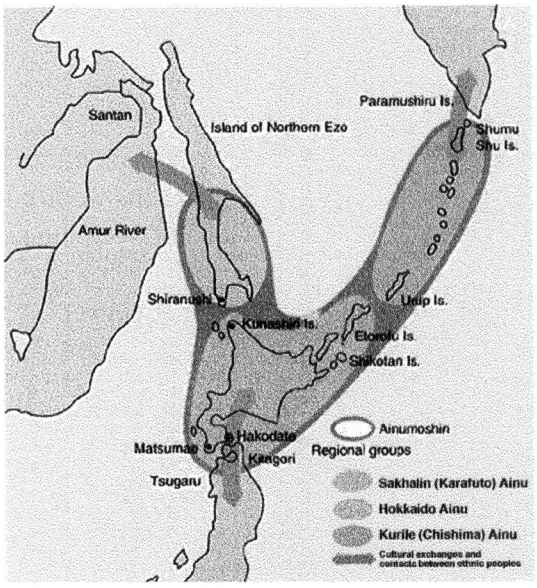


Figure 1.1:
Ainu territories according to
the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô

This point can be neatly illustrated by comparing three recent maps of Ainu territory and culture, all of which are "official," but all of which disagree on the placement of the southern boundary. The most conservative of these is that which appears in the *Brochure on the Ainu People* published by the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô, the largest and most "official" Ainu organization, reproduced to the left.

In this map, Ainu territory includes the southern part of Sakhalin, the Kurils, Hokkaidô, and the prefecture of Aomori at the northern tip of Honshû. The justification offered assumes the relative lateness of the emergence of a distinctive Ainu culture centered on Hokkaidô, which is said to emerge from its immediate predecessor, Satsumon culture, in the mid-twelfth century. However, prior to the emergence of "Ainu" culture as so defined, the Satsumon culture had spread across northern Honshû and most parts of Hokkaidô. The problem is that before the mid-twelfth century, the main actors on the

stage of indigenous history, appearing in various official records, are the indigenous peoples of northern Honshû, most commonly known as Emishi. To this day, the exact relationship between the Emishi and the more recent Ainu is not clear, although it is possible to place them in a larger cultural complex and emphasize their affinities. In the next chapter, I will examine various perspectives on understanding the Emishi, and their associated definitional problems.

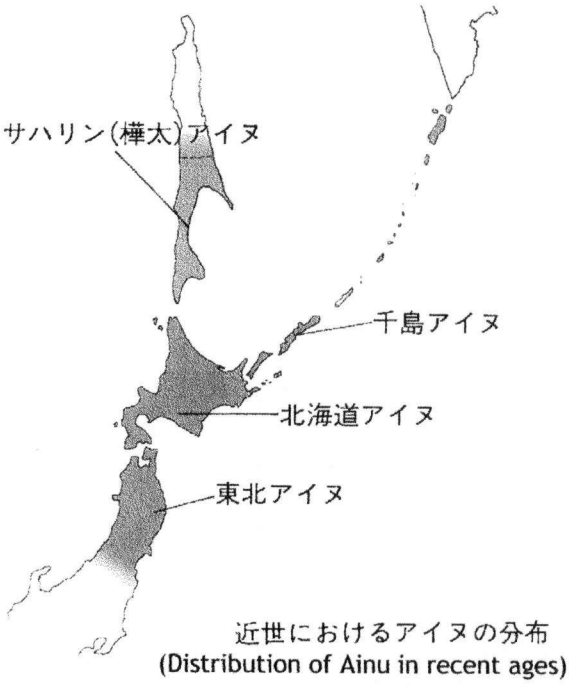


Figure 1.2:
Ainu territories according to
the Hokkaidô Ainu Museum, Shiraoi

The second of these maps, shown at the left, presents an attempt to see the Emishi /Ainu cultural complex as a distinct unit. It is titled "Distribution of the Ainu people in recent ages"[2] and it is published by the Hokkaidô Ainu Museum in Shiraoi. Unfortunately, even though most of the northern half of Honshû appears as Ainu territory on the map, this area is never referred to in the accompanying text (The Ainu Museum, 1994). The same area is defined as Ainu in the *Ainu minzoku o rikai suru tameni* (*To understand the Ainu people*), an official publication of the Hokkaidô government (Hokkaidô government 1995). The exact words they use are: "The Ainu people once lived in a wide area covering northern Honshû, Hokkaidô, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands. Today, the majority of the Ainu live in Hokkaidô and there are very small populations in other areas"

(1995: 2). Nevertheless, these sources do not identify the Emishi people as Ainu, but say rather that the Emishi included at least some Ainu people.[3] This position, which is becoming steadily more popular, is still seen by some as problematic, partly because of the lack of Emishi ethnography and the unavailability of any full description of the spoken Emishi language.

Those scholars who have looked primarily at material culture have emphasized differences rather than similarities. Physical anthropologists tend to come to rushed conclusions on very scanty data, for instance that a handful of "Emishi" skulls are not "Ainu," and so the Emishi are not Ainu (Suzuki 1950: 23-44).[5] Differences in material culture, such as shifts in pottery styles, are seen by some as indications of racial changes (Kaiho 1993). Nevertheless, even here, some recent studies have questioned to what extent measurable differences in material culture can be mechanically mapped to modifications in social and ethnic frameworks (Fukazawa 1998).

Then what justification is there for assuming a link between the Emishi and the Ainu, other than a feeling that the so-called Emishi were the indigenous people prior to the emergence of the Ainu? One problem is that, for fairly obscure reasons, there is no Ainu archeology in Honshû, and even Ainu studies on the academic level have only begun there in the very recent past.[6] Thus the chief proponents of the Ainu/Emishi cultural complex come from linguistics, and the study of religion and ecology.

The third map we are going to discuss here is thus a linguistic one, entitled "Main Ainu Dialects and Sites of Fieldwork" (see next page). It is taken from a journal published by the Hokkaidô Ainu Culture Research Center, which was established in 1993. This map identifies northern Tôhoku, in the prefectures of Aomori, Akita, and Iwate, as

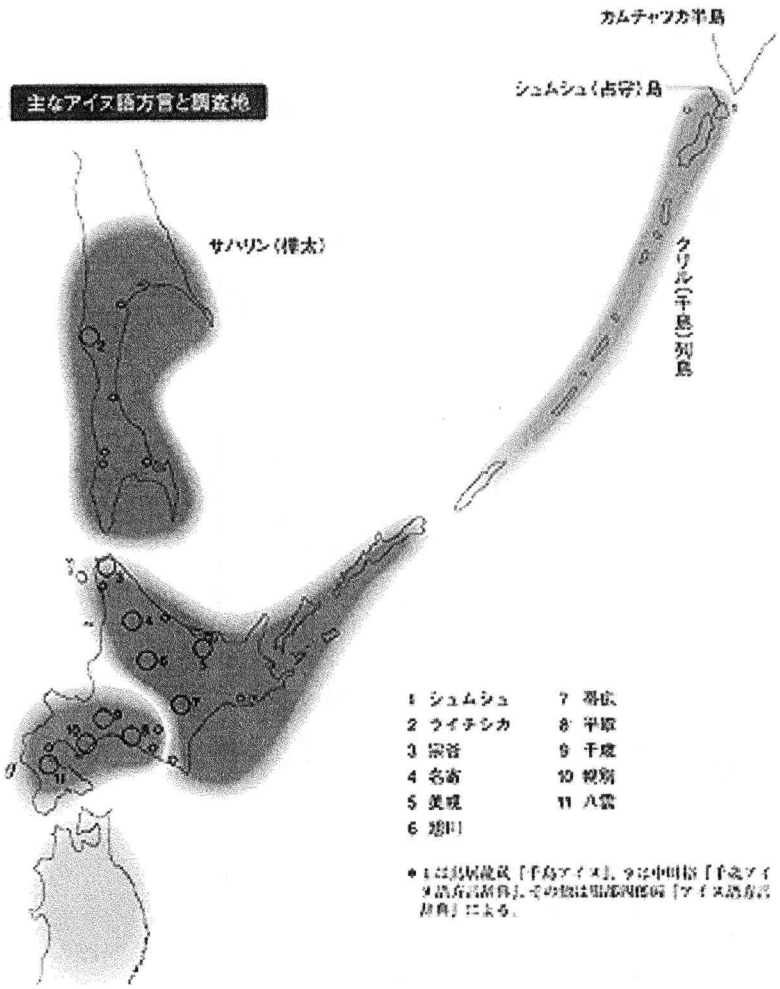


Figure 1.3: Ainu dialect map,
by the Hokkaidô Ainu Culture Research Center

an Ainu dialect area, distinct from Hokkaidô, the Kurils, and Sakhalin.

According to this booklet, the dialectal variation is apparent, even though the different dialects still remain mutually intelligible. This linguistic boundary is the safest and most conservative definition offered by canonical works by Kindaichi Kyôsuke, followed by a number of other prominent linguists, including Chiri Mashiho, the only native Ainu student of Ainu linguistics. The most recent scholar in this line is A. Slawik, who considers the historical "Emishi" language to be a member of the same linguistic family as Ainu (Slawik et al. 1994, Chiri 1973j, Kindaichi 1962, Yamada 1984a, 1993).[7]

The linguistic argument rests largely on the study of indigenous place names, the result of extensive field work which has been necessary to contextualize the names in question, many of which are duplicated in Hokkaidô or even further north. There are also overlapping vocabulary items and beliefs among the local nomadic populations,

including the *matagi*, as well as personal names in written documents, starting from the *Kôjiki* and *Nihonshoki*. Although these place names are commonly referred to as "Ainu," this should not be understood as a claim that the Ainu language has remained unchanged over the years, or that the language spoken by the Emishi in northern Honshû one thousand years ago was identical to contemporary Hokkaidô Ainu. Nevertheless, certain elements seem to persist and ensure a basic continuity, such as is displayed by the words *nay* and *petsu* designating rivers. The consistency of the patterns that remain is difficult to explain by any other hypothesis than the presence of an Ainu or proto-Ainu linguistic heritage.

As we mentioned, there are also scholars who support Emishi/Ainu continuity on ecological and religious grounds. Obayashi Taryô, probably the foremost Japanese authority on the ecology and religion of the indigenous peoples in the circumpolar regions, states that judging from the hunting, fishing, and gathering ecology of the Emishi, and their annual ritual cycle, there is no question that they and the Ainu share a basic system and form a continuity. He argues strongly for the recognition of Ainu elements in northern Honshû in general. The problem is, he points out, that due to historical circumstances, scholars have been hesitant to assert the Ainu roots of certain indigenous customs in northern Honshû (1997b: 171). I would merely add that the Hokkaidô Ainu explanation for, and in some cases, demand for the recognition of Ainu customs in northern Honshû only came to be taken seriously by a small number of mainstream academics in the past decade or so.

The Dawn of Ainu Studies?

There are extra-academic reasons for the disagreement over the definition of "Ainu" as well. The official Japanese government assumption about the Ainu for the last few centuries has been that they are an inevitably disappearing minority people, with a distinct culture, language, and world view that all belongs to the past, with no place in, and no right to the present. In other words, "Ainu" became little more than shorthand for "relic of the past." The Meiji government officially labeled the Hokkaidô Ainu Hokkaidô kyûdojin (北海道旧土人, "Former Indigenous People of Hokkaidô"), and in 1899 they implemented a strict colonial law, the Hokkaidô kyûdojin hogohô (北海道旧土人保護法 Hokkaidô Former Indigenous People's Protection Act), which remained on the books until 1997. It was only two years ago that the Ainu were recognized as a living indigenous people in Japan by the Japanese government, and the colonial law was replaced by the Ainu Culture Promotion Act, which is seen by the Ainu as an *ad hoc*, temporary compromise for the New Ainu Law still under discussion. Any serious student of Ainu studies, or indigenous studies of northern Japan, must bear in mind that the very existence of the Ainu and other indigenous peoples of northern Japan has never been wholeheartedly acknowledged by the Japanese government.[8]

The perennial definition of the Ainu as a group of former hunter-gatherers lingering in forgotten corners of Hokkaidô is based on 19th-century salvage ethnography, shaped by the unashamed imperialism and nationalism of that time. Nearly all studies accepted the accuracy of the Meiji spatial definition of the Ainu: only in Hokkaidô. Their brothers and sisters in northern Honshû, the people of Tsugaru, were set apart from them by an imaginary gulf, despite a host of obvious commonalities — Tsugaru was defined as the

domain of vulgar Japanese peasants, Hokkaidô as the home of the Ainu, backward barbarians or (occasionally) noble savages, but never on any account relatives.

As part of this process, the concept "Ainu" was associated with a collection of quaint surface manifestations, with ethnographers looking for "Ainu customs" rather than searching out underlying values and principles. The sorry state of Hokkaidô Ainu culture as it existed in the 19th century was enshrined as its culmination and essence, and the damage done to it by Japanese encroachment ignored or even celebrated. To borrow a Russian proverb cited by Solzhenitsyn: they smash in your face, and say you were always ugly.

The Ainu who remained Ainu were treated as living museum specimens, posed, photographed, measured, and tested, often with less consideration than the law now prescribes for laboratory animals. The only road "forward" left open to them was to become "civilized," which in effect meant to cultivate a sense of shame towards their indigenous heritage, and try by any and all means to pass as Japanese.[9] Most of all, to be Ainu meant to be born inferior, subject to abuse, discrimination, denigration, and an endless need to justify one's existence; and this, unfortunately, continues to this day.

The archeological study of the Ainu can help to correct this prejudiced and mistaken picture, but it comes with its own limitations. Archeologists tend to study material culture: and they are often more or less helpless when it comes to fitting these "things" into a living context. Hence archeological research into the indigenous population of Japan came to be dubbed "Jômon" studies, a name taken from a pottery style which conjured up an ethno-cultural group in its own image. Unfortunately, "Jômon" people have become as real as Ainu in the minds of those who study them, with a distinct and unitary

presence. Worse still, seduced by the insidious charms of nationalism, the term "Jômon" has sometimes become not merely *a* name of *a* people, but *the* name of *the* indigenous people who were ancestral to the Japanese state and culture of today. Once more, the Ainu have been left to one side.

Some say that Ainu studies are going through a paradigm shift at present, being integrated with Japanese studies proper, rather than kept in a separate and isolated compartment as in the past.[10] Indeed, many questions about the Ainu (and the Japanese) which were earlier taboo are now at least openly asked, including "what is the historical, genetic, linguistic, and cultural relationship between the 'Japanese' and the Ainu?" and "How 'homogenous' is the Ainu culture, and where are its limits?" Those who study Ainu language and oral literature have begun expressing their problems with the accepted southern boundary of "Ainu" place names, since these can easily be found in central and southern Japan as well (Katayama 1994, Kimura 1988a, Umehara 1994, to quote a few). Answering these questions is a task for future research, but at least the questions are now being taken seriously by a number of respectable scholars. In the past, when common vocabulary and grammatical features were found between Japanese and Ainu, they were mechanically considered to be loans from Japanese, but today the other possibility is not ignored, and even a common root for the two languages is being hypothesized (Katayama 1994, Slawik et al. 1994). And, at long last, there is a growing number of researchers who are willing to listen to the long-standing Ainu claim that many older place names in the Japanese archipelago can only be understood with a knowledge of indigenous languages, including Ainu (see the Ainu interpretation of Japanese place names by Ainu speakers in Yamamoto 1991, Nomura 1993).

Taking into account these different perceptions of the Ainu, and current scholarly concerns, my working definition of the Ainu for the purpose of this dissertation is a compromise. Recognizing the diversity within the indigenous cultures in northern Japan, both historical and contemporary, I attempt to view the indigenous cultural complex of northern Japan, made up of Ainu and other indigenous peoples in Honshû, as an "Ainu culture complex." The concept "Ainu culture complex" highlights the broadest regional unit traditionally identified through a common general linguistic thread, and at the same time preserves an ethnic subdivision between the Ainu and Emishi, since I consider the Emishi to be indigenous peoples who flourished before the emergence of the modern Ainu. The geographic boundary of this culture complex corresponds to that accepted by the Ainu Culture Research Centre at present. I respect the position of the Hokkaidô Ainu Association in their attempt to limit the traditional Hokkaidô Ainu territory to that presented in their map, and thus not expanding the use of the term Ainu to the traditional and contemporary inhabitants of areas beyond its limit, unless referring to Ainu people who moved to these other areas.

Thus when I use the term Ainu as an ethnic category, I refer strictly to those indigenous peoples in northern Japan whose "distinct" culture and language are said to have emerged after the mid-12th century.: this usage agrees with the current usage "Ainu" defined somewhat narrowly by the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô, and their legal position vis-a-vis the Japanese government. Other indigenous peoples may be referred to as simply indigenous peoples, or depending on the context, by whatever names they were called by the Japanese or by themselves. However, when I use Ainu as a linguistic category, for the sake of the discussion I treat it completely separately from its ethnic coun-

terpart. As a rule, I use the term Ainu (language) in accordance with the model provided by the Ainu Culture Research Centre. Thus, the latter has a much wider scope, in time and space, than the former; I believe this is justifiable considering the possibility that Ainu was a *lingua franca* among some populations, like English in India or Nigeria. I will return briefly to the issue of language and identity in the concluding section.

Why Tsugaru now?

Tsugaru is the problem child of a fated mismatch between the "Japanese" and the Ainu. The people of Tsugaru are least likely to be recognized as still Ainu by outsiders; they are situated at the furthest periphery of the present Ainu territories. The same holds true for their "Japaneseness," since the majority of "Japanese" do not understand the authentic Tsugaru vernacular, and perceive Tsugaru to be at the very edge of their civilization. Even though Ainu people still live in Tsugaru and its adjacent areas, and keep in contact with the Ainu in Hokkaidô, their public visibility is close to zero except for the occasional activities of a few public figures.[11] The same holds true for the Ainu in southern Hokkaidô, who are wrongly depicted by some to have completely disappeared in the sixteenth century after the conclusion of the first Japanese-Ainu war (Howell 1994). On the contrary, open ethnic conflict continued in Tsugaru until the end of the sixteenth century.

The recent Ainu past of Tsugaru is neither an invention nor an illusion, whether or not post-modernists wish to accept it. As the textual historian Hasegawa points out, the Tsugaru clan's extension of trade access and subsequent control over the entire jurisdic-

tion of Tsugaru (western Aomori today) could not have been possible without the pacification of the Ainu who held power in the central part of the Tsugaru peninsula (Hasegawa 1993: 154-156). The Ainu in Tsugaru, as we will see in the next chapter, continued to be documented in official records until the early nineteenth century — until all the residents of Tsugaru finally became "Japanese" under the family registration system.

Tamai thus rightly points out the need for further study of the historical background of the ethnic conflict at the end of the sixteenth century, since it will shed light on the most important issue concerning the distinct cultural and historical circumstances which shaped Tsugaru (Tamai 1993: 185-190) — the influence of Ainu and other indigenous civilizations on contemporary Tsugaru people at large, and the nature of the indigenous societies which existed before the Edo period. For example, the Ainu *atsushi* was commonly produced and worn by the Ainu population in northern Tsugaru in the late eighteenth century, as seen in sketchs made at that time (one reproduced on the next page); or the salmon-skin boots shown to the left, which were in common use in Aomori prefecture until the turn of the twentieth century. (They are called *keri*, an Ainu word.) These traditions, and many others, are not completely a part of the past even today.

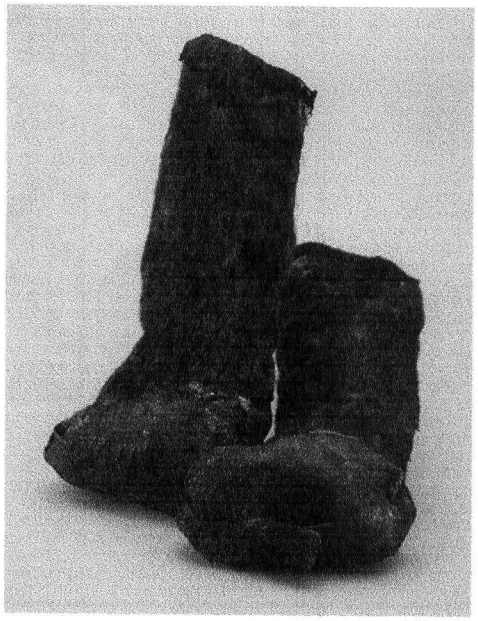


Figure 1.4: Traditional salmon-skin boots, Aomori

To this day, there are a small number of people in Tsugaru who can trace their roots to their Ainu ancestors. But Ainu Tsugaru, or more precisely, indigenous Tsugaru is not

limited to those few. Tsugaru as a region is a relatively recently conquered land, and its image as "Japan's Dogpatch" is the by-product of its assimilation and annexation into mainstream society, or to be blunter, the powerful "other." In the context of imposed Japanese homogeneity, the residents of Tsugaru have suffered an identity dilemma and have been reduced to a forgotten, partial people, neither fully "Japanese" nor fully Ainu. But on the other hand, these forgotten people were perhaps able to profit to a certain extent from their very obscurity, and preserve their indigenous values and customs better than the Hokkaidô Ainu, who suffered truly ethnocidal pressures over the past century, and were pushed aside by a massive migration from outside. Indeed, Tsugaru is a distinct, living indigenous community to this day, with a remarkable range of particular and localized customs and beliefs attached to the land, some of which are clearly Ainu influenced, some of which seem more "Japanese," and still others which have acquired unique forms over the centuries.

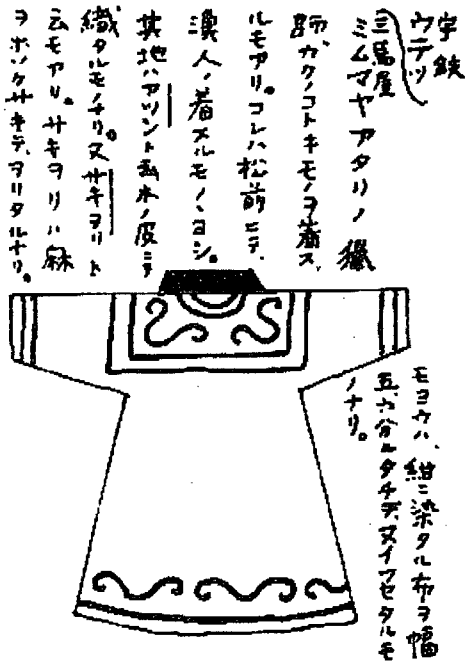


Figure 1.5: 18th-century sketch of Ainu *atsushi*, North Tsugaru

There is a growing consensus that the Tsugaru identity is founded on the assumption of mixed origins, from which the Ainu are not excluded, but instead form an important component. Tsugaru is essentially hybrid, and here even the dichotomy between

Japanese and Ainu, the perennial either-or distinction, often declines in relevance — no matter how difficult that is to comprehend for traditional Japanese culture.

Heritage and gender: cutting the roots

One key to whether the indigenous heritage is maintained or declines, regardless of the official classification of the persons involved, is family structure and gender relations. With cultural transmission in general — the shamanic heritage in particular — the prospects of survival decline in direct relation to the lowering of the status of women.

Women, as primary teachers of the young, are of course key to the perpetuation of any culture. Their position in northern Honshû became all the more critical, though, because of two more specific factors: the manner in which the north was conquered by the south, and the nature of the indigenous kinship system.

In the conquest of north by south, which will be detailed more fully in the following chapter, most of the conquerors who came from outside — that is, usually middle and upper ranking officers, since the troops were local conscripts — came without their women, at least in the early stages of the invasion. There seems to have been no massive population movements, no racial replacement, almost no immigration at all in some remote areas for many centuries. If the rulers and officials from the south stayed and married, the female part of their family often had to be recruited locally. This seems to have been the case, as evidenced by local oral history, some of which will be discussed in the next chapter; and with the women would have come at least some of the local heritage. In any case, southern migration into northern Honshû was much more gradual

compared to that into Hokkaidô after the mid-Edo period, where Ainu women became a treasured commodity and were subjected to gross mistreatment by Japanese settlers. The decline of female status among the Hokkaidô Ainu seems closely related to the pattern of contact with, and settlement by, the "Japanese" in their colonial advance.

The second factor, which tied in with and reinforced the first, was the Ainu descent system. Let us first review its nature as it has been studied among the Hokkaidô Ainu. It was in fact not one system, but two: a "juxtaposed descent system" composed of descent lines for both men and women, of equal importance, and equally crucial to maintain. In fact, it was very reminiscent of the dual descent system found throughout the Japanese archipelago before the enforcement of Confucianism in the Edo period (Umehara 1994).

Among the Hokkaidô Ainu, the male line of descent was from father to son, and was symbolized by the passing of a distinct ancestral emblem (*itokpa*) from one generation to the next; the female line, from mother to daughter, had as its symbol a secret "chastity belt," the *upsor* or *kut*. By the time this latter system was described by outside observers, it had already fallen into disuse, but it seems likely that the members of the maternal descent group had a distinct collective consciousness as *sine huci tktr* 'one old woman's blood-related joints' or *sine huci esap utar* 'relatives descended from one old woman'. The group assisted each other in childbirth and burial, and the latter function survives to some extent even today. It also defined permitted degrees of relationship for marriage: a man could not marry a woman who had the same type of *upsor* as his mother (Peng and Geiser 1977).

This type of system gave women a greater independence and value in both the sacred and mundane spheres. For example, it was as necessary to maintain the female

line as the male for the Ainu, since a woman who died without continuing her descent group would have no-one to perform services to her afterwards. In contrast to later Japanese peasant custom, which often abandoned girl children in hard times, the Ainu were notorious for readily adopting female children, both within their own groups and from outside. This custom can be found in Tsugaru as a relic of its indigenous heritage. My grandmother, for example, was adopted by her aunt who lived across the street, since that aunt wanted — in retrospect, we might say she *needed* — a daughter.

We can thus hypothesize that the survival of traditions in indigenous areas in northern Honshû, Tsugaru for instance, resulted in more emphasis on the woman-mediated, domestic, and pragmatic than did Hokkaidô: the Ainu language spoken at home, and a cultural essence usually devoid of showy ceremonies and outward display. Being rural and female, it often escaped the full attention of the state, though some of its more obvious manifestations were attacked. Shamanism through the female line was passed down from generation to generation, absorbing foreign influences but not losing its essence, penetrating the entire region, as part of the common livelihood of the people in the area. If all daughterless Ainu families in Tsugaru adopted daughters, and if the adopted daughters were treated as real, then theoretically many families in Tsugaru transmitted parts of the Ainu heritage, not through blood, but by means of their own cultural system. This implies that there may have been a massive preservation and diffusion of Ainu culture through the female line throughout the Tsugaru area, if, as seems likely, the Ainu were the largest indigenous population in the area at the time of conquest. Furthermore, because of the pragmatic and domestic nature of the female-mediated heritage, based on

needs rather than on loyalty or obligation, such a cultural system could and would continue even after its Ainu label was lost.

The indigenous variety of shamanism in Tsugaru became highly syncretic due to assimilation and contact with organized religions including Christianity and Buddhism, but its essential values and elements remained unchanged. The elements which proved hardest to kill in Tsugaru were essentially related to female-controlled activities or female-symbolic activities, such as the worship of fire. When a women married in Tsugaru society and moved out of her maternal house, it was called ***kamadowake***, literally "dividing the oven," dividing the fire. It is a women's duty to maintain the fire, a synonym for the family or household itself.

Now we approach a central puzzle. There are indications in classical Ainu literature that in earlier times women enjoyed a considerable degree of equality with men, trading on their own and even fighting in battle, with swords, carrying babies on their backs.[12] This status certainly does not clash with their role as culture transmitters, but how do we reconcile it with the male-centered Hokkaidô Ainu model of more recent times, best known from Nibutani, the people who told researchers that there had been no shamanesses in Nibutani (Sjöberg 1993: 80-81), that women were not allowed to go to the mountains, and that women could not pray to the gods? (Takakura 1960: 18) How do we explain the change from this earlier society to one where women could not even speak the names of their husbands, or converse with any male guest? (Takakura 1960: 18)[13]

This is a question that requires much more work, because it is important not only for the Ainu but also for other indigenous people, many of whom suffer from the same gender tensions. As a beginning, I would suggest that one major factor in reducing the

status of women has been Japanese immigration into Hokkaidô, beginning in the last half of the Edo period and swelling to a flood in early Meiji. In northern Honshû, on the other hand, the gradual process of colonization, and the relatively low number of Japanese men who came to settle and married locally, would not have been overwhelming within the overall indigenous context, and so the culture-bearing roles of their wives and other women would not have been greatly hindered. Moreover, as we will see, power-seeking males relied on maternal connections to authenticate indigenous rule. Although the migration from southern Japan to Tsugaru became more prominent in certain areas more suitable for agriculture and commercial trade, this did not appear to have devastating effects on indigenous culture, but rather to have enhanced it. On the other hand, once immigration to Hokkaidô reached the point that it was Ainu marrying into Japanese society, rather than the other way round, the patrilineal bias of the Japanese family system would have come to dominate. Moreover, if Ainu men married culturally Japanese women, the female cultural transmission would have been brought to an entire halt; and such marriages have been common in Hokkaidô.[14]

The combination of these two factors has worked to shape the modern construction of Ainu culture in Hokkaidô, the only "Ainu" culture most scholars ever acknowledge. Let us call this the "Nibutani" model after its most famous centre, whose spokesmen are for the most part blissfully ignorant of the leading role women once played in their society. Its disturbing phallocentricity can be considered a natural result of the damage to the female descent groups and the cultural descent line among women from intermarriage.

As ironic as it sounds, the net result of disregarding the preservation of the female line has been to emasculate official Ainu culture. The "Nibutani" model approved by the

outside world is not canonical. Rather, it is a pallid reflection of the original. Its spirituality is centered on the revival of public rituals, neglecting the everyday cultural practice without which such rituals can never be a natural part of life. In this sense, the "Nibutani" Ainu, victim of his history, is half or less of what he could and should be. He will never thrive unless he can be reunited with what he has set aside in his frantic search for respectability: not only the cultural role of women and the shamanic inheritance, the restoration of which is the chief object of my study here, but also the sea-trading merchant past of the Ainu, shared by both men and women, and their common warrior heritage.[15]

So who are the Ainu?

Who properly shares in the Ainu heritage? To whom is this culture, language, literature, and spirituality, to be restored? These are questions which need to be answered in order to determine the rights of the individuals who may reclaim their heritage, as well as to establish the ground for indigenous content in public education, a responsibility still unacknowledged by the Japanese government. I propose three possible grounds for a claim of "Ainu" ancestry, all defensible in one way or another, but some casting their net much wider than others.

The first of these grounds is to be descended from an Ainu person whose name was marked as *kyûdojin* (former indigenous person) in his or her family registration in Hokkaidô in the early Meiji period. This is the chief criteria used by the Hokkaidô Ainu Association, the largest Ainu organization, for determining eligibility for its membership. The

spouse of such a person is also considered Ainu by this organization, as well as a child officially adopted by an Ainu person.[16]

The second category is less clear-cut than the first, but also involves easily discernible characteristics. Persons of Ainu ancestry often recognize themselves as such through details of their family history, such as a family member who speaks the Ainu language and/or practices Ainu customs at home, or by the transmission, orally or in writing, of a family history with links to the Ainu.

Excluding the members of this second group from the Ainu, as has been done in the past, is indefensible on several grounds. First, many Ainu chose not to register themselves as ***kyûdojtn*** if there was any way they could avoid it at the time the family registration system was imposed on them in Hokkaidô. There are cases, for example, where Ainu registered themselves as ***kattaku-imin***, "pioneer" settlers from southern Japan, to escape discrimination and social inequality.[17] Also in this category are persons whose Ainu ancestors outside Hokkaidô were forcibly registered as "Japanese," since the ***kyûdojtn*** category was limited to Hokkaidô. This was the case with my family. It also appears that some Ainu migrated to southern Honshû to live among the ***matagi*** people, again to escape discrimination.[18]

The third category, the least obvious but potentially greatest in numbers, is where an entire region or community developed a distinct hybrid culture and identity as a result of a historical process of assimilation. In the last analysis, traditional Ainu culture did not depend on blood transmission at all, since adopted children were recognized as equal to those who were born a part of the group.[19]

The Tôhoku identity (northern Honshû), presently undergoing a revival, is founded on the recognition of the region's indigenous autonomy prior to its invasion by the central government. This puts them somewhat at odds with the Ainu in Hokkaidô, in whose eyes they appear to be indirect rulers and direct invaders. With the shortage of scholarly work on the local indigenous heritage and its possible links with the Ainu, and the lack of a national model for a "mixed-blood" group, both Tôhoku study and the revival of the Tôhoku indigenous heritage have been considerably delayed. It is only in recent years that a native standpoint has come to be expressed. Indeed, with the development of regional history and the recognition of cultural differences, more than one native standpoint has appeared: not only that of Tôhoku but that of the Mutsu nation (Aomori) as well.

Tsugaru, as I will argue in this dissertation, is a representative case of the third category defined above. Tsugaru represents an indigenous culture, which pertains to the Ainu, and whose transmission has rested partly on blood, and partly on adoption. But in the last analysis, blood never mattered because the very idea of adopting children requires a belief that nurture is superior to nature. The Ainu traditionally made conscious decisions to ensure the transmission of their culture rather than depending on fate: as far as the traditional Ainu were concerned, "race" was consciously constructed through culture, not the other way around. My understanding here directly challenges those, Ainu or non-Ainu, who reject the idea of racial mixing, and encourage the Ainu to marry only Ainu in order to preserve their racial purity — amazingly, this kind of sentiment is frequently expressed by Ainu "purists" and Ainu "sympathizers." These statements only prove their misunderstanding of traditional Ainu culture, an error which may be the

result of the presentation of Ainu adoption customs as no more than a response to Japanese settlers' inability to raise their own children during the early years of colonization in Hokkaidô.

Towards the light: from my story to our stories

Throughout my early education in Japanese public schools, until my high school graduation, I never learned anything about indigenous peoples in Japan, neither Okinawan nor Ainu, nor of the existence of an independent northern nation centered on Tsugaru. To this day, it is often taboo to talk of Hitakami and Hi-no-moto as real nations, rather than mythological ones, despite the extensive documentation of their existence in both written documents and oral history. Regardless of this public silence, official Japanese history has never been convincing enough to convert me. History can often be found written in the faces of living people, even when they have been deprived of words to give it verbal or textual expression.

For my part, the most powerful evidence of the coherence of the indigenous history of northern Japan is the feeling of attachment many people have to their land and their ancestors, a feeling often expressed in terms of "Ainu blood" still running thick in them, and their strong desire to see the restoration of a connected history beginning from the earliest days of human settlement in the north. When I spent a few days in Aomori in 1996, I met one lady who was a successful business person, a native of Aomori, who was not slow to criticize outside academicians and bureaucrats who have been hesitant to

affirm the indigenous Ainu heritage in Aomori, "Oh, who cares what they say! I am from Aomori and I am saying I have Ainu ancestry! Cut my arm, take my blood, and be quiet!"

To an western student with no connection to Ainu communities, my discussion so far and the story which will unfold may be a total surprise, since the Ainu are still depicted in mainstream Japanese studies and the media as a declining race to be spoken of in the past tense. This is a particular danger for foreign scholars, who may with the best will in the world attempt to respect what they see as the Japanese scholarly consensus and the accomplishments of Japanese scholarship, without realizing that these scholars may be just as much outsiders to Japanese indigenous issues as any American or European is — and much less sensitive to the limitations of their position.

Of the thousands of pieces of literature published on the Ainu or Emishi, very few have been written by the Ainu themselves, and for most of the rest, the Ainu were never consulted. But there is nothing unusual about my story, except that I have a chance to tell it. My journey through the darkness to the light is by no means a unique experience, but rather a very small reflection of what the Ainu in general have been going through in recent years. It is only the tip of an iceberg. If one wishes to see the hidden nine-tenths that remains, it will be necessary to go beyond the accepted "scholarly consensus," a consensus which has often gone hand in hand with colonialism, a reality to this day for the Ainu and many other people in the north. Just like a shaman, who is initiated by opening to totally different realities, outsiders attempting to understand "others" must learn to see reality from their perspective.

In the light of the Ainu culture complex, the Ainu homeland, Ainumoshir (the quiet land of humans), becomes a much bigger place, connected by many oceans. National

and regional boundaries imposed by nation-states on the region, which have created artificial divisions and the image of unrelated peoples, are essentially foreign to the indigenous peoples of northern Japan, including those who came to be known as the Ainu of today. But restoring the Ainu's proper place and dignity does not necessarily require a rewriting of the history of Japan, as many might think; it is rather, a chapter to be added to it. When Isis finally faced Seth, who had dismembered her husband Osiris, she pardoned him and set him free. There is no room for revenge in this quest, only for truth.

This dissertation is thus a study of the diversity and interconnectedness of the indigenous cultures of northern Japan, and the shamanism which runs through them like the warp of a fabric. It will compare and contrast two long-standing shamanism traditions in northern Japan: Ainu shamanism in Hokkaidô and Sakhalin, and shamanism in Tsugaru at the northern tip of Honshû island in the prefecture of Aomori. Both shamanic traditions encompass cosmological, medical, and ecological knowledge systems indigenous to their localities, though the Hokkaidô Ainu tradition exists within a larger, ethnically different population, while Tsugaru shamanism is supported by its participants across the region and their communities as a whole. Both traditions have been preserved primarily by female shamans, but while Hokkaidô Ainu shamans are few in numbers, those in Tsugaru can be counted in the hundreds and they show no signs of diminishing. As a matter of fact, Tsugaru is notorious as the mecca for traditional shamanism in Japan, and the word incantatory, ***jujutsusei*** 呪術性 , is often used to sum up Tsugaru culture.

The chapters to follow are devoted to examining four areas within this general theme. Chapter Two, "Tsugaru: the forgotten history of the First Nations of Northern Japan," will provide a brief account of indigenous history in northern Japan and the role

of Tsugaru. Here I examine such issues as the confiscation of land and resources in northern Honshû and Tsugaru by the Japanese state; the maternal continuities strategically promoted by male rulers; the persistence of Ainu place names in northern Honshû, Tsugaru in particular; the dual identity, and thus the "metis" dilemma, of powerful indigenous elites who came to be the indirect rulers of the north as extensions of the centralized Japanese state; and the differences in public policies towards the indigenous population during the Edo period between Hokkaidô and Tsugaru.

Chapter Three, "Ainu shamanism and its cosmological foundations," will try to reconstruct traditional Ainu shamanism and related spiritual practices and beliefs, centered around Hokkaidô and the place of women in the tradition. As part of this, I will provide an account of the late shamaness Aiko Aoki from Nibutani. The discussion will touch on the contemporary Hokkaidô Ainu dilemma, how to cope with shamanism and shamans in the effort to restore their culture and ethnic pride. I will also examine the possible influence of state policy during Edo on shamanistic belief and practice in Hokkaidô.

The Hokkaidô situation will be compared to the past and present of indigenous shamanism and other spiritual beliefs and practices in public sites in Tsugaru in Chapter Four, "Hell's Heaven: Shamanism, the Tsugaru school." My discussion here will also touch on how present day shamanism and activities pertaining to shamanism integrate oral history concerning the origins of the culture, the conquest, and the events which followed. I will highlight the significant influence of Ainu culture in Tsugaru, but at the same time, discuss foreign elements, "Japanese" and others, to argue for the resultant formation of the distinct Tsugaru shamanism which lies at the heart of Tsugaru culture today.

Figure 1.6:
My grandmother and I, c. 1965.
More than thirty years later, my father told me that she spoke Ainu.

In the course of my doctoral dissertation, my path led me to places far more distant than I ever imagined I would reach when I began my journey. My role in putting together this dissertation is, after all, shamanic, at least in the sense that storytelling is a shamanic act. It is to restore voices to those who have been silenced, living and dead, but who remain in the hope of a justice yet unfound.

Endnotes

1 The term "Japanese" designates those inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago who consider themselves to possess a non-Ainu identity (except, of course, for Korean, Chinese, and other self-conscious minority groups as well as indigenous peoples such as Okinawans and Amami Islanders, among others). I am not in a position to assume that such inhabitants share a homogenous and unified culture, even now, let alone in the past. Included in the category "Japanese" are an unknown but certainly substantial number of indigenous populations whose identities and cultures have been suppressed by the Japanese state.

2 Dr. Sasaki and his colleagues have been officially collaborating with the Chinese government for several years now in their research on *qi* (*kí*) and the Chinese conception of energy with the Chinese Life Sciences Institute.

3 The time period in question (*kinsei* 近世) stretches from 1600 - 1868, or perhaps 1853.

4 "*Nihonshoki* (*The Chronicles of Japan*) tells us that in the year 658, during the era of Emperor Saimei, an imperial agent by the name of Abe no Hirafu, leading 180 armed ships, attempted to pacify the Emishi, and finally held a large feast with the Emishi of Watari-shima 渡島 at Arima beach [exact location unclear; possibly in Tsugaru]. Although we do not know whether this Watari-shima is today's Hokkaidô, or whether this "Emishi" meant the Ainu, it is accepted that these Emishi

included Ainu people, and thus that this is the first record of the Ainu in Japanese sources" (Hokkaidô government 1995: 3).

5 See the counterargument presented in the discussion of the prototypical "Ainu" skulls found in Hachinohe city in Aomori prefecture, in Fujimoto 1964: 140.

6 See the discussion of Ainu oral traditions collected in Tsugaru and Shimokita, and the need for Ainu study in Aomori prefecture in Tachibana 1983.

7 Slawik is a former professor at the University of Vienna, an authority on Japanese historical linguistics. His background is in the study of place-names in Central Europe, and he considers the study of place-names in Japan well worth scholarly attention. He also notes, and regrets, the relative lack of such study in China and Korea (Slawik et al., 1994: 196).

8 In Japan to this day, there is no indigenous education for and about the Ainu in public schools, including in those in Hokkaidô. The Japanese government has yet to pay any serious attention to the need for Ainu language education. Japan probably counts as one of the least sympathetic of all modern nations towards its own indigenous groups.

9 The following statement by Iwano Hômei made in 1909 is a typical educated Japanese view on the Ainu in Hokkaidô then:

> (The Ainu) are an inferior race fated to disappear sooner or later. What good does it do to educate them? Even if there are a few men and

> women who grow up, it is not appreciated if they marry Japanese and produce mixed blood offspring. In my view, the Ainu only need minimum protection to keep them in servitude for life. (Kaizawa 1993b: 69).

10 Many academic institutions and museums in Japan still manifest discriminatory attitudes towards the Ainu. One of my colleagues in Japan told me that the National History Museum (***Kokuritsu rekishi minzoku hakubutsukan***) in Chiba prefecture does not exhibit its Ainu material, the reason given being that the Ainu have no part in Japanese history.

11 These few visible Aomori Ainu include Guantei Yûza, an actor, and Chisato Dubreuil, a curator of the Smithsonian's recent Ainu exhibition, "The spirit of a northern people."

12 The earliest collected of the Ainu oral epics in Phillipi 1979, written down by the English missionary John Batchelor some time in the 1880's, "The epic of Kotan Utunnai" (Phillipi 1979: 366-412), takes it for granted that women will fight by the side of men in battle: "I [the hero's elder sister] took you / from your mother's / back and / tied up tightly / my baby-carrying cords. / After that / I wielded my sword / all around / your mother..." (Phillipi 1979: 368-369). Again, the "Woman's Epic" refers to a woman fighting — and winning -— a sword battle, once more with a baby tied to her back (Phillipi 1979: 275), and the title character in "The Woman of Poi-Soya" fights, trades, and hunts in the mountains herself, though in this case her conduct is presented as highly irregular (Phillipi 1979: 300-365).

13 The prohibition on women speaking to or interacting with male guests or strangers is definitely not part of the older Hokkaidô Ainu tradition. When a landing party led by the Dutch explorer de Vries came upon some Ainu on July 4th, 1643, he used sign language to ask a group of four men and five women where they obtained the silver that they used for their ornaments: "An old woman among them seemed to understand my question immediately, and she expressed by the action of inserting her hand into the sand and digging in it. The she put some sand on her hand, making a sound like si! si!, and put it into a small pot which she then put onto a fire." (Leupe 1858, translated in Fukazawa 1998: 54). Obviously, this woman was not only willing to communicate with male strangers, she was also familiar with the techniques of smelting silver.

14 Peng, writing in 1977 from research done in the early seventies, stated that "Most younger Ainu much prefer to marry a *wajin* [Japanese], and many children of Ainu couples rebuke their parents for not having mixed in marriage. Attached to this strong conscious norm of intermarriage are very strong sentiments of self-hatred. One respondent claimed to hate pure Ainu and said she would prefer her children to marry a *wajin* rather than an Ainu even if the *wajin* were a criminal." (Peng and Geiser 1977: 150) However, Peng does not draw a clear enough distinction between marriage with a Japanese woman adopted into an Ainu family as a child, and marriage with a culturally Japanese woman. The former sort of marriage need not disturb the line of cultural transmission, since the female descent group can be continued just as well by adopted children as by blood relatives; the latter is a decisive break.

15 Some Ainu activists, suffering from a "politically correct" construction of what is "natural" to indigenous people, have been at pains to assert that the Ainu were always peaceful, innocent, and harmonious both in their dealings with nature and with other human beings: "...the Ainu Moshir differs from such states as Japan or the United States in that it does not make distinctions between people of different cultures.... We have never possessed nature nor have we turned it into 'our territory.' We have not established a system in which man controls man....." (Naohika Hashine, "A letter from Ainu to Native American Friends" [1976], cited Sjöberg 1993: 191) Compare this with the following passage from "Epic of Kotan Utunnai," which, it might be added, is describing the accomplishments of a *woman*: "Wherever she passed, / the corpses mowed down like grass / lay stretched out in the distance. / So many human corpses / were lying spread out / over the ground that / my legs / would get tangled up in them." (Phillipi 1982: 400-401)

Does this mean that the indigenous people of today's Japan should pick up their swords again and begin slashing about? By no means. But the energies that expressed themselves in war in the past can be turned to more appropriate ends. Pride in a warrior heritage can be a driving force for more peaceful action in the present, but to deny it, much less to attempt to erase it, is to live a lie.

16 The full definition of "Ainu" that the Hokkaidô Ainu Association provided to the Japanese government runs as follows:

> The Ainu people, whose bases of life have been Hokkaidô, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands for a long time, have coexisted with nature by

subsisting mainly by hunting, fishing, and gathering. The people have their own language, culture and customs, which have been handed down for generations. The Ainu people as a group can be defined by these historical facts.

(Identification of Ainu, extent, and so on)

They should be Ainu or members of Ainu families.

Concretely,

A.One who is of Ainu blood, recognizes himself to be Ainu, and declared oneself to be Ainu of one's own will.

B.One who insists that he can be identified through confirmation of his or her relations.

C. One who newly joins the Ainu people through marriage or adoption.

D.The degree of blood relations shall be irrelevant.

E.It is not necessary to limit the identification to the entire people.

(Ainu Association of Hokkaidô 1992: 105)

17 Personal conversation with Otani, 1998 October.

18 Personal conversation with Katayama, 1998 October.

19 Another major group which deserves attention in relation to all of the above categories is the urban Ainu, the Ainu who moved to large cities such as Tokyo and Osaka to escape discrimination. It is said there are at present over ten thousand Ainu living in the Tokyo area alone, close to half the membership of the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô. Their children are growing up accustomed to a metropolitan life style, often with little or no connection to their heritage communities in northern Japan. The urban Ainu identity is unique among the Ainu in having a pluralistic heritage, unlike traditions based on specific regions, and for this reason the urban Ainu community is more open to new ideas and tolerant of difference. Thus, the urban Ainu and their distinct hybrid culture should by no means be considered a degenerate subvariety, but should be respected and given full recognition in their own right.

CHAPTER TWO

TSUGARU

THE FORGOTTON HISTORY OF THE FIRST NATIONS OF NORTHERN JAPAN

> Then, chilly white Lake Tosa spread out before my eyes. The lake is noble but ephemeral, like the water filling a shallow pearl shell. Not even a single wave; no boat floating on it. All is still, and yet so big. It is a deserted pool of loneliness, as if neither floating clouds nor flying birds can cast their shadows on the surface of the water.
>
> *Tsugaru* (Dazai Osamu, 1946)

From time immemorial, Tsugaru 津軽 has been a magnet for wrecked ships, flotsam, and refugees from all directions.[1] A peninsula in the prefecture of Aomori, at the north-western tip of Honshu, Tsugaru borders on Hokkaidô to its north. To the west it is bounded by the Japan, or the China, or the East Sea; to the northeast, it opens up into the Pacific Ocean through the Tsugaru Strait, beyond the Shimokita

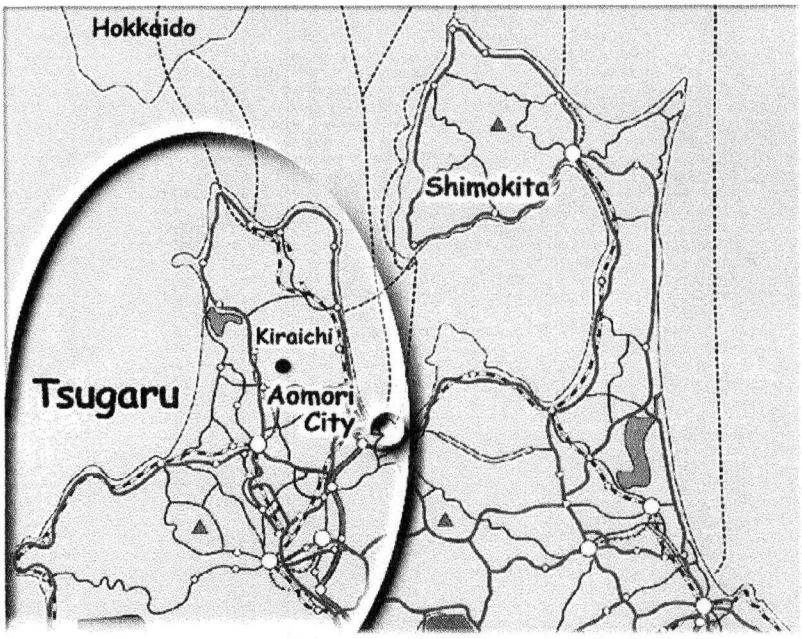


Figure 2.1: Northern Honshû and Tsugaru

peninsula. South, it stretches down to Mount Iwaki,[2] a sacred mountain locally known as Oiwaki-sama, or Tsugaru Fuji (the Fuji of Tsugaru), and the Shirakami Mountains, a world heritage site, one of the last wilderness reserves in Japan. Among its earliest settlers were speakers of an Ainu language:[3] the name "Tsugaru" may derive from the Ainu word *tukari*, "seal,"[4] a distant memory of a hunt and hunters gone now for many centuries. Another and probably better etymology relies on a local tradition that "Tsugaru" was originally the Ainu *chupka-un-kur*, the "People at the base of the sun," or "Easterners."[5] Indeed, the word used to be transliterated into Chinese characters as 東日流 , "East-sun-flow," and to this day, east remains the most important sacred direction for the Ainu.

According to local oral tradition, the people of Tsugaru are the descendants of Asobe and Tsuboke. Some of these traditions were written down during the Edo period by local families, and these "unofficial" documents are to this day much disputed.[6] However, Shibata (1995) argues that the word "Asobe" is a mispronunciation of the Ainu *Ape* 'fire',[7] and "Tsuboke" is originally *chupka*, 'the sun." The first ancestors of the present-day Ainu people, northern Asiatics, migrated to the Tsugaru area across the land bridge during the Ice Age about twenty thousand years ago. They worshipped fire, without which they could not survive. Then came Tsuboke, the *chupka*, the worshippers of the sun, from the south. The legend of the latter migration is in harmony with the present hypothesis of Jômon sea movement, which began approximately twelve thousand years ago and reached its peak about seven thousand years ago.

Driving through Tsugaru today, one still finds scene after scene largely unchanged from the time of Dazai, a gifted but eccentric novelist native to the region: rustic quiet and untouched vistas prevail. Its hidden streams, wild forests, jagged mountains, and

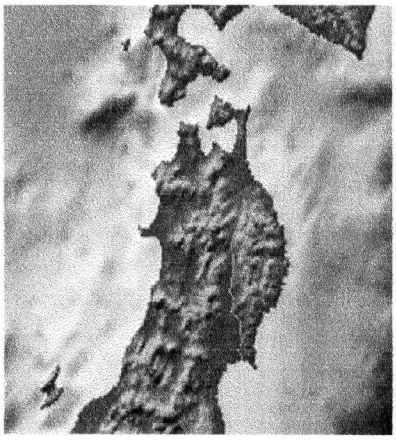


Figure 2.2: Topography of northern Honshû

sheer cliffs have proven highly resistant to modern industrial development. The small size and sporadic distribution of most communities, many still devoted to traditional fishing and agriculture, reflect its advanced state of depopulation. Tosa, for example, a community on Lake Tosa that shares its name, has been tagged a "silent" or "ghost" village (cf. Osabe 1975: 14). Since public transportation is not necessarily convenient, even when it is available, travelling in Tsugaru can be a challenge unless one has a car and a good knowledge of the local geography and climate. This is especially true during the winter because of the frequent blizzards and heavy accumulations of snow. The contemporary marginality of the area is well expressed in Dazai's description of Tappi, the northernmost village of Tsugaru: "This is the ***ultima Thule*** of Honshu. No road beyond this village. Everything tumbles off into the sea" (Dazai 1962: 73).

Dazai's description set the seal on the exoticism of the region. His words have become a canon for writers of travel books, and his judgment is never challenged: a region rustic to the extent it seems almost devoid of civilization. Yet Tsugaru is by no means isolated: Tappi is only twenty kilometers from Shirakami Cliff in Hokkaidô, and on a clear day you can see to southern Hokkaidô on the other side of the Tsugaru Strait, known locally as the ***shoppai kawa*** (salty river), an indigenous water route connecting the two shores. More recently, Tsugaru has acquired an up to date link with Hokkaidô via the Seikan tunnel, construction of which has provided the primary source of wage labor over the last few decades for a number of local communities. Such connections, as we

will see, were vital to the strength of Tsugaru's indigenous communities in the past, as they worked together to participate in a flourishing trade-based economy.[8]

All the same, the idea of Tsugaru as *ultima Thule* has been favored for millennia by the Japanese to the south. For them it *was* the end of the world: the civilized world by southern definition.

Tsugaru was the last Ezo, or indigenous peoples', stronghold in Honshu, where they maintained open military resistance for at least a thousand years, until the end of the 16th century, at which time the feudal military government finally succeeded in "pacifying" them. Even after that, Tsugaru remained tolerant of both the presence of Ainu people and the persistence of the Ainu heritage, including the Ainu language. From the indigenous standpoint, Tsugaru was a focal center within a larger network, one that extended beyond the national borders devised and defined by the Japanese in the south. This forgotten nation,[9] the last political community of indigenous people in Honshu, is the homeland of my ancestors.

This chapter examines the importance of Tsugaru in the indigenous history of northern Japan and the history of the Ainu people, within the framework of the Ainu culture complex as defined in Chapter One. I will discuss and describe the north-south political tension which lay at the root of much ancient ethnic conflict in northern Japan; a number of different perspectives on the origin of the "Japanese"; the flourishing of the neolithic Jômon culture in the north; the extension of southern imperialism to the north and the conquest of the Emishi, the indigenous population of northern Honshû; the last powerful aboriginal clan, the Andô, in Tsugaru and their "metis"[10] dilemma, and their reliance on women to transmit their indigenous identity; and the final phase of the history

of the autonomous Ainu in northern Honshû, in Tsugaru, with the increasing separation of the indigenous communities on either side of the Tsugaru Strait.

North and south

As every speaker of Japanese knows, the Japanese name for Japan, Nippon 日本, consists of two characters, 日 "hi" (sun) and 本 "moto" (base), a meaning which is clearly depicted in the design of the national flag. This often functions as a powerfully evocative imperialist symbol, dear to this day to the hearts of the lunatic fringe of the right wing. And here lies a monumental irony: the word Nippon — the Sunrise Country — can be traced back to one of the indigenous polities of Japan, subjugated by a competitor which appropriated not only the territory but the name. One of the two officially produced Chinese records of that time, the *New History of the Tang Dynasty* 新唐書, records the story given below, which is all the more interesting coming from a Chinese source — that is, from a relatively disinterested, if not exactly impartial, observer:

> In the year 670, an embassy came to the court [from Japan] to offer congratulations upon the conquest of Koguryô. About this time, the Japanese who had studied Chinese came to dislike the name Wa[11] and changed it to Nippon. According to the words of the [Japanese] envoy himself, that name was chosen because the country was so close to where the sun rises. Some say, [on the other hand], that Japan was a small country which had been subjugated by the Wa, and that the latter took over its name. As this envoy was not truthful, doubt still remains.[12]

Clearly, the Chinese historian was suspicious that the Japanese court had borrowed their new appellation from someone else, since he said first that the envoy claimed the name as the court's own choice, and then that he was a liar and the question was open.

Whether honestly crafted or dishonestly appropriated, this is the first appearance of the name "Nippon" in the Chinese histories. Other studies confirm that it was indeed in the latter part of the seventh century that the official national name Nippon/Nihon 日本 was chosen.[13] This is the same time that the canonical "historical" literature such as the *Nihonshoki* and the *Kojiki* appear, justifying Emperor Jinmu's conquest of the East.

Japanese historical sources record the existence of an indigenous people or region known by the southern state as "Hinomoto."[14] *Suwa daimyôjin e-kotoba* 諏訪大名神絵詞 , for instance, written in the 14th century, reports that there were three major groups in northern Japan: the Karako 唐子 , the Hi-no-moto, and the Watari-tô 渡り党.[15] I have included here one sketch of the cultural divisions in northern Honshu and Hokkaido, that by Shichinomiya (1989: 44; redrawn at the left). While it may not be accurate in every detail, it is correct in presenting northern Honshu and southern Hokkaido as a single cultural area, a concept that I will be returning to in the discussion below. The Watarito Ainu, for instance, were those Ainu who crossed the Tsugaru Strait frequently, said to be culturally and linguistically closer to the "Japanese" to the

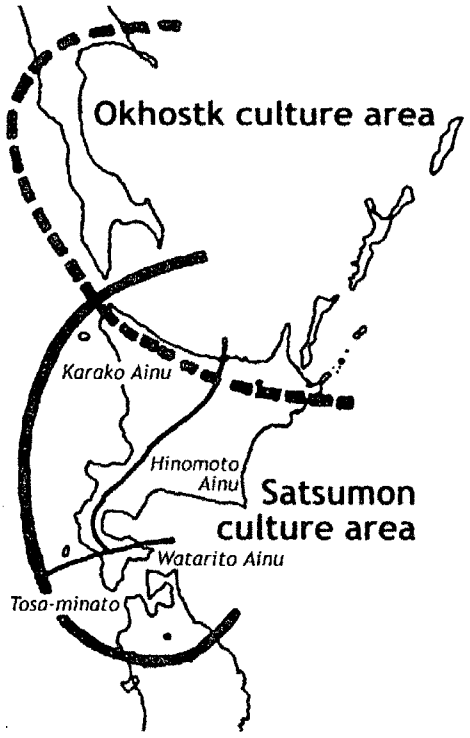


Figure 2.3: Cultures of northern Japan according to Shichinomiya

south, constituting a distinct sub-group of the Ainu. They were thus the first group to become "invisible" once the central state extended its authority.

If it is indeed the case that the northern part of the Japanese archipelago once contained a loose federation and possibly a multi-ethnic society in competition with another "Japan" to the south, then we cannot ignore the northern perspective simply because the south was eventually victorious. We can begin to reconstruct this perspective by reexamining the origins of the "Japanese" and the emergence of the First Nations of the Japanese archipelago. We will then move on to discuss how this northern system was eroded by southern aggression, a process represented in orthodox histories as the conquest of barbarism by "civilization."

The origins of the "Japanese"

Archeological evidence indicates that the first human settlers in the Japanese archipelago may have migrated there as early as 180,000 years ago. The migration continued throughout the stone age, via a southern oceanic and a northern continental route (Hanihara 1984, Ota 1981: 119-120). Approximately 12,000 years ago, the aboriginal population acquired neolithic technology, producing pottery with distinct, elaborate rope-patterns — Jômon 縄文 pottery, the oldest known in the world (Ota 1981:162). Hence this ancient neolithic period has come to be called the Jômon age.

The most popular theories on the origins of the Japanese state and people are presented in Ota (1981: 13-14). Although none of these viewpoints takes adequate notice of

our northern perspective, they still constitute a useful framework for examining the spectrum of opinion concerning the earliest histories of the peoples of Japan.

The orthodox construction of early Japanese development is found in the Imperial History, ***Kôkoku shikan*** 皇国史観 , the sole and sufficient myth of Japan that was officially propagated to its peoples until after the end of World War II.[16] According to this view, the "true" history of the "Japanese people" begins with the establishment of the Imperial Family under its first emperor, Jinmu 神武 , in 660 BCE. It thus regards the two oldest written historical records which detail the mythological origins of the Imperial Family, the ***Kojiki*** 古事記 (compiled BCE 713) and the ***Nihon shoki*** 日本書紀 (BCE 720), as unchallengable canons for the determination of the facts of Japanese history. Implicit here is an unquestionable faith in the divine civilizing mission of the Yayoi people, a "Manifest Destiny," despite the systematic attempts by the Yayoi state to conquer and assimilate indigenous "barbarians" such as the Ezo to the north, and the Hayato 隼人 and Kumaso 熊襲 to the south.[17]

Although the use of these works as textbooks in public education was officially terminated in 1945, a powerful underlying belief in the Imperial History as the "real" account may still lurk in the dark corners of the historical perspective of a majority of the people in Japan. For them, the concept Yamato 大和 (as in ***Yamato damashî*** = "Yamato spirit," ***Yamato nadeshiko*** = "true gentlewoman of Yamato," ***Yamato minzoku*** = "Yamato / Japanese people") enhances pride in, and excites nostalgia for, a common, ancient, and sacred past.

The next, a more innovative approach, considers the establishment of the Imperial Household to have been a military achievement by aggressive intruders who arrived via

the Korean peninsula, and destroyed the already existing egalitarian society of the Yayoi people. This view is best represented by Egami's "Horsemen Empire" theory, Kibamin-zoku seifuku ôcho setsu (Egami 1986).[18] According to this view, the distinct ethno-cultural foundation of the Japanese (sedentary, egalitarian, theocratic) was already established during the Yayoi period.[19] The Yayoi began about the third century BCE with a massive importation of manpower and technology from the mainland of Asia, which was at that time in the process of being unified under the Han Dynasty. The exception to this unification was the Korean peninsula, which was where most of the Yayoi people came from.[20]

Some, such as Kikuchi Sansai, argue instead for an early pre-Yamato theocratic state which Kikuchi calls the *Ten no chô* ("Sky State"; Kikuchi Sanya 1966). Kikuchi considers the *Ten no chô* to be the indigenous state which was attacked by the Yamato court and destroyed by around 250 CE. According to him, the "Wa country" of the early Chinese chronicles, ruled by Himiko, was nothing more nor less than the "Sky State," agricultural and theocratic. However, it is not clear where this *Ten no chô* is to be placed, or who exactly is supposed to have lived under it. Yagiri, for example, obscures the whole issue by considering them to be Jômon people who also included migrants from Southeast Asia (Yagiri 1975).

Common to all three of these theories is the assumption that the people who came before, the Neolithic or pre-Yamato peoples, counted for little or nothing later. They are assumed to have been overwhelmed, swiftly submerged or even extinguished in the unchallenged superiority of their successors.[21]

Sannai Maruyama and an ancient civilization of the north

Both of the views sketched above share the assumption that the Jômon period was a historical dark age and that the Jômon populations were simple, primitive, and barbaric, lacking elaborate political arrangements comparable to the Yayoi state or the Yamato Court. In reaction to this, yet another view has arisen: that the Jômon populations already shared a distinct culture and technology in the context of a complex socio-political relationship, managing territorial and economic matters without relying on a centralized political structure. This view, which in the hands of some proponents still retains nationalistic overtones, maintains that the Ainu and the Ryûkyû islanders, who are positioned on the geographic margins of present day Japan, remain closest to the Jômon populations, genetically, physiologically, culturally, and probably linguistically, while the rest of the inhabitants have been more drastically influenced (though not utterly overwhelmed) by foreign influences.[22]

One problem with this view is that it tends to assume an interrelated cultural network during the Jômon period anachronistically confined and defined by present-day national boundaries.[23] A variety of locally occurring items of evidence, including some found in Hokkaidô, suggest that certain characteristics of Jômon cultures extended beyond modern lines on the map (*Asahi gurafu* 1983:137, Yoshioka 1987:18-19).

A focus on the Jômon period can be very productive in reconstructing the dynamics of the prehistoric population in the Japanese archipelago from an indigenous perspective: in Hokkaidô and the northern tip of Honshû, the Jômon continued well into the eighth century, giving way to the transitional Satsumon period, traditionally held to be the chief foundation of the later Ainu culture beginning in the mid-twelfth century

(Miura 1995).[24] The only thing necessary is to avoid making the assumption that Jômon populations were racially homogenous or culturally uniform. It is far more realistic to operate under the working assumption that they were constantly negotiating ways to relate to different groups in different areas at different times, through more than one language, in the same way as any set of indigenous communities tied together by a stake in trade.[25]

On the other hand, to deny any aspect of dyachronic continuity or inter-cultural commonality is to assume the constant and total replacement of human populations, one after another, throughout the Jômon, which is completely unrealistic. It is possible, without going to the extreme of imagining a fixed uniformity over time and space, to recognize a number, perhaps a large number, of common features and patterns found in cultural developments during the Jômon period.

The famous Final Jômon period site at Kamegaoka, near Kizukuri, 40 kilometers west of Aomori City, which has been known for over three hundred years, has always been one of the showcases of "Jômon culture."[26] The artifacts from Kamegaoka, including some of the best early examples of the female figurines nicknamed "Jômon Venuses," indicate a prosperous settlement with a rich ritual and ceremonial structure and considerable societal distinction.[27] Kamegaoka type potteries are characterized by elaborate, asymmetrical shapes and designs which one visual artist, Okamoto Tarô, has called "beauty at its ultimate origin" (Okamoto 1969). The stone circles from about the same time at Manza and Nonakado near the town of Oya in northern Honshu similarly testify to a widespread and developed, but as yet poorly understood, cosmology. A number of similar sites in northern Honshu and Hokkaidô, and even mainland Northeast Asia, indi-

cate that "a cultural relationship of some sort existed" between these areas at that time (Aikens and Higuchi 1982: 175-79). Similarities in ritual objects used in shamanic performance, such as bent-nosed masks, also suggest a connection between the Jômon and ancient Siberia (Fukuda Tomoyuki 1998: 113-121).

In the city of Aomori alone, approximately two hundred Jômon sites have been confirmed, including several large stone circles, and many of these sites go back to the early Jômon (Sannai-Maruyama Jômon Era File 1998 no. 34: 5). Nevertheless, it was not until the excavation of the Sannai Maruyama site at the northern tip of Honshû over the last few years that the north came to see itself as being situated at one of the focal points of Jômon cultural development.

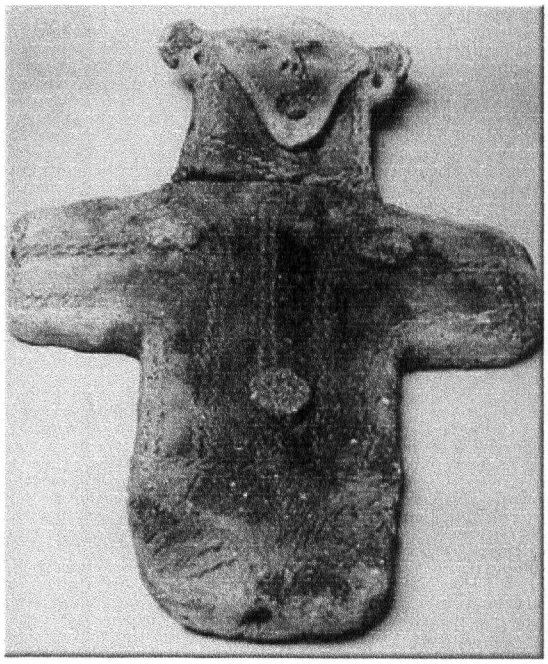


Figure 2.4:
"Jômon Venus" from Sannai

Sannai Maruyama has been known for centuries as a place rich in archeological relics. In 1799, Sugae no Masami wrote: "From this village's ancient ruin, people dig up broken pottery, rope-shaped or cloth-shaped *kawara*.[28] Some say that potters used to live here. Some of them are human-faced and mask-shaped" (Sugae no Masami. 1971-77a; cf. example at left). But up until 1994, when a massive excavation for the purpose of building a stadium revealed a large-scale Jômon settlement, neither Sannai nor Aomori had received much outside attention in mainstream media as places of major historical significance.

The excavation of Sannai Maruyama challenged the assumption that the Jômon populations were uncivilized and barbaric, living in simple and small-scale societies with scanty reserves and an unpredictable future due to their nomadic lifestyle. Sannai was a well-planned community, stable for 1200 years from about 3200 B.C. to 2000 B.C., with a minimum population at times exceeding 500.[29] The present state of knowledge of Jômon culture in northern Honshû, as suggested by the Sannai excavations, can be summarized as follows:

1) ***An advanced technological level.*** Sannai reveals the considerable technological achievements of the Jômon populations, evidenced in mass production (perhaps even surplus production) of pottery, lacquerware,[30] jewelry, and stoneware, as well as a high level of architectural and construction skill, including the use of large chestnut trees. Weaving and knitting characterize Sannai clothwork, as well as sewing and perhaps even stitching — countless needles made of animal bone have been found in Sannai.[31]

2) ***A foraging, farming, and sedentary life style.*** It is apparent that the Jômon inhabitants of Sannai were not simply a hunting and gathering people but were sedentary affluent forager-fisher-farmers with ample access to sea and land resources.[32] They foraged and farmed gourds, beans, burdock, perilla, flax, and millet. They even farmed forestry resources by artificially creating chestnut forests around the community.

3) ***"Urban" planning to sustain the population within the limits imposed by ecological balance.*** Some examples are the use of Jômon "feet," a measurement unit; the construction of "paved" roads with pits; and a well-planned waste disposal system (Okada 1996a: 18-19; 1996b: 32-33).

4) ***An extensive trade network.*** The Sannai site contains jade from the Niigata area, amber from around Iwate, asphalt from Akita, and obsidian stones from Hokkaidô, all brought in through water-based trade by boat. The exchange with outside traders was an essential aspect of social sustenance as well. In its eastern valley, Sannai has an arc-shaped main public road (420 meters long) which runs east-west, leading to and from the water. This road, sunken and leveled, leads between two rows of adult graves.

5) ***A complex social structure.*** Sannai tombs and large mounds are a highly organized part of community design and planning. This indicates the development of social stratification, and the possible emergence of slavery and/or outcast classes.

6) ***A developed cosmology.*** Complex ritual structures and belief systems interacted with their ecological situation and limitations, giving rise to the concept of death as rebirth. The numerous finds of elaborate ritual objects, particularly of large anhk-like clay female figurines[33] and the evidence of careful urban planning that appears to have been carried out under the influence of a developed cosmological scheme, is all but impossible to explain without assuming a highly developed ceremonial and religious life on the part of the people who lived there (cf. Okada 1996: 16-25, Tsuji 1996 : 28-9).

The importance of Sannai lies in the fact that it is not only a relatively early and previously undisturbed site, but that it contains numerous artifacts in extremely good condition, including house poles made of huge chestnut trees.

Sannai can shed new light on the Ainu as well. The name "san-nai" means "(go/send) down the water" in Ainu, and local people in Aomori recall that there was an Ainu village in the Sannai area up to the early Meiji (Yamada 1982a).[34]

One important question that Sannai poses for the Ainu concerns social structure and social stratification. Sannai is often compared to the Northwest Coast native peoples in Canada, who developed a highly stratified society including "slaves" and "nobles." The Ainu, on the other hand, are wont to be portrayed as an absolutely egalitarian people living in harmony with nature.[35] Even though they possessed hierarchical chiefdoms, where sometimes a chief might be followed by dozens of his men during his public appearances, any suggestion of a power hierarchy in traditional Ainu society has been carefully avoided by both the Ainu and Ainu experts. Nevertheless, to deny the existence of *any* hierarchy at all in a human society is a fallacy. There is a mass of counter-evidence available to even the most casual inquiry, such as Ainu folktales which assume senior chiefs possess the power of life and death over lesser mortals and even less powerful chiefs.[36]

Sannai has become a symbolic center for the revival of local identity in Aomori, with a reconstructed historical site and a museum facility, and its ambitious excavation project is to continue for many more years. Moreover, from the point of view of some Ainu and ordinary Tsugaru people, Sannai is a sacred site: it is an ancient burial ground, to be respected as such. While many local people hoped that Sannai would give birth to a coherent indigenous history inclusive of the Ainu, the restoration project has been shaped by the interest of funding agencies both local and federal, who are much less interested in the Ainu connection, or are simply ignorant of it. In the Sannai preservation project, we know of no official attempt to consult with the Ainu, and as Hudson correctly observes, the "site has tended to be hijacked for more nationalistic ends" (Hudson 1996).[37]

One of the puzzles of the Sannai site is a structure made with six large poles. Scholars debated the meaning of this structure and whether the number six had any significance; they projected their own fantastic ideas about what it could have been, ranging from a temple to a watchtower, ideas represented by different models which are part of the museum exhibition at Sannai today. No one managed to remember that six is a sacred and auspicious number for the Ainu. Artifacts from Sannai also contain well-preserved materials made of plant fibers and birch bark, made in ways which are similar to those used in Ainu costumes and baskets to this day (cf. the discussion of Jômon fibers in Okada et. al. 1996, Hokkaidô Ainu Culture Research Center 1997 no. 2).

In the traditional, linear schema of the advance of "civilization" in the Japanese islands, the Jômon period yields to the Yayoi and then to the Kofun (c. 300 - 700 CE), centered in the south and ancestral to the southern polities which later developed into the imperial Japanese state. Nevertheless, the spread of Yayoi was neither instant nor complete. As Aikens and Higuchi point out, Jômon lingered in the north, both as a major influence in central Honshû, and a predominant one in northern Honshû and Hokkaidô. Their map, reproduced on the following page, shows three broad zones of cultural influence, which as we will see are the often neglected context for the events of the following fifteen centuries.

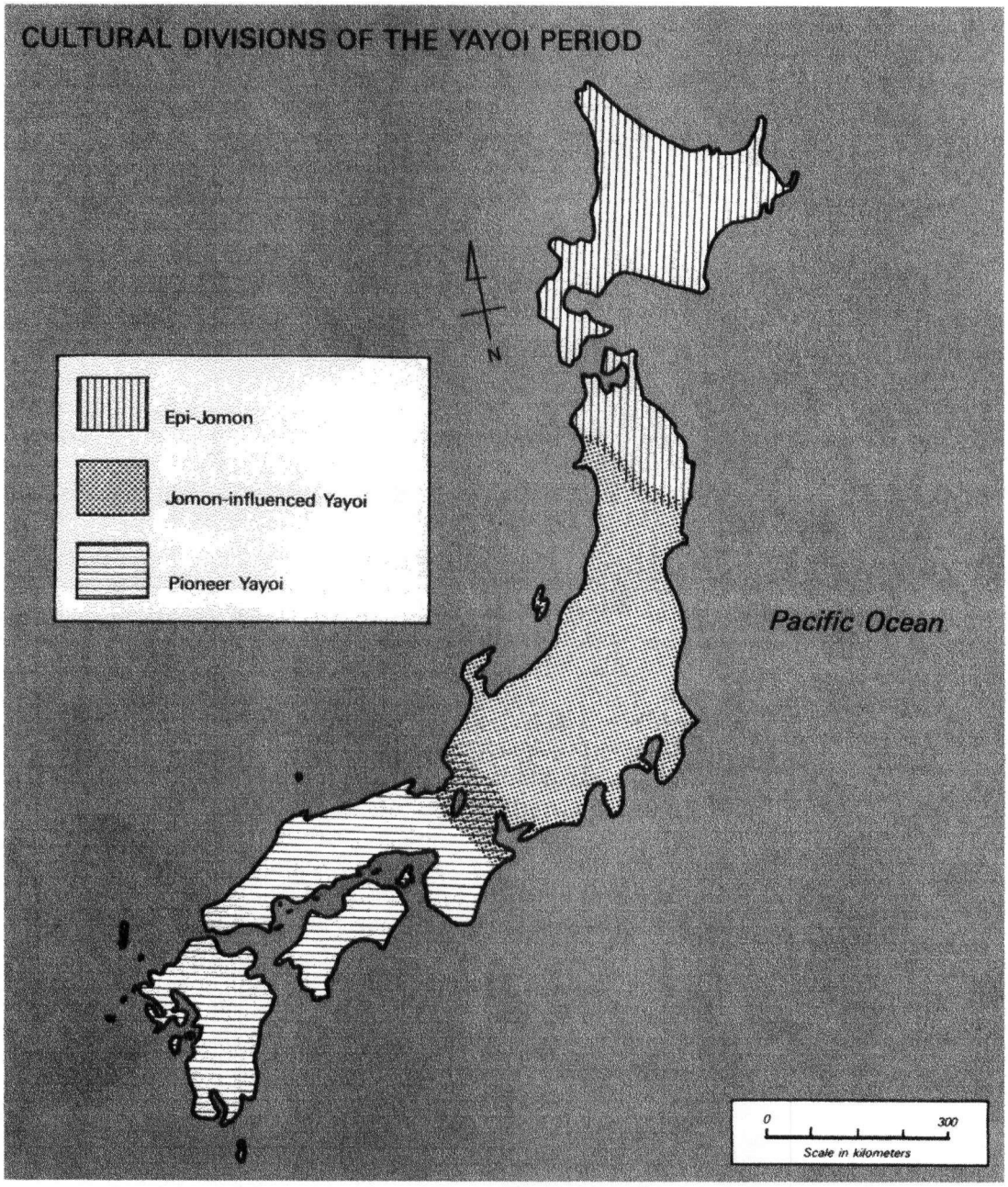


Figure 2.5: Cultural zones of the Japanese archipelego

The boundaries correlate broadly with the borders of environmental zones, which in turn influenced the lifestyles of the peoples living there. The forced extension of a southern system to the very different circumstances of the north and its native communities will be at the root of many of the tragedies of later centuries.

Nibbling at the North: the slow extension of southern imperialism

The earliest general term for central and northern Honshû in Japanese historical sources was *mojin no kuni* 毛人の国, the Country of the Hairy Men.[38] Later, this fell out of use, to be replaced by Ezo-chi 蝦夷地 "barbarian territory." Throughout, the favorite collective term used by the southern state for the native populations of central and northern Japan has been 蝦夷 , pronounced either Emishi, Ebisu, or Ezo.[39]

Traditionally, many researchers have been hesitant to consider a link between the Emishi and the Ainu in spite of at least some linguistic evidence for the large-scale presence of speakers of the "Ainu" language in the northeast. As I stated in Chapter One, I believe it is safe to say that the so-called Emishi included at least a significant number of speakers of some variety of a "proto-" Ainu language.[40] Others would go much further than this, both in space and time, such as Hudson who boldly plants the roots of the Ainu language in the time of the "initial Pleistocene colonization."[41]

Some argue that the term Emishi[42] was a general designation for the peoples who lay north of the areas directly controlled by the central state — that is, the population not only of Honshû but also of Hokkaidô (Kudô 1988: 150-1). Thus, not all of the indigenous population in central and northern Japan were included under the name of Emishi: as the state extended its official control northwards, those who had been subjugated came to be called the *fushû* 俘囚 , literally meaning "captives," a term which implies former Emishi status.[43] The *fushû* were often uprooted and sent to southern regions while migrants from the south moved into their homelands (Shibata, chapter 3: 93-178). Some *fushû* were appointed as *sakimori* (soldiers), with sometimes less than perfect results (see below); others, skilled ironsmiths, were often transported in groups to vil-

lages in southern Japan where they were given a secure and prestigious status (Kikuchi Sansai 1993, Shibata 1992).

References to the First Nations of the north can be found in the earliest written records that touch on Japan. Perhaps the earliest, though a notoriously difficult source to use, is the semi-fantastic Chinese geography *Canon of Mountains and Seas* 山海経 , which took its present form around 100 CE, though parts of it may be several centuries older. It contains several inconsistent references to a country of "hairy men" in the northeast that had official relations of some sort with the northeastern Chinese state of Yan 燕 in the 3rd century BCE.[44] An early commentator on the *Canon of Mountains and Seas* appended a note to one of these with a strange, sad tale which suggests indigenous sea trade between northern Japan and the Asian mainland may already have been active in the first centuries of our era. In the year 310, he said, four persons, men and women unable to speak Chinese, were rescued from a boat which landed on the Zhejiang coast. Three soon died, but the fourth, a man, settled in central China, where he was granted a wife by imperial order, and spent much of his time lingering in the local market. When he finally learned Chinese, he told his neighbors that he was from "the country of the hairy men."[45]

On its first appearance in more orthodox accounts, Chinese official histories covering the dynasties from the first century CE onward, the sparse material on Japan presents it as politically fragmented. What is more, this evidence, which considerably predates the establishment of the Yamato court, demonstrates that these First Nations of the Japanese archipelago were in close contact with the Asian mainland.

The *History of the Han* 漢書 , written in the first century CE, marks the initial appearance of Japan, or the states of Wa, in the official Chinese record. The amount of space devoted to Japan proper is only two sentences, appended to the account of Korea: "In the Sea of Lelang [northern Korea], there are the Wa peoples, who are divided into more than a hundred states. It is said that they come to present themselves and their tribute seasonally" (*History of the Han, juan* 28 xia: 1658.) The *Record of the Three Kingdoms*, "History of the Kingdom of Wei" 三國志·魏書 , the earliest extended account to be written if not the earliest in the period it covers,[46] lists dozens of small polities in the Japanese archipelago, some loosely federated, some entirely independent.[47] It also makes clear that the early polities of Korea and those of Japan were in close and frequent contact, linked particularly by the trade in iron and with iron:

> The nation (of Chenhan) produces iron, and (people from) Wei 濊 , Wa, and Mahan 馬韓 are found side by side in the markets there. As a rule, all trade and exchange is done with iron currency.[48]

There was also a certain amount of ethnic blurring along their boundaries, where the custom of body tattooing, considered a Wa ethnic marker, was found in areas under Korean rule and its presence explained by proximity to Wa.[49]

Nevertheless, as we follow the Chinese histories century by century, they record the slow growth of a centralized government, the beginning of a development into a "state" in the Western sense of the word, the Yamato empire. Even before the Yamato advance had begun, the southern rulers had kept a special deputy in the north to watch over those regions.[50] By the fifth century, a Yamato ruler is boasting to the Chinese of conquering "fifty-five countries of hairy men" in the east, "sixty-six countries of various bar-

barians" in the west, and "ninety-five countries" after having crossed the seas to the north.[51] In these early times, the southern knowledge of northern geography was very limited: before the sixth century, southerners generally believed that northern Honshû and Korea were linked by land (Kumada 1989).

The earliest Japanese written record is that of the *Nihonshoki* (*The Chronicles of Japan*), the official history compiled by the Yamato court. This contains a report on the Emishi nation known as Hitakami 日高見 by a court officer or minister, Takenouchi Sukune, who had traveled to northeastern Honshû: "Among the eastern barbarians are the Hitakami. In that country men and women are both tattooed, and are brave. They are the Emishi. Their land is huge and rich. We must conquer and take it." On bestowing the ceremonial battle-ax of command on Yamato Takeru no Mikoto, the Emperor Keikô is said to have remarked that "...the eastern savages are of a violent disposition, and are much given to oppression; their hamlets have no chiefs, their villages no leaders; each is greedy for territory and they plunder one another....Amongst these eastern savages the Emishi are the most powerful...."[52] This would have occurred around the third or fourth centuries CE.

Despite the deficiencies of their knowledge, the Yamato rulers soon became determined to make contact with, and extend control over, northeastern Japan, with the court looking primarily to local powerful families to keep the area under control. In the mid-seventh century, during the reign of the Empress Saimei, when the Jurchen were threatening the Japanese coast, the "protector of the Koshi nation," Abe no Omi Hirafu,[53] repeatedly invaded the modern Akita and Niigata and set up imperial government outposts. In 658, for instance, as we noted earlier, he led 180 armed ships north, finally

meeting and feasting with the Emishi of Watarishima 渡島 at Arima Beach.[54] The natives solumly assured him that their bows and arrows were for hunting, not attacking the emperor's servants, and the incident ended peacefully. It gives some indication of the strength of these Emishi that with all his 180 armed ships,Abe no Omi Hirafu was apparently unable to secure a military victory and had to settle for the contemporary equivalent of a powwow. His other experiences were not all as positive and free from violence, but when we read that "barbarian" visitors who came to "submit" at court were given gifts of Chinese-style military equipment, we may wonder whether the imperial government even contemplated bringing them under direct Yamato control at that time.[55]

The *New History of the Tang Dynasty*, quoted above on the indigenous origins of the name "Nippon," contains further references to the inhabitants of northern Japan dated only a few years after Abe no Omi Hirafu's expeditions to the north. Seven years before the Japanese envoy discussed his country's name and borders before the Chinese emperor, another mission had come to the imperial capital which had included Emishi representatives:

> In the following year (663) an envoy came to the Court accompanied by some Emishi 蝦夷. The Emishi also dwell on islands in the sea. The beards of their envoys were more than four feet long. They stuck arrows in their head(dress), and without ever missing would shoot a gourd held on the head of a person standing several tens of steps away.[56]

The version of this passage found in the *Nihonshoki* calls the Emishi slaves, but other Chinese sources, such as the nearly contemporary encyclopedia of official writings and government documents *Tongdian* 通典 (*Comprehensive Canons*) agree in terming

them envoys. The *Tongdian* also states that "The nation of Ezo is a small state amidst the islands of the sea," demonstrating that at least for this writer, it was a political unit distinct from the Yamato empire (*Tongdian, juan* 185: 990).

The *Nihonshoki* goes on to relate an alleged exchange between the Japanese envoy and the Chinese emperor on the origins of the Emishi:

> The (Tang) emperor asked where these Ebisu came from, and the envoy responded that their country was in the northeast. The emperor then asked how many kinds of Ebisu there were, and the envoy answered respectfully that there were three kinds, and that the farthest was Tsugaru, the next were 'raw' Ebisu, and the closest were 'cooked' Ebisu.[57]

That Tsugaru, on its earliest appearances in the historical record, did not even qualify for the label "raw" makes it plain that it lay beyond not merely the reach, but even the dreams, of Japanese imperial power at that time. It was to stay that way for centuries. Its independence was underlined by the sketch of the Japanese boundaries given by the envoy who arrived in 670: "...he said that the domains of his country were many thousands of square *li* and extended to the ocean on the south and on the west. In the northeast, he said, the country was bordered by mountain ranges beyond which lay the land of the hairy men....." Even this may have been overly optimistic: the Chinese historian labels the speaker "boastful" (*New History of the Tang, juan* 220: 6208, translated Tsunoda: 40).

Thus the north (with its various designations, including Hitakami 日高見 , Hi-nomoto, the land of the "hairy men," or the land of the "barbarians"), remained in most respects a match for its southern rival during these early centuries: technologically, cul-

turally, and economically competitive, particularly strong in horse breeding[58] and the use of iron.[59]

The southern reaction took two forms, one oriented towards the present, and one towards the future: to serve present needs, Japanese court officials in Kyoto and Nara repeatedly sent messengers to the north to buy horses;[60] and to improve the future situation, they kept up constant military pressure (Takahashi Tomio 1982: 37-9).

In the long run, the pressure from the south paid off. Yamato persistence gradually ate away at their northern neighbors, who might have been their match physically, but seem to have often suffered from a cognitive disadvantage, the sort of failure to fully comprehend how drastically the rules had changed that seems endemic among the native peoples attacked by centrally organized states.

Even so, victory did not come easily, once the court moved beyond the relatively cautious probes that Abe no Omi Hirafu had conducted for them. There were rebellions in the northern territories in 709, 720, and 724, the last of which took eight months to suppress. In 737 another government expedition, with up to 7000 men, did a great deal of marching and countermarching across northern Honshu, but did not succeed in bringing any considerable aboriginal force to battle. After that, there were 37 years of peace, while the Yamato court tried to consolidate its position in the area, with a gradual extension of its network of forts and settlements. Between 774 and 811 there were another 40 years of more or less continuous warfare, with five major campaigns, in 776, 788, 794, 801 and 811. These followed a set pattern: the armies of the southern court would march around the countryside, burn some villages, capture or kill some "barbarians," and then celebrate a great military victory (Farris 1992: 85-96). Against a guerilla

enemy, "swarming like bees and gathering like ants," it is hard to believe such clumsy efforts had much immediate military effect.

The most notable break in this pattern was the campaign of 788, which supposedly involved an army of nearly 53,000 men on the government side. They mustered at Fort Taga in the southern Mutsu nation,[61] but stalled at the Koromo River (a branch of the Hitakami) and showed little enthusiasm for advancing further until prodded on by an imperial order. When they finally sent 2000 men over the river, the northern forces, under the command of "the bandit chief Aterui" [Ainu: Atoroi][62] (to quote the official Japanese account) drew them on by engaging with about 300 men to the front, blocked the river passage, separated the advance party from the rest of the army, and then attacked with 800 more men to the front and 400 from the rear. The Japanese general, Hasetsukabe Yoshigoto, and a number of his best troops were killed in battle; about 250 men were hit by arrows; over a thousand drowned in the river; and 1,257 returned without their baggage. It was a rout, Yamato Japan's Little Big Horn, and it put a permanent end to that year's campaign. Emperor Kammu, furious, ordered the attack resumed, but it was several years before the southern forces were ready to move again (Farris 1992: 92-94).

Nevertheless, in this defeat we can see the foundations of the eventual southern victory, if we define victory in a negative sense as the beating down of all open opposition. Despite their losses, the Yamato army had one accomplishment to boast of: "we burned 14 bandit hamlets of about 800 houses." These protracted search and destroy operations undoubtedly had a wearing effect on aboriginal unity and morale, presenting as they did the dreary prospect of endless destruction without any hope of eventual victory. The

only way the Emishi could have won permanent victory would have been by emulating their enemies and fighting to exterminate them; and this was something that they were neither able, nor probably even willing, to do.

After the capture of Atoroi and another indigenous leader, More [Morai],[63] and the execution of both in Kawachi near Kyôto in 802 — apparently they fell into the classic and oft-repeated trap of a fake offer to negotiate[64] — and some smaller engagements, an uneasy peace again descended on the northern frontiers (Enryaku hachinen no kai 1996: 41). Colonization continued, though, as did court efforts to break "barbarian" resistance by exiling Tôhoku natives to other parts of Japan. With an eye to their martial qualities, court officials hoped that the "barbarians" could be used to control other local residents. What they got was not only a series of revolts — three in Kazusa alone, in 848, 875, and 883 — but an organized crime problem, as the displaced northerners indulged in widespread arson and robbery (Farris 1992: 128).

Sometimes we can still discern how complex the interaction between the northerners and the southern court could become. In 875, for instance, eighty vessels with raiders from Watarishima (perhaps Hokkaidô) ravaged the districts of Akita and Akiumi.[65] In 878 the indigenous people around Fort Akita on the west coast of Dewa rebelled and burned the fort to the ground; but the Watarishima Ezo offered their services to the court to put down the revolt (no doubt with the intention of returning and stealing anything they had missed earlier, this time with imperial permission). At any rate, the Akita rebels subsequently defeated a Yamato force sent to suppress them, and for six months or so, the northern half of Dewa was entirely free of imperial control. Their subsequent

submission, at least on paper, was achieved more by negotiation than by force (Farris 1992: 129).

After the settling of the revolt at Akita, the northeast enjoyed a long period of peace, under the rule of local governors of native or metis stock. This peace was finally broken by the Former Nine Year War 前九年の役 (1050-1062), which actually lasted twelve years. It was centered in Mutsu, and involved the apparently hereditary district magistrate, a native of the region, Abe Yoritoki, whose independence had reached the point that he was neither paying taxes nor providing men for labor service. After the initial round of fighting, a court amnesty in 1051 allowed a nominal reconciliation; but fighting began again in 1056 when the governor's son, Sadatô, was spurned and insulted as an Emishi by the family of a provincial official. The war was not won until 1062, when another Emishi leader, Kiyohara Mitsuyori of Dewa, was persuaded to fight on the government side. He in turn was destroyed a few years later, in the Latter Three Years' War 後三年の役 (1083-87), which began as a private quarrel over wedding gifts and never received the official sanction of the southern court.[66]

Once the central state extended its nominal authority to the northern tip of Honshû in the twelfth century, the locus of "barbarity" shifted, and the remaining indigenous populations in the north, including Hokkaidô, came to be called Ezo, a different pronunciation of the characters used for Emishi (Oishi 1988: 42). Even so, as we will discuss in more detail below, the last organized armed resistance by indigenous forces, Ainu, in Honshû occurred as late as 1581, in and around the village of Kiraichi at the northern tip of Honshû.

The Andô: merchant lords of northern Honshu

Although the fight was long and bitter, direct armed resistance to Yamato imperialism was unsuccessful in the long run. A subtler alternative was provided by northern centers of trade, whose economic importance allowed them room to maneuver, especially when the central government was weak. These were ruled over by the "metis" leaders of north-eastern Japan, the Abe and their peers.

The best-known and most powerful of these trade centers was Tosa-Minato under the Andô and Abe,[67] reindeer herders who may have produced cheese and eaten meat,[68] and who openly claimed to have ruled there for seven thousand years, considerably predating the establishment of the Japanese Imperial house. (cf. Matsumae 1919). The family name Andô is said to be derived from the region around Lake Tosa, known as the "gulf of Andô" 安東浦 in the ancient period, when it was much larger than it has been in the more recent past.[69] They were a mixed-blood clan, an elite who maintained a profitable harmony between the indigenous population and outsiders until undermined and eventually destroyed by a combination of natural disaster and southern greed and insecurity. Tsugaru remained an indigenous polity, a middleman in northeast Asian trade, as long as Andô strength and Tosa's inviolability were preserved.

Northern Honshû attracted the Japanese in the south with such treasured trade goods as horses, gold, iron goods, sealskin, marten skin, and falcon feathers, in addition to items its residents transmitted from those living still further north, including bearskin, sea products such as salmon and kelp, and Chinese ceramics and costumes. The Andô and their predecessors obtained these goods through a local barter trade network extending to the Amur River region, in which numerous indigenous peoples partici-

pated, operating in much the same manner as similar networks in indigenous North America.[70] The Ainu participated in this network using various types of boats including the *ttaomachip*, a convertible sewn-type ship (Ohtsuka 1995: 121-134). One result was the settlement in northern Honshû of other aboriginal peoples such as the Uilta: the traditional Japanese designation for the eastern part of Tôhoku, Mutsu 陸奥 , and the western part, Dewa 出羽 , are said to be derived from Uilta words meaning, respectively, otter and salmon (Fukuda 1997c: 86).[71]

The Andô's prosperity owes something, perhaps a great deal, to their southern forerunners, the Fujiwara clan of Hiraizumi, who maintained an intricate trade network on the coast of the Pacific Ocean (Oishi 1995). After the appointment of the local Abe clan as Japanese deputies in northern Japan in the middle of the tenth century, their northern trade flourished greatly. In 1126, Fujiwara Kiyohira, the head of an Abe branch in Hiraizumi who called himself "the Distant Chief of Eastern Barbarians," boasted:

> I succeeded to my ancestor's unfinished business and am the head of the assimilated barbarians entirely by mistake. But the indigenous people in Dewa and Mutsu are as obedient as grass blown by a wind, and even such pirates as Mishihase and Yûrô follow me like the sunflowers do the sun (Shichinomiya 1989: 43-4).

The earliest reference to the Andô may be found in the *Azuma kagami* in an incident dated to the eighth month of 1189. Minamoto no Yoritomo, the lord of Kamakura at that time, headed for Hiraizumi in today's Iwate prefecture with 280,000 soldiers, to put down the Fujiwara there.[72] They were guided there through the wilderness by a local man of humble status, Andô Ji, who was familiar with the mountains. Some time in the

period from 1205 to 1224, the head of the Kamakura ***bakufu***, Hôjô Yoritoki, appointed the head of the Andô to be Ezo kanrei, government agents for Ezo.[73]

The Andô were divided into several branches and each of them came to possess its own family record after Tosa was lost. These accounts vary in details but concur in the broad details of the basic story line.[74] According to the family records of the Fujisaki and Akita Andô clans, their common mythological ancestor was said to have been Abi 安日 , a brother of Nagasune 長髄 , who took refuge in Tsugaru when his indigenous state in south-central Japan, near what is now Osaka, was invaded and conquered by the southern Yayoi people from Kyûshû led by their first emperor, Jinmu, in 660 BCE. In more historical times, these Andô clans trace their ancestry for about one thousand years to the Abe family, which was entitled "the head of the assimilated barbarians" by the Japanese court. As we have noted above, in the middle of the tenth century the court appointed them official Japanese deputies to northern Honshû in the region along the River Kitakami, the home of the Emishi leader Atoroi who had been executed a century before.

In essence, the Andô were *gôzoku* 豪族 , indigenous lords of the north, though it might be better to call them a powerful "metis" clan because of their assimilated status and mixed origins, Ainu and "Japanese."[75] Traditionally, scholars would go no further than to hint at their Ainu component, but recently, even some of the more conservative researchers are openly talking of the Ainu ancestry of the Andô (Endô 1998).

Students of Andô history have observed a persistent but apparently contradictory pattern — one that is prevalent among indigenous "elites" in colonized countries: on the one hand, the Andô were the central government's official regional deputies, the "Rulers

Figure 2.6: Andô on a Western map, 1562

of Ezo" (*Ezo kanrei* 蝦夷管領),[76] but on the other, they were an indigenous clan independent of their nominal masters, with a self-bestowed title, Hi-no-moto shôgun, the Lords of Hi-no-moto,[77] defending their territories against southern aggression and engaged in numerous bloody wars with the "Japanese" and the indigenous allies of the Japanese.[78] They even appeared on early Western maps as a separate country in northern Honshu, "Bandoy," as in the example to the left, from 1562.[79]

To the "Japanese," the Andô's dual identity often proved highly disturbing. From time to time, the fact that their clan traced its origins to the indigenous leaders Abi and Nagasune, the enemies of the first Japanese emperor, Jinmu, became a source of controversy within the central government as to whether or not their northern agent deserved to be treated as their "equal."[80]

In spite of their names, most of which are typically Japanese, and the prosaic way in which Japanese official literature often depicts them, the men of Andô were, like other mixed-blood "elites" elsewhere, all the more powerful as an "indigenous" lineage because of their less "Japanese" identity. Like a number of other aboriginal peoples around the Pacific rim, they were sea traders with a nautical tradition going back to legendary times. They were often described as the "Andô navy" (*Andô-suigun* 安東水軍), with armed ships capable of giving battle at sea. This was, indeed, a necessity, given the forms competition sometimes took on the Japan/China/Eastern Sea trade routes, trou-

bled by pirates such as the Genkô 元寇, the Wakô 倭寇 and others. Moreover, not merely the Andô but also other wealthy traders in northern Honshû had in the distant past traded with peoples from what is now called the Middle East, a trade which is documented in the surviving papers of some of the oldest families in the prefecture of Aomori.[81]

Tosa Orai, the oldest written history of the area, gives a description of Tosa's days of glory: India's King's City,[82] China's Chang-an, and our country's Heian City are the greatest walled cities of their three respective countries, it says, but the new expanded city of Tosa, 80 *cho*[83] in size, is the largest in northern Japan. It goes on to describe the scale of this flourishing metis community, the fort of Fukushima:

> The city had wooden fences in all directions, encompassing many forts; and the vast wild plain spreads beyond the fences to the northeast, where thousands of horses and reindeer are herded. To the south of the castle are the waters of the lake, and to the west lies the boundless blue ocean. Large numbers of Ezo ships and Japanese ships gather in the sea, their bows lined up (*Tosa Orai*).[84]

The remains of the walled city have confirmed the essential validity of the description in Tosa Orai: the area enclosed by the walls was several hundred thousand square meters.[85]

The fort of Fukushima was the largest walled city ever to be built in northern Honshû. Tosa thus became a port of trade for the indigenous peoples living in and bordering on northern Japan. Polany's concept of a port of trade, or open port, is one whose absolute neutrality must be protected and managed by an autonomous unified political power. Such a port welcomes different parties interested in trade regardless of their ethnic background, and so the security of each participant must be granted an equal prior-

ity (Polany 1975). Both the Andô and Tsugaru itself must have maintained a delicate political balance among the Ainu, the Japanese, the Chinese and many groups of First Nations peoples — a task that would have become increasingly difficult as southern aggression intensified.

Local tradition asserts that Tosa was destroyed by a typhoon in 1340, which killed over ten thousand people and changed the shape of the shoreline, ruining the docks and landing places. But the political neutrality of Tosa was by this time already heavily compromised; it had lost its political unity to southeastern rivalry, the Nanbu clans. Moreover, internal conflict among the Andô had weakened their own solidarity, through the war known as Tsugaru *tatran* 津軽大乱 (1275-1328), which may have triggered the demise of the Kamakura *bakufu* (Oguchi 1995: 30-33).[86] The remaining Andô fled, some to the south, to Akita, and some to the north, to Hokkaidô, where they probably had some connections, but this served to further increase friction within the clan.[87]

Students of Ainu history often assume that Tosa, the Japan/China/Eastern Sea trade, and the power of the Andô had merely a negative effect on the transformation from the "pre-Ainu" northeastern culture known as Satsumon to a distinct "Ainu" culture.[88] Kikuchi Tetsuo, for example, states that the Japan/China/Eastern Sea trade was the chief force which "destroyed" the life-style of the pit-dwelling Satsumon foragers, made them "give up" their agriculture, "eliminated" their kilns, and "weakened" the use of pottery in their daily lives. This trade, he states, produced a massive influx of goods from Honshû, making the Ainu dependent on those "foreign" goods. The Ainu were thus "forced" to become specialized hunters and gatherers[89] to meet the increasing demand of the Japanese trade for furs and sea products. For Kikuchi, the indigenous population, such as the Ainu or

"pre-Ainu," could only be passive and modest beneficiaries of any large-scale trade activities, since their transformation and their incorporation of other cultural values could only be seen as an unilinear process of the "destruction" of their "traditional" ways (Kikuchi Tetsuo 1993: 48-58).

This unilinear dependency model gives an inaccurate depiction of the social relations among the groups concerned. It assumes that the cultural influence is always from the center to the periphery, and preempts any enquiry on pre-existing social networks and the nature of trade before the influence of the Kamakura government was felt. If we take Kikuchi's view literally, then the Ainu and other indigenous populations could never be active participants in any trade economy. It assumes them incapable of making their own choices and constantly negotiating with other groups, much less of forming their own federation or "leagues" to facilitate dealing with other nations. It condemns them to remain in an eternal "native" lifestyle, rather than adapting to the changes of their times, and fails to appreciate the technological level of the early inhabitants of the Northeast — who, among other things, invented or at least introduced to Japan the curved slashing swords the samurai would later make famous. Finally, this dependency model tends to obscure dual categories such as a "periphery" within a "core," for instance, the Ainu in Tsugaru associated with Andô, or a "core" within a "periphery," the Andô associates among the indigenous populations in Hokkaidô. I shall return to this issue in a later section on indigenous political organization.

It is thus not surprising that the Andô and Tosa are distinctly out of favor with some Ainu "sympathizers," precisely because of their strength in trade and their autonomous

"port of trade." It is a typically metis fate: those who straddle boundaries will be rejected by both sides, neither fish nor fowl.

Once a highly developed cultural system loses its focal center, such as an open port, the deterioration of the system as a whole may be very rapid. The loss of Tosa and Tsugaru thus raises the question of what happened to the northern First Nations who were once the parts of the integrated trade network centered on the Tsugaru Strait (see also Uemura 1990). The so-called "emergence" of Ainu culture in Hokkaidô and its development roughly coincides with the fate of Tsugaru: the Hokkaidô Ainu began to enter official Japanese records in the thirteenth century as Ezo, around the time the Andô clan reached its height of power in Tsugaru as trade middlemen and Tosa attained its greatest prosperity. It is ironic that Kikuchi's theory would have us believe that once their "real" culture emerged, the Ainu had to struggle unceasingly for their autonomy, or to put it more bluntly, they entered into a continual decline. This process appears parallel to the separation that was gradually developing between Honshû and Hokkaidô, the drawing of a boundary through the formerly undivided Tsugaru Strait (Shichinomiya 1989: 209).

Those who see the Hokkaidô Ainu as an undivided whole will never see the larger whole which includes Tsugaru. Isolating the Ainu from their predecessors and relatives in Honshû and canonizing them as "the aboriginal people" of Hokkaidô is merely one more way to legitimize the suppression of the bulk of northern indigenous history. And this, of course, is what the central authorities have always wished.

The women of Andô: a window into a different world

We should pause to take a closer look at the women of the Andô, since their roles not only illustrate the group's aboriginal heritage, but also relate directly to our main topic, the indigenous spiritual tradition centered in the house and family, which was largely transmitted in the female line.

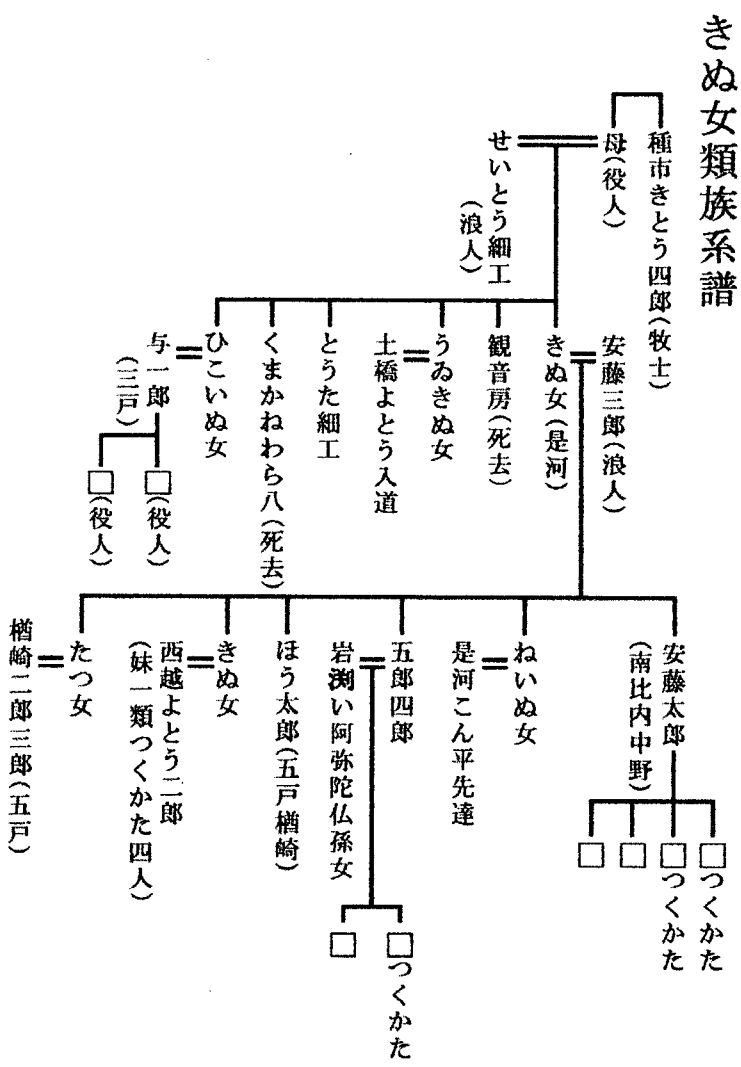


Figure 2.7: The family record of Andô Kinume

It appears that the female members of the Andô played a much more central role in transmitting the clan identity than would be usual for an "ordinary" Japanese family. The family record of Andô Kinume 安藤きぬ女, dating to 1301 (shown to the left; cf. Shichinomiya 1989: 61), is a well-known example of an ordinary Andô family during the Kamakura period. The female names here are marked with the suffix *-inu*, as in Kinu, Urukinu, Neinu, and Hikoinu. According to Hokkaidô Ainu practice, *-inu* gen-

erally marks an Ainu male name, and it is only used with women who were highly respected. The common use of this suffix may thus suggest that the Andô in Nukano-bu (the eastern part of present-day Aomori) practiced some level of matrilineality, though naturally the official ***ketfu*** depicts the Andô as patrilineal (Oguchi 1995: 24-25).[90]

Kinume was the wife of Andô Saburô in Hachinohe, who has left a record of her six siblings and six children. According to her, her mother was a clerk and her father was a rônin, an unemployed warrior. She was the eldest daughter. Both of her sisters who survived to the age of marriage, Urukinu and Hikoinu, became the wives of self-employed men; and her daughter Neinu married a ***shugen*** monk. The members of this family were non-agricultural, with a non-sedentary lifestyle, employed in such fields as horse herder, craftsman, ***shugen*** monk, or free-lance priest. The female members have a strong tendency to marry out of their local areas, as far away as today's Iwate and Akita prefectures. In short, both male and female members of the clan were nomadic, not confined to doing business in one place.

More evidence of matrilineality comes from the Fujiwara lineage, said to be related to the Andô,[91] who carried on their family through the female line when their men were killed in war. Both of these phenomenon make better sense when seen in the light of the parallel descent system practiced by the Ainu, discussed in the previous chapter, where there were equally legitimate male and female lines. If the paternal line was weakened for any reason, they could rely on the maternal line. Maternal descent appears to have been entirely sufficient to authenticate the indigenous continuity that the lineage wished to claim (Shichinomiya 1989: 430).

Another hint that women did not play the same role in Tsugaru as they did in more "Japanese" society comes from the *Tsugaru tairan*, the Andô War, recorded in official Japanese court documents as an Ezo Ainu rebellion (Endô 1995a.b).[92] The *Suwa daimyôjin e kotoba* tells us that Ainu women participated in this war by standing behind the male warriors (the Andô and their allies) holding *inaw*, sacred emblems of shaved wood, and chanting (Oguchi 1995: 30-33). This is still less than the sword battles of the oral epics, discussed in Chapter One, but far more than would be usual for women in "Japanese" society.

Legitimacy of the female line, the maintenance of independent genealogies, the use of honorific titles, and participation in warfare (wielding *inaw*, and chanting), all point towards greater equality between the genders. The picture resembles more closely the one we sketched in the first chapter, the fighting and trading women of the Ainu epics, rather than the life prescribed by the Ainu customs of latter-day Hokkaidô. When we come to judge what the present tradition has lost, and how it has changed, these are some of the hints and traces that must not be forgotten.

From relation to isolation

The charisma of the Andô status as "Lords of Ezo" seems to have persisted for a considerable time after they departed from Tsugaru. The Andô's ability to mediate and settle, to restore peace in the name and authority of their ancient lineage traced back to Hi-no-moto, could still be witnessed in the mid-sixteenth century. It is not my purpose here to

provide a detailed review of the history of the Hokkaidô Ainu, but a few details are necessary to round out the tale of their Tôhoku relatives.

Once the Andô fled empty-handed to southern Hokkaidô from devastated Tosa, they were forced to create a new structure of alliances to survive in their new home not only with the Ainu but also their enemy, the Nanbu clan. For the first hundred years or so, the Andô and the local Ainu were able to maintain a relatively harmonious relationship. Andô and the Nanbu also came to restructure their relationship to achieve some kind of alliance in their new territory. Yet beginning in the mid-fifteenth century, the southern Hokkaidô Ainu and an Andô connection in the area, the Kakizaki clan, engaged in continuous warfare, the most violent outbreak being the Rebellion of Koshamain in 1457.

The fighting lasted until 1550, when the head of the Akita branch of the Andô clan, Andô Kiyosue, came to southern Hokkaidô. He made the trip at the request of Kakizaki Suehiro, the head of the Andô clan in Matsumae, who wished to reach a compromise on territorial and trade issues with the Ainu for their mutual gain. Since the Tsugaru Andô were gone, the authority and the title of the Lord of Hi-no-moto had fallen to the members of the family in Akita, and it was by relying on this traditional prestige and recognition that Kiyosue was able to restore order in Hokkaidô by calling a settlement conference (Shichinomiya 1989: 158-160). This conference is of crucial importance from the view of the people of northern Honshû, since it seems to have been the last implementation of a long-standing First Nations practice of settling differences through negotiation and treaty-making under the supervision of an inclusive and egalitarian "council" backed up by the traditional auspices of what the Japanese called Hi-no-moto.[93]

The agreement brokered by Andô Kiyosue called for two Ainu leaders, Hashitain and Chikomotain, to be appointed as the heads of the Eastern and the Western Ainu respectively. The Kakizaki in Matsumae agreed to collect tribute from all trade ships that came to Matsumae, and distribute a portion to each of these chiefs. Finally, all ships travelling to eastern Hokkaidô were henceforth to be required to lower their masts, and the crew to bow, at a designated spot, to acknowledge Ainu authority. The same was required of ships going west (Shichinomiya 1989: 156-158).

This newly restored peace, and the Andô's traditional authority over the north, was soon to be disrupted by the emerging military government in Ezo. In 1591, the generalissimo Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who had the ambition to invade China via Korea, welcomed Kakizaki Yoshihiro from Matsumae, who was seeking the support of the central government. To Hideyoshi, Yoshihiro was seen as the "lord" of a "barbarian" island, Ezo, often assumed by southerners then to have a land connection to Korea in the north. Hideyoshi met Yoshihiro face to face in his palace because he wanted him as an informant about northern affairs, especially those pertaining to Korea.

Yoshihiro made a good impression on Hideyoshi, and obtained an official letter from him in 1593, authorizing him to oversee Ezo trade as his deputy. From that point onward, Hokkaidô was officially a part of the centralized feudal government based in Edo, the ***bakufu*** system, within which Kakizaki's lineage became a regional unit, the Matsumae ***han*** or fief. The rigid feudal system, built around a system of clans, had no room for the authority of the lord of Hi-no-moto. The Andô in Akita lost their traditional status and authority, receiving in their place designated clan territories registered by Hideyoshi, and their position was more and more narrowly defined by succeeding heads

of the Edo government. They soon abandoned their own name and adopted the place name Akita in its stead (Shichinomiya 1989).

In their new home in Hokkaidô, the Andô sought independence from their powerful enemies in Honshû, but at the same time they had to deal with Ainu groups who claimed control over trade and territory in opposition to this newcomer. While Matsumae's northern trade prospered, backed up by the Edo ***bakufu***, and they were successful in restricting competition, including that from Tsugaru ***han***, they depended heavily on Tsugaru for such essentials as Ainu-Japanese translators for negotiations and manpower for warfare against the Ainu (Yamada 1982b: 169, Kikuchi Isao 1994: 84-85.). The extraction of disposable manpower was easy, because of the near-permanent economic devastation which characterized Tsugaru during the Edo period.

The link between the descendants of the Andô and the nomadic native population in northern Honshû is symbolically maintained to this day. The Akita family, a branch of the Andô clan, has preserved heirlooms which include an old "Ezo bow and arrow." Shichinomiya points out that this Ezo bow and arrow, black and shorter than the Japanese version, matches the description of the bow and arrow used by the Emishi people depicted in the *Nihonshoki*: "The Emishi people are very strong — (they) hide their arrows in their hair."[94]

An indigenous "state"?

Although for the purpose of this dissertation I selected the term "nation" to designate an indigenous polity in northern Japan, many scholars still argue for the existence

of a quasi-state in northern Japan. The selection of the term to designate the polities in northern Japan, such as those run by the Fujiwara or the Andô, or the Hitakami nation, varies according to author: Hudson favors "kingdoms" (Hudson 1999: 223), Yiengpruksawan settled on "states" (Yiengpruksawan 1998), and others simply refer to them as a trade network (Nakamura 1989). Many Japanese scholars use the term ***buraku-shakai***, tribal state/society, to describe the small-scale independent polities in historical Japan, but this term and its associated concept tends to meet strong opposition among western scholars who find it contradictory and unacceptable.

One conventional definition of "state" runs as follows: "A specialized type of political organization characterized by a full-time, specialized, professional work force of tax-collectors, soldiers, policemen, bureaucrats and the like that exercises supreme political authority over a defined territory with a permanent population,..." (Johnson 1999, entry "state"). However, these text-book categorizations are only useful when their limits are kept in mind and the attitudes of those who use them are not prescriptive but rather descriptive towards the actual population and phenomenon studied. In other words, in dealing with human phenomena, researchers must be cautious not to squeeze the reality to fit the prescribed categories but rather to question the extent of the validity of such working categories in the specific cultural context.

What is often missing in the efforts of scholarship conducted from an outside view might be the meta-framework to position the researcher's own cultural, personal, and scholarly background with regard to his or her interpretation of the human phenomenon in question. As Lakoff and Johnson argue, conceptual categories are not absolute, fixed entities whose edges are neatly delineated: they are, in reality, heterogeneous,

dynamic, ideational constructs shaped by human thoughts, and thus are subject to socio-cultural constraints (Lakoff and Johnson, 1990; Lakoff, 1987).[95]

Many anthropologists, dissatisfied with traditional, static and monistic categorizations based on binary distinctions such as "simple' and "complex," "elementary" and "advanced," or "east" and west," have begun to apply a more dynamic and situational approach to understanding social phenomena. Jack Goody, for example, attempts methodological innovation in the study of social organization by trying to perceive analytical categories as "bundles of features," the examination and identification of which might eventually make possible a "gradational" understanding of social phenomenon:

> The nature of the categorization of social system one uses depends to some extent on the nature of the problem one has in mind, but the choice may carry deep epistemological significance.—[for example,] a bias [that] tends to oppose modern family structures to tribal ones—[leaves] out the enormously important, 'intermediary' category of agrarian states. That is the very gap this book tries to fill---(Goody 1990: 11)

In the spirit of these attempts, I would like to shed some light on the often disregarded possibility that among the indigenous population of northern Japan are some which possessed a complex political system which might be considered a quasi-state, a system which did not develop fully due to influence from the more powerful southern states. There is much to suggest the existence of certain features characteristic of a stratified and bureaucratized society, beyond a mere trade network. These include the claims for Ainu writing, counting, and recording systems; great military capability; and a surplus economy, in addition to others already mentioned, such as government councils and the

existence of servitude. The evidence, most of it suggestive rather than conclusive, is included here because in my view, it opens up a whole range of topics for future research.

The Ainu writing system has never been seriously studied by scholars. Nevertheless, I have been told by Ainu in Hokkaidô that some of them possessed a distinct writing system in the recent past. However, a few generations ago, any materials relating to their writings were confiscated and the persons who possessed them were in danger of arrest.[96] Local historians of Tsugaru provide further tantalizing hints in their depiction of a variety of writing and recording systems that are said to have been used in premodern Tsugaru, including rope knotting, hierographic symbols, and even an alphabetical system (see Appendix I for examples).[97]

On the larger political front, Uemura draws a useful analogy between the Hokkaidô Ainu and native confederations in North America, especially those in the Great Lakes area, which were built up long before the coming of the Europeans; he also compares them with the Germanic tribes attacked by the Roman armies. He reminds us that the western notion of statehood must be adjusted to account for the contemporary social and political system, and that we should not try to force all ancient "states" into a single mold (Uemura 1988). His views are similar to those of the Ainu educator Kayano Shigeru.

A number of influential scholars have unfortunately taken it as a matter of faith that a complex and efficient indigenous political structure can never have existed among the Ainu and the Emishi in Tôhoku. Nakamura, for example, considers the indigenous peoples of northern Japan as at best members of a trade network and nothing more. He feels

that the possibility of an indigenous state in the north was eliminated by pressure from the ancient Yamato state (Nakamura 1989). To such arguments, other scholars respond that such a view is the unfortunate result of historical ignorance about the Ainu and Emishi. Takahashi Takashi, for instance, discusses how between the ninth and eleventh century, different groups of "barbarians" were reported as capable of collective, highly organized action against the central court. He documents a number of so-called Emishi "rebellions" and argues that there existed indigenous federations and developed political structures prior to the conquest by the southern court. Indeed, he argues that the imperial *ritsuryô* system could not have been extended to Tôhoku without the prior existence of such developed political structures (Takahashi Takashi 1986, 1991a & b).

Uemura similarly argues that those who see the Ainu as simple nomadic hunters and gatherers with limited mobility cannot explain their strength at certain periods. For example, during the war of Shakushain in the 17th century, the Ainu were able to assemble over two thousand warriors quickly. It is known that Shakushain was a "lord" who was at the center of a network of relationships stretching as far as Sakhalin, basing himself on an economy capable of producing surplus wealth. There is also the case of Atoroi and Morai in northern Honshû in the 8th century, as discussed above, who were able to muster thousands of troops, keep them in the field facing a huge enemy army, and coordinate them successfully in a complex ambush (Uemura 1990).

Another example Uemura cites is the direct confrontation between aboriginal forces and the Chinese/Mongol Yuan dynasty army in the 13th century, where the Yuan again had to send "tens of thousands of soldiers and hundreds of ships" to Sakhalin to battle the Guwei people, according to the account in the Chinese dynastic history.[98] The

Guwei were in all likelihood Ainu, in sea communication with Hokkaidô to their south, and their battles with the Mongols were a result of their attacks on the Jilimi people, ancestors of the modern Nivkh. This was only one episode in a struggle that went on for over forty years, and whose eventual conclusion was not recorded — a phenomenon which suggests that from the Yuan point of view it was not particularly successful.[99] And again, we are justified in returning to the question: how was such expansion and development possible, if there was really no prior structure to build on?[100]

I will leave the final word on these open questions to Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, who states in her brilliant study of the *fushû* capital of Hiraizumi:

> Resistance to multiculturalism is understandable in the context of modern Japanese assumptions about the political and cultural homogeneity of their nation through history. However, the level of opposition to theories that ascribe independence to the Emishi and *fushû* is quite remarkable. Documentary evidence clearly indicates that, at the very least, a semi-autonomous enclave existed in the Kitakami Basin that, seen as an ethnic bloc by all parties, was not entirely within the jurisdiction of the Japanese state. If it had been, forts surely would not have been built, nor wars fought repeatedly to assert Kinai control; nor, for that matter, would settlers have fled to the *fushû* for refuge from the central government....History has not been written by men sympathetic to those rulers, but, like Saint Elmo's fire on a stormy night, they will occasionally come into view as scholars disturb the residue of the past. It is important not to lose sight of what such apparitions signify as they counter the force of ideology. (Yiengpruksawan 1998: 48)

The long twilight of Ainu Tsugaru

As we have mentioned, northern Honshû experienced a number of drastic crop failures during the Edo period, due partly to bad weather, and partly to the unsuitability of single-crop rice production to some areas of the northern environment. Much of the area was simply too cold, and many places had the wrong type of soil. Moreover, since northern Honshû was traditionally occupied by indigenous hunters and gatherers, many of whom were nomadic and persistently refused to adapt to a completely sedentary lifestyle, the expansion of the agriculture-based economy ran against the socio-cultural grain. It appears in Tsugaru that after the establishment of Tsugaru ***han***, many indigenous hunters, ***matagi***, became peasants but maintained their earlier lifestyle to varying degrees. It may have been easier in Tsugaru than other areas in northern Honshû for ***matagi*** to become peasants, since many of them still hunted and trapped not very far from their communal settlements (Chiba 1970b).

The Nanbu clan who took over Tsugaru from the Andô was soon destroyed by a neighboring rival, the Oura clan, which eventually established Tsugaru ***han***. The destiny of Tsugaru was one of continuous misfortune, marked by internal political friction and social and economic instability. Tsugaru never regained any control over northern trade, since that authority had been officially delegated to the Matsumae ***han*** in southern Hokkaidô. Throughout the Edo period, Tsugaru ***han*** was practically subordinate to both Matsumae and Edo. If they wished to participate in the Ezo trade, they had to submit to control and taxation from the Matsumae, and to fulfill their designated place in the system, they had to enforce rice cultivation in Tsugaru to pay tribute to Edo (Shichinomiya: 206-208).

Tsugaru maintained a love-hate relationship with Matsumae throughout the Edo period, due partly to the quick change in the balance of power between the two, which put Tsugaru under Matsumae in spite of their mutual dependency. Within the Edo feudal system, the head of the Tsugaru ***han*** was nominally a feudal lord assigned land for rice production, a requirement not applicable to Matsumae ***han***, whose status depended upon its ability to manage Ezo trade as an official trade outpost, rather than being a feudal landlord. In theory, therefore, Tsugaru was not inferior to Matsumae. It might even be seen as more "legitimate" in the sense that it was a full member of the mainstream hierarchy, its ranking based on the amount of tribute in rice paid to the central government. But in practice, it was the opposite. Matsumae was increasingly successful in northern trade while Tsugaru struggled to maintain local integrity and fight poverty.

In spite of the unreliability of the harvest, the unsympathetic local fiefs still extracted the required tribute, rice, from the local peasants every year and forwarded it to the Edo ***bakufu***; or some portion was forwarded to Matsumae ***han*** which then used some of it to reward the Ainu in Hokkaidô. Tsugaru ***han*** did encourage settlers from the south to move into the area as peasants, but the migration to Tsugaru tended to attract only villagers from similar mountainous and "backward" regions in northern Honshû such as Akita and Yamagata. Except for a few wealthy merchants who saw trade opportunity as middlemen between Osaka, Edo and Tsugaru, Tsugaru did not offer much for ordinary people. Population did not grow as the ***han*** might have expected, even with some level of migration: the combination of frequent peasant riots, famine, and the spread of disease had an almost genocidal effect throughout northern Honshû in the Edo period, and Tsugaru suffered the most. During the Tenmei period (1782-1783) Tsugaru experi-

enced its worst crop failure ever due to a combination of bad weather (a "little ice age"),typhoons, and floods. Since the pressure from the local lord was unrelenting, the price of rice skyrocketed in Tsugaru, until it was completely out of the reach of ordinary people. The peasants consumed anything edible to survive, including the roots of grass, dogs, cats, horses, cows, and even human corpses. The roads were covered with dead bodies, old and young, dead of starvation and disease, and babies commonly died at the hands of their mothers if they even managed to be born alive. The estimated death toll in Tsugaru due to the Tenmei famine was over 82,000, nearly half of the region's total population (Fujisaki 1973: 310-11, Miyazaki 1970: 179-180).

Underlying the peasant riots, crop failures, and starvation in Tsugaru were a series of half-hidden factors related to indigenous modes of livelihood, which persisted in spite of a nominal integration into the fief system. The intended effect of single crop production was the creation of a center-periphery dependency structure, via the extraction of surplus rice. We can thus see that the difficulty of transforming Tsugaru into a single-crop agricultural community has more than a passing resemblance to the situation of the Ainu in Hokkaidô during the Meiji period, when the government provided farmer settlers from Honshû the most fertile land, and left only the remnants, difficult to cultivate, to the Ainu, who initially failed to comprehend the value of land measured strictly in terms of agricultural utility. Rice agriculture *per se* was by no means new to Tsugaru — it had been practiced there since the third century BCE — but since Jômon times the traditional ecology had combined a variety of seasonal activities with regularized mobility, from place to place in a fixed order. Thus, even if rice production provided them some stability in good years, it must have been nearly impossible to give up the cycle of eco-

Figure 2.8:
Chinese map of north Honshû showing Tsugaru 津軽大里 and "barbarian territory" 夷地

nomic activities which were sufficient and sustainable, given the richness of the seas and forests. As late as the mid-eighteenth century, the Ainu in Tsugaru resisted assimilation laws and measures adopted by Tsugaru *han*, by taking refuge in the mountain wildernesses (Kikuchi Isao 1994: 85-6)

The indigenous residents of Tsugaru, the Ainu, continued their collective resistance to outsiders' attempts to intrude and interfere in local affairs right up to just before the Edo period. At least one Chinese map of the 15th century,[102] part of which is reproduced to the left, still labeled a section of northern Tsugaru *ichi*, "barbarian [or Ainu] territory," and tagged Hokkaidô "barbarian [or Ainu] island." There is written evidence for armed Ainu resistance in Tsugaru in the late 16th century. More than a century after the War of Koshamain in Hakodate, southern Hokkaidô, the Ainu fort in the village of Kanagi, Dazai's home town in Tsugaru, was destroyed by a local alliance of Japanese forces.[103] In 1581, the Ainu in Nakamura village in western Tsugaru put up armed resistance against the Ohura clan, which was fighting with the Nanbu clan over territory, invading Ainu communities in order to expand their control. At about the same time, two chieftains in Kiraichi, Sasuke and Yae, were executed for starting "riots."[104] Shortly after this, both these Ainu villages came under the control of the Ohura clan, the forerunners of the Tsugaru *han* (Hasegawa 1993: 153-9). An oral tradition survives to this day in Kiraichi, which states that the Japanese con-

queror (in this story, Hideyoshi's deputy) killed the village chiefs and then married the daughter of one of them, named Princess Tora, to found the regional "shogunal" lineage.[105]

This may have been the last Ainu armed resistance in Honshû, but its suppression did not by any means signal a final extermination of them or their heritage there. It was only in 1806 that the Tsugaru Ainu were finally forced to participate in the Japanese family registration system. They thus became ***heimin*** (commoners), or more concretely, peasants, at least for the records (Kikuchi 1994, 84-86).

It appears that Tsugaru ***han*** was not able to politically assimilate its aboriginal component before the early 19th century. This probably means that numerous Ainu villages were officially "non-existent," for they were not subject to strict taxation based on rice production *per se* on designated parcels of land, in spite of their theoretical peasant status. Government documents in Tsugaru that record "official" Ainu villages depict only those on the northern coastline, none in the interior, even though Ainu "riots" were recorded in numerous places around the time of the establishment of Tsugaru ***han***. These official Ainu villages on the north coast had to remain unassimilated, perhaps for political and practical reasons; and they were forced to become "Japanese" when and if their rulers needed them to be. Indeed, these Ainu were a vital source of manpower as sailors, guides, and interpreters in case of war in Hokkaidô, and their villages also ensured extra-territoriality for Ainu coming from Hokkaidô: they needed to remain Ainu for strategic purposes.[106] It does not seem an accident that the assimilation of the Tsugaru Ainu was only completed about the time the Edo ***bakufu*** began directly managing

northern affairs, ordering the Tsugaru and Nanbu clans to fortify their territory against Russian (and Ainu) attacks (Takakura 1960: 51).[107]

There were certainly political motivations behind the production of these official records, which were, to say the least, highly unlikely to depict the reality of a colonial front line in favor of the colonized. They were written for the eyes of the Edo ***bakufu***, which had to be reassured that the Ainu and the land of Ezo were "under control." They thus may well have drastically underestimated the numbers of Ainu still present. Some local writers such as Nakamichi thinks that the recorded Ainu communities at the northern end of the Tsugaru peninsula were only the tip of an iceberg — their presence could not be kept secret because they were strategic ports visited by many travellers (Nakamichi 1976 [1926]: 110-123). Edo was particularly interested in regulating the official trade traffic on the Tsugaru Strait, which could not remain Ainu property, even in theory.[108] Tsugaru thus became an instant feudal community, "imagined," in the minds of distant rulers who could not have cared less about the anonymous masses.

Evidence of living Ainu is not hard to find once one looks outside the official histories. For instance, the ***Mutsu-koku Tsugaru-gun no ezu***, written in 1645, reports Ainu villages (***teki-mura***) along the northern and western coast of Tsugaru. The ***Tsugaru Ittôshi*** "Goryô-bun teki no oboe" reports only the northern coast Ainu villages, fifteen of them, with forty-two households, in the 1660s.[109] These same Ainu appear in the Tsugaru ***han*** official record, ***Onkoku nikki***, as well (cited in Kikuchi Isao 1994: 84-85.)

Many of the Ainu persons in "Goryô-bun teki no oboe" already had Japanese names, which could be interpreted to mean an advanced degree of assimilation. But the ***Tsugaru Ittôshi*** contains another report written about the same time, which lists Ainu per-

sons from the same area who contributed to the battles in Hokkaidô, Shakushain's war, and in this report their names are marked with the suffix '*-in*,' written with the character "dog" (犬).

Another official document from nearly one hundred years later, the *Tsugaru sotogahama ushirogata-gumi teki on-aratame oboe-gakinari*, contains a list with only Ainu names (most of which are marked "dog") from the same area. This list describes a total of eight Ainu villages with 39 Ainu households — it was a report to Tsugaru *han* from a local office in charge of the Ainu along the northern coast, for the purpose of de-Christianization. By this time, the occupation of the persons on the list is given uniformly as "peasant." The population of these north coast Tsugaru Ainu villages did not change much over a century, going from c. 250 to 235 (Yamada 1982a: 205-215).

Yamada finds it very curious that by the time of the "Goryô-bun teki no oboe," the southern coast of Hokkaidô, across the Tsugaru Strait, was virtually Ainu-free "on the record" (Yamada 1982a: 208). Kikuchi Isao gives a more accurate summary of the Ainu in southern Hokkaidô during the Edo period, based on Hirosaki *han* documentation. Basically, Matsumae *han* divided its "municipality" into Eastern and Western. About 1669, eight official Ainu settlements were reported in each of the districts. Included in these settlements are several on the northern side of the Tsugaru strait. The Ainu in Matsumae districts may have been affected by disease and bad weather during the Tenmei period (the 1780's) since their population decreases dramatically about that time.

Kikuchi also confirms the existence of Ainu who chose to become peasants. The most notable case of this type is that of Iwanosuke, a "peasant" and a "part-time" Ainu who in winter grew his hair and beard and dressed in Ainu costume to visit the lord of

Matsumae to receive gifts, remaining a Japanese peasant during the summer (Kikuchi Isao 1994: 82-84).

The process through which the Ainu heritage and identity was forced underground in some areas of Tsugaru and Shimokita can be traced through historical documents. The *Genshi Manpitsu Fûdo Nenpyô*, a reliable historical source about Shimokita written about the turn of the eighteenth century, relates how several Ainu families in Shimokita were supplied with coarse grain as welfare payments until 1771, the issuing of an order forbidding the speaking of Ainu in the 1780s, and finally an order prohibiting the wearing of the Ainu-style jacket, *atushi*.

One of these Ainu families, Happila,[110] lived in the village of Wakinosawa. They later acquired a Japanese surname, Wakie, but their descendents were more casually known as Happila even after the Second World War. In the Tsugaru peninsula, Nyûi [Ainu: ni-o-i, "logs-many-place"] Mitsugu, a local officer of the Tsugaru *han*, succeeded in 1756 in assimilating the Ainu on the northern coast of the Sotogahama peninsula: the Ainu cut their hair short, shaved their beards and mustaches, took Japanese names and entered the family registration system, and became Buddhist (Yamada 1982a: 203-217).

Sugae no Masami, a renowned ethnographer, who visited the village of Utetsu in this area thirty-two years after Nyûi's work, wrote: "Though the coastal people here are the descendents of the Ainu, they are no different from others. In the recent past they shaved their faces, stopped tattooing, and no Ainu traces can be found" (Sugae 1971-1977b). But one must wonder what Sugae meant by "no Ainu traces can be found" given his remark about how road constructors, men and women, were wearing *atsushi* in another village in the area, Setoshi. About ninety years after Nyûi, Matsuura Takeshirô, a

northern explorer, again wrote about Utetsu: "The villagers here are all descendents of the Ainu. They grew hair around the mouth and wore ear rings eighty years ago, but they keep these secret. It is said that they keep Ainu furniture inside their homes, but rarely show it to visitors" (Matsuura Takeshirô 1975).

In this repressive atmosphere, one of the earliest of the First Nations reverses in northern Honshu, the betrayal and death of Atoroi [Aterui] in the early 9th century, became a symbolic focus for all that had happened then and since. Its impact was such that to this day a myth is current in Tôhoku that the executed head of Atoroi, known as 悪路王 Akuro-ô (King of the Evil Way), forever roams through the air, seeking revenge. The myth seems to be a reflection of the deep folk feeling about the suppression and the tragic history of the indigenous peoples all over northern Japan. Miyazawa Kenji, a celebrated poet from Iwate prefecture, Atoroi's home ground, alludes to this myth in one of his best-known poems, "Haratai ken bairen" (Haratai sword dancers):

> Ho! Ho! Ho!
>
> Akuro-ô of Tatta, ancient King of the Evil Way
> a five-mile pitch-black cave
> the God of Black Night and dreams pass through
> his head was sliced and pickled
>
> Andromeda trembles in the fires
> the bluffing of blue-black masks
> a shower of swords, glug glug!
> spiders dance at the bottom of the night sky
> spluttering out greasy pieces of stomach
>
> (Miyazawa 1973: 106, translation auct.)

We can thus see that it was not true that the Ainu were eradicated from Tsugaru. Rather, their "Ainu-ness" was under constant assault, the only relief being provided by the fact that since Tsugaru was officially "Japanese," the authorities were relatively less focused on enforcing cultural conformity than they were in the later "conversion" of the Hokkaidô Ainu. The separate fates of the remaining Ainu (or members of other indigenous peoples) in Tsugaru and Hokkaidô have thus been shaped by the socio-historical changes these regions went through during the Edo period; and this process had been governed primarily by the official attitudes of the regional governments towards them, and the public cultural policies enforced by them.

The main difference between the attitudes of the Tsugaru and Matsumae *han* towards the indigenous population was determined by the nature of their place in the feudal Edo system and how they were required to operate within it. Tsugaru *han* had to defend its legitimate "Japanese" status and Japanese territoriality; but Matsumae was a Japanese outpost in a foreign territory for much of the time, as the lord of Matumae often asserted to Japanese guests. Hence, from the beginning, Tsugaru *han* had to treat the indigenous inhabitants as their subjects, with the practical aim of regional integration and rule; but for the Matsumae, the indigenous populations remained a necessary "other" and their own identity could not be fused entirely with them. I will discuss some of the aspects of these differences in the next two chapters, especially the regulations pertaining to indigenous beliefs and spiritual practices.

It is unfortunate that scholars such as Ohtsuka believe the frequent appearance of Ainu customs among "officially" Japanese people in northern Honshu during the Edo period were the exclusive result of ethnically Japanese people imitating the Ainu after

coming into contact with Hokkaidô Ainu during trade. This amounts to a thorough, and rather perverse, denial of indigenous history in Honshû. After all, we cannot be sure that the people in question had any sense of "Japaneseness" at all — the region had been conquered by force. They were for the most part dirt-poor, and the idea that they would take up wearing clothing that is difficult to make, tattooing themselves, and speaking Ainu, merely for the sake of fashion, is more than a little silly: they were not contemporary teens in the grip of a Dear Kitty craze. On the other hand, Kikuchi Isao, among others, maintain what I believe to be closer to the correct view: that the Shimokita and Tsugaru peninsulas were the last aboriginal communities of Ainu in Honshû (Kikuchi Isao 1994: 84-86).

Kiraichi and the Tsugaru Ainu heritage

Like many other assimilated Ainu villages, Kiraichi remained with its memories, as a small, rural community. It was there that my late grandmother Kasai Kane was born. Although after the execution of its chiefs following the Yae-Sasuke War the village no longer appeared as Ainu on the official record, its inhabitants never fully converted to an agricultural mode of subsistence nor did they give up their other customs.[111] Notorious to this day as a "place apart" even by the standards of conservative peasant culture, Kiraichi has kept to itself over the ages.

Kiraichi is in fact one of the oldest recorded settlement in northern Tsugaru, appearing in documents as early as the Kamakura period. The earliest references to Kiraichi write its name as 忌来市 or 帰来夷地 : the former is rather ominous, seeming to indicate

that it is a place to be avoided, and the latter clearly marks it as an Ainu settlement. Just before the Edo period, the Chinese characters were changed to those presently used, 喜良市 , to eliminate these undesirable connotations. But from the Ainu point of view, "Kiraichi" appears to have originated in a mispronunciation of an Ainu place name, *chiray-chi*, "a riverside where *ttô* fish gather" — very similar expressions and place names are used by Hokkaidô and Sakhalin Ainu.[112]

Kiraichi was important since it lay at a crossroads for the indigenous trade, by land and water, to and from Tosa. The land link is the indigenous road that came to be called Shimonokiri-kaidô 下の切り街道 which runs north-south, and the water connection is the branches of the Iwaki river, which run in three general directions from Kiraichi, north, southwest, and southeast.

The strategic position of Kiraichi is further strengthened by it being situated at the foot of the Nakayama mountains, across which to the west is an important port, Aburakawa: in the past, mountain paths, *kemono-michi* (animal roads), were safe and fast routes for indigenous warriors and traders. Elders in Kanagi still remember that Kiraichi was an important place for the Ainu in Tsugaru, and it may be that as long as they posed no political threat, they were allowed to maintain their traditions. Certainly in the depth of the mountains, they were not chased by their intruders, and this at least partially accounts for why Ainu language and customs survived in Kiraichi well into modern times.

The traditional hunters and gatherers of northern Japan are generally called *matagi*, meaning "winter man = hunter" in Ainu.[113] Kiraichi is important not only for students of Ainu history in Tsugaru but also for those interested in the connection between the *ma-*

tagi and the Ainu, since its history clearly illustrates the transformation from an Ainu to a *sato-matagi* (village-based hunter-gatherers) community.

As many cedar forests in Tsugaru were "confiscated" from the indigenous population and became imperial property, logging and charcoal-making became a primary industry in the mountainous areas in the interior of Tsugaru. Thus many natives, including the people of Kiraichi, combined their traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering with this new resource industry during the Edo period. In general, Kiraichi villagers chose to be loggers, resource managers, or charcoal makers rather than rice-growers. They were called *yamago* 山子 or *sumiyaki* 炭焼き , and worked under the supervision of local *bakufu* officials.

All the same, such people never entirely abandoned hunting and gathering, though large animals such as bears have been gone for decades from many of the mountains in Tsugaru. They hunted and trapped small animals, including rabbit, fox, weasel, raccoon, otter, birds, and larger ones such as deer. They also caught fish in the rivers, often using traditionally formulated drugs to put the fish to sleep. Gathering activities in the mountains continue to this day, though their scope has lessened greatly: many people still prefer to gather mushrooms, wild plants, nuts and fruits rather than buying them. Those who remain committed to a hunting lifestyle tended to become charcoal makers since this allows the greatest mobility and freedom in the mountains, though the work itself may not be as financially rewarding as logging. The charcoal trade also insulated its practitioners to some extent from the absolute depths of poverty and dependence on the harvest, since they were dealing in a necessary material whose supply was not affected by the sort of poor weather that can ruin a rice crop.[114]

According to statistics, in early Meiji about eighty percent of the people in Kiraichi worked in the mountains, and even today they rely on agriculture much less than their neighbors.[115] Thus the people of Kiraichi often talk about the mountains as their "home," and say that if you want to know about Kiraichi, you have to go to the mountains. Even today there is no restaurant or cafe in this village of about fifteen hundred people located on the southern skirts of the Nakayama mountains, and of course, no souvenir shop.

About fifty years ago when my father spent holidays as a teenager in Kiraichi, most houses were still thatch-roofed and small, the traditional style very similar to what one can see in Ainu museums today. In the house where he stayed (the birth home of my grandmother), the center of the house was occupied by a hearth, and the entrance of our relatives' house was closed with a mat instead of a door. The "windows" were covered with two pieces of square wood, or again, mats. The walls were of grass, twigs, and bamboo (earth for richer families). In many houses the toilets and storage were outside, built with thatched walls and thatched roofs.

Much of this traditional lifestyle has fallen to "progress," but some things are still easy enough to identify. As I walked around Kiraichi during my field work, I noticed that many houses have wooden drying poles placed over tree branches. This type of drying pole, called ***kuma***, is commonly used by the Ainu in Hokkaidô. The villagers in Kiraichi told me that everyone used to have them around here, for drying all sorts of things, including fish and vegetables.

Today, people in Kiraichi seem no different from anyone else in Tsugaru, and indeed, the younger generations are not familiar with its Ainu past. The word "Ainu" may be quite alien to the post-war generation, but for elders who lived in the mountains, it can evoke

strong but mixed feelings. I came to learn half-way through my fieldwork that the topic of Ainu was almost taboo in Kiraichi, as I repeatedly met with deep silence after my casual use of the word. Even my great-uncle, my father's cousin, did not have much to say to me when I told him briefly of the purpose of my work. But some time after my visit to his house, my father said to me that after talking to him on the phone, my great-uncle had told him, "Wa daba Ainu dabe na. Wa dake de nee be" ("I think I am Ainu, and I am not the only one").

Modern times: Anonymous warriors, unfolding stories

At the Meiji Restoration, the "new" Japan established a family registration system where commoners in general became ***heimin*** 平民 (ordinary people), but social outcast groups and aboriginal peoples were sorted into special subclasses. The former outcastes known as burakumin became ***shin-heimin*** 新平民 (new commoners), and the aboriginal people in Hokkaidô were dubbed ***kyû-dojin*** 旧土人 (former aboriginal people). In 1898, the Hokkaidô Former Aborigines Protection Act was passed and put into force, solidifying the myth that the only remaining Ainu people were in Hokkaidô, Japan's new frontier. Thus the Ainu presence in modern Japan was fragmented, just as happened to the Saami people in Scandinavia and the Kirgiz in north-central Asia (Yamada 1982a: 223).

Unlike the Ainu in Hokkaidô, who were foregrounded (or perhaps better, "targeted") by official recognition, those Ainu who remained in northern Honshû came to feel that they lost much of the official claim to their indigenous identity in modern Japan. The "new" Japan was determined to bury their identity forever, to relegate it to the past and

wipe out all links between it and the present.[116] The Ainu descendents in Tsugaru did not wish to be considered as belonging with those Ainu in Hokkaidô who became the public target of humiliation and discrimination; and as many tell us today, even the Hokkaidô Ainu could not see any way to survive modernization and nationalization, and told their children not to look back (Kaizawa 1993b).

In spite of all these factors, the Ainu villages in Tsugaru were in visible existence until well after the Meiji Restoration, as Yamada Hidezô reports:[117]

> Those Ainu remained in various places in Tsugaru, not just along its northern coast. Mr. Murakami of Aomori told me, "There was an Ainu village in Sannai until its last survivors, an old couple, moved to Shiraoi in Hokkaidô. It was about the first year of Meiji."
>
> Mr. Kaimori Kakumasa tells me, "There were Ainu in Higashida-sawa, northeast of Asamushi, and the last person, an old man, moved to Biratori (in Hokkaidô). That was the last Ainu there." Mr. Tanaka Shôzô from Okutairahe reported a similar story from his home. There seem to be many such accounts around here.
>
> When Mr. Fukui Yûzô had occasion to go to Kitahama (northern Tsugaru coast) in the last year of Taishô (1926), when he was an elementary school student, the school principal told him never to use the word "Ainu" there. (Yamada 1982a: 222).

In the well-established regional history journal *Usori*, published by "The Society for Narrating Shimokita's History and Culture," Fukuda, a local etymologist in Aomori, discusses how the majority of the population in what is now Aomori prefecture spoke a variety of indigenous language closely related to the Ainu — he calls it the Mutsu language — until just before the Meiji restoration (Fukuda 1997e: 95). In the absence of any forced unifica-

tion or standardization of language, it appears that if Fukuda is correct, the linguistic situation in Aomori in mid-nineteenth century must have been quite a mixture, perhaps similar to the natural process of creolisation in which the indigenous and colonial languages fuse to a varying degree, depending on factors such as region, gender, and occupation. Such a process is very common where a prolonged ethno-linguistic conflict characterizes a region, as with the Creole language in Haiti.[118]

Fukuda himself is elderly, and he told me that he has personally known many Ainu speakers in Aomori. He recalls some very fluent Ainu speakers, who considered themselves Ainu, surviving in Aomori until the 1960s; others are said to remember the lineage of their chiefs, though unwilling to go into detail to outsiders. Although somewhat hesitant to call himself an Ainu, he asserts that he is an assimilated indigenous person, *tai* 田夷 ("peasant barbarian"), a term which he believes characterizes the majority of the population in the eastern part of Aomori: "No one wanted to become assimilated, but they had no choice. Life was hard either way. You should never forget these people, the anonymous warriors and voiceless people. No one in their right mind wanted to kill their brothers; but if they had not, they would have been killed first by the invaders."

Fukuda is not the only one who remembers the presence of the Ainu in Aomori. When I visited a museum in Tosa, which is now part of the village of Shiura, a senior curator, an elderly local person, assisted me with my research. Still seeking for more evidence, I asked him where he thought my grandmother learned to speak Ainu, and he said, "she must have grown up within those people. There used to be lots of people (who speak Ainu)." He looked a little puzzled, as if to mean, "what's the big deal?"

Another local historian, from a traditional fishing community in Shimokita, Chûzaburô Tanaka, is the former director and the owner of the museum Keiko-kan in Aomori city. The Keiko-kan displays Ainu artifacts produced and/or found in Aomori, and Mr. Tanaka is open about his intimate connection to the Ainu in Hokkaidô. He speaks of himself as their "close relative." His grandmother still made the Ainu-style *atsushi*, as it was a family tradition for the Tanakas. "Although the official records do not tell whether or not the people of today's Aomori have Ainu ancestry," the Keiko-kan's introductory statement to its Ainu exhibits goes, "these exhibits are evidence of the existence of the Ainu people here in the relatively recent past, as well as our traditional exchange with the Ainu in Hokkaidô." The word "Ainu" may have been banned, and some of the more obvious customs persecuted, but Ainu Tsugaru, or Ainu Aomori, still left traces which are visible today.

There are still others to whom a description of the Ainu heritage in Aomori in the past tense is highly offensive. Guantei Yûza, a successful actor and a playwright from the Shimokita peninsula is one of the most prominent Ainu spokespersons from Aomori today. Originally mountain dwellers, his family was forced out from their traditional territory by the waves of southern migration and modern development. They came to resettle in the fishing community of Hamasekine, which was in the recent past chosen as the home port for the experimental nuclear powered freighter Mutsu. Many traditional fishermen of Hamasekine lost their fishing rights and their natural environment after the unsuccessful legal battle with the developers and the government, in which Guantei and his family were among the chief plaintiffs (Guantei and Matashige 1994).

His performances, often acted out storytellings, question the cultural implications of economic development and its effect on how ethnicity is perceived: how you become defined by outsiders. One of his plays, "Kokoroni umi o motsu otoko" ("A man who has an ocean in his heart"), which deals with the controversial development of the nuclear power station in the village of Rokkasho[119] in eastern Aomori prefecture, contains a scene where the pivotal character, a traditional fisherman, is confronted by the riot police during a protest. As the squad slices up the man's only decent formal jacket, he cries out, "Even if you spoil my jacket, I can't let anyone spoil the fisherman's soul inside my heart!" When he performed this play in Okinawa, the audience screamed "No way, no way," at this point; and Guantei writes how the struggle of traditional fishermen transcends regional boundaries (Guantei and Matashige 1994: 25-26).

Guantei resides in Tokyo today, so he is in touch with the Ainu in Tokyo; and his performance group includes some young Hokkaidô Ainu. While doing my research, I came to learn from the Hokkaidô Ainu that there are many individuals from Aomori who consider themselves Ainu, and who are participating in the general Ainu cultural revival and reclamation of indigenous rights. An important but seldom realized fact is that many Ainu people in Hokkaidô have family oral histories which trace their ancestors to northern Honshû. The late Yamamoto Tasuke, for instance, a highly respected Ainu elder from Akan in eastern Hokkaidô, writes that he was taught by his father the names and death places of his ancestors going back twenty-four generations, beginning with Kiraw-kor-ekashi[120] who moved to Hokkaidô from Aun-moy,[121] today's Aomori (Yamamoto 1991: 159).

Stories like this are rather common, and I believe this is the reason why some Hokkaidô Ainu people speak of Aomori Ainu as the most "genuine Ainu," the ones they believe remained in their native land.[122] But these stories are only gradually surfacing, as more Ainu individuals go public, and as the Ainu gain more confidence in accepting their identity and diversity.[123] Most recently, at a public symposium commemorating the War of Koshamain, held in Yokohama in June of 1999, an executive board member of the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô, Mr. Sawai Aku, publicly acknowledged the contribution made by an Aomori Ainu curator to the recent Ainu exhibition hosted by the Smithsonian Institute, the "Spirit of a Northern People." This was the first time, as far as I know, that the existence of living Aomori Ainu was officially acknowledged by the organization, and it marked a major step towards the reunification of the Ainu divided by the Tsugaru Strait.

During an informal gathering following the symposium, Mr. Sawai told me that his organization had received phone calls from Ainu people in Aomori who were dissatisfied by the ways in which the proposed New Ainu Law[124] was written and propagated. They saw it as beneficial to only some Ainu if it were ever to be achieved, and at the same time they did not think that the Hokkaidô Ainu were being very realistic. Mr. Sawai stressed that "we have only begun," and the Ainu are in fact "everywhere" in the Japanese archipelago.[125]

It was in this context, that of the Ainu's emergent "reunification" movement, supported by indigenous peoples overseas, that I came to accept my role as the *de facto* Ainu representative to a conference organized every three years by the world's indigenous peoples themselves, WIPCE Hawai'i, World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Edu-

cation, "The Answer Lies Within Us," hosted by the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, in August of 1999 (Tanaka 1999a). The aim was to facilitate the development of indigenous studies and to establish the Coollongata Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education, which should serve as a universal point of departure for the proper place of indigenous studies in academia as well as protecting the right to indigenous education elsewhere. In opposition to the fashionable but empty skepticism which prevails in many areas of the humanities influenced by deconstructive theory, indigenous studies stress the centrality of the cultural tradition and its continuity from the past to the present.[126] This conference was the first time that discourse on the Tsugaru Ainu as a living people was received within academia.

Language and identity: a sociolinguistic look at Tsugaru[127]

As I have already noted, the study of the Ainu language itself is still a relatively underdeveloped field, but the efforts made by serious and committed researchers should not be discarded completely simply because the linguistic issues are hotly debated and consensus is difficult to achieve. Nor, of course, should the claims made by native speakers of the Ainu language be ignored. Language is essential for understanding a cultural phenomenon even when a linguistic category is obscure, as is the case with pidgenisation or creolisation.[128] Nevertheless, the works of linguists, especially field linguists, tend to be pushed aside by students of material culture, or misunderstood as "confusion" (cf. Fukazawa 1998). Students of the Ainu language have made a tremendous effort — in Yamada and Kindaichi's words, identifying Ainu place names is like "picking gold-dust out of

sand" — examining the distribution of linguistic features and patterns which follow the still productive rules of the spoken Ainu language today.

One core focus in this pursuit is the study of place names, which historical linguists consider the "fossils" of language. Hundreds of place names rooted in Ainu stand as silent witnesses to the communicative relation between ancient Hokkaidô and northern Honshû,[129] in addition to early historical documents listing personal names from northern Honshû that may be considered Ainu.[130] These place names and personal names, if they were located in Hokkaidô today, would certainly be called Ainu names proper, and be considered for preservation.[131]

Place names are a universally recognized source in determining both the history and the culture of a region. Such evidence is generally accepted and widely adopted by historical linguists:

> As we have said, place-names can be an important source of information regarding the people who have inhabited an area. This is the result of two main facts. The first of these is that the names attached to localities tend to be extremely persistent and to resist replacement even when the language spoken in the area is itself replaced. This resistance to replacement is particularly marked in the case of important topographical features such as large rivers and mountains, but is also characteristic of human settlements of all sizes.... The second fact is that when a new name is given to a place it is naturally structured according to the synchronic rules of the language spoken by the people who coined it. As a result, *if a place-name is analysable in terms of the rules of a specific language state, this can be taken as a safe indication that persons speaking that language inhabited the region at the time the rules were productive.* By therefore dividing up the total cor-

> pus of place-names of a region into groups and attributing each of them to a specific language state, the historical linguist can to a large extent reconstruct the history of the region in terms of the language spoken by its inhabitants (Bynon 1978: 273-274, my emphasis).

Especially since we are often dealing with a mere four or so centuries into the past, the degree of inexactitude imposed by dialect difference and linguistic evolution by no means invalidates modern attempts to interpret the meanings of place names in Ainu.[132] Humility is justified; despair is not.

Below, I have reproduced a map of the Tsugaru Strait drawn by Yamada, depicting some of the more obvious Ainu place names in an area inclusive of northern Aomori (the Tsugaru and Shimokita peninsulas) and southern Hokkaidô. These place names strongly indicate the existence of Ainu speakers on both sides of the Tsugaru Strait, and the creation of a pattern of name duplication across the Strait, distinct to the area.

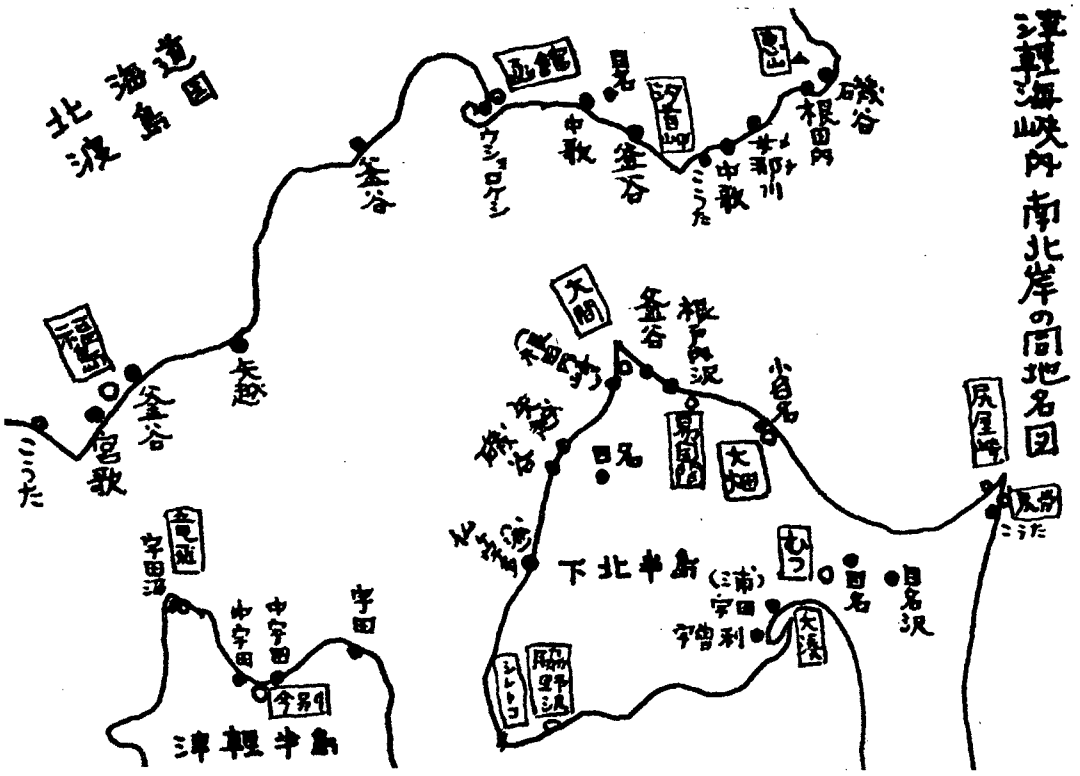


Figure 2.9: Ainu place names in northern Honshû and southern Hokkaido

Thus, linguistically speaking, the Tsugaru Strait was not a dividing line at the time of the Ainu occupation of this area, and southern Hokkaidô and the northern tip of Honshû were a common linguistic unit. However, it is also important to note that certain patterns of lexical formation evidenced in these place names, such as ***kama-ya***, indicates that the Ainu language spoken in this area was somewhat different from other part of Hokkaidô, and it thus seems to form a distinct subvariety of the Ainu language.

(1) ***uta, uda*** 歌、宇田 : derived from the Ainu word "ota" meaning "sandy beach." Place names bearing *uta* or *uda* are characterized by sandy beaches ideal for canoe/boat launching. During the Ainu period, these places may have been simply called *ota*. However, Japanese settlers distinguished between different *ota* by attributing each one a distinct characteristic, such as the existence of a shrine (*mîya-uta*), or smallness (*ko-uta*). Ota-noshike was the original name of Nakauta (to the east of Hakodate, at the top of the Tsugaru peninsula), meaning "sandy beach-center." As is clearly evident, the Japanese name Nakauta (center-*uta*) preserves the meaning "center" and the sound of *ota* in a modified form. In southern Hokkaidô, *ota* came to be transcribed by the Japanese as *uta* 歌 , while on the Aomori side it was rendered *uda* 宇田 .

(2) ***mena*** 目名 : "*menas*" means "east" in Ainu, as in *menas-kur*, "easterner." Place names containing *mena* are found throughout Hokkaidô. In this map, *mena* appears in the eastern parts of both sides of the Strait: on the north side, Mena-gawa (*mena*-river), and the town of Mena; on the south side, Mena-zawa (*mena*-riverside) and the towns of Mena and Komena (small *mena*).

However, "*mena*" means "(hot) springs" in Ainu, and in this case, some of these *mena*-marked places may have to do with natural springs.

(3) *tsoya* 磯谷 : *tso-ya*; *tso* means " wave-covered-rock", and *ya* means land or shore, as in Lake Tôya (lake-shore) in western Hokkaidô. Isoya in this map are indeed characterized by the existence of rocky shores.

(4) ***kamaya*** 釜谷 : ***kama*** means "flat rock" in Ainu. Places marked with ***kama*** in Hokkaidô usually have flat rocky ledges jutting out into the river, or if situated by the sea, a wide, flat rocky space when the tide is low. The Kamaya appearing in this map to the west of Hakodate was often called ***kama-ya-pet***, meaning "flat-rock-shore-river," and according to Nagata a large flat rock characterized the bottom of the river (Nagata 1922). Another Kamaya to the east of Hakodate is marked by a large flat rock shelf jutting out towards the sea, and the same formation characterizes the Furukamaya of the Shimokita peninsula. Though the Kamaya of Shimokita on this map is a relatively large village today, and has no rock formation in the neighborhood, the ancestors of the villagers came from Furukamaya (old-***kamaya***) right next to their present settlement, which does have such a formation. Yamada notes that even though both ***kama*** and *ya* are extremely common Ainu place names throughout Hokkaidô, it is rare to find them combined and appearing in a relative sequence as in the Tsugaru Strait area.

(5) *yagoshi* 矢越 : *ya-kus-i*, "land-pass-place." These areas are named after a place where a rocky cliff makes it difficult to walk along the beach: hence, one must "go across the land/hill." The Yagoshi on the map west of Hakodate is a famous rocky cliff known as Yagoshi ***misaki***, and its Shimokita "twin," located facing the other Yagoshi, is also characterized by a rocky cliff obstructing the shoreline. Both *ya* and ***kus*** are common Ainu place name items in Hokkaidô, but as with ***kama-ya***, the combination of the two, result-

ing in Yagoshi, is limited to the Tsugaru Strait area. The place name Yagushi in the eastern part of Iwate prefecture may also be given an Ainu interpretation.

(6) ***netanai, netonai*** 根田内、根戸内 : ***net-o-nai***, "driftwood-much-river." Netanai 根田内 is located at the eastern end of the northern tip of Hokkaidô in today's Esan town. There is a river running near it, and as with numerous places in Hokkaidô, the place is named after the driftwood found there, ***net*** or ***nit***. Netonai-zawa 根戸内沢 in Shimokita is the name of a river to the east of Ooma town. The local people call the river Netonai, and this Shimokita place name retains its more authentic Ainu pronunciation.

(7) ***usori*** 宇曾利 : ***usu-or*** or ***ush-or***, "gulf-inside," as in the gulf of Usu 有珠 in central Hokkaidô, or ***us/h-kesh***, the Ainu name for Hakodate, meaning "gulf-edge." Usori of Shimokita was originally a small gulf located near the city of Oominato, enclosed by a cliff known as Ashizaki. There is a river called Usori-gawa running through the village of Usori-gawa (formerly simply Usori). Today, ***usori*** has become a general designation for the Shimokita peninsula. The Ainu name was misinterpreted by the Buddhists during the Edo period, who coined the name Mt. Osore (恐山 "Mount Fear") for the holy mountain of the Shimokita area.

The above selection of place names represents only a small portion of Yamada's work in the area. Another of his contributions towards identifying Ainu place names in Aomori is his discussion of the frequent ***moya***-related place names. ***Mo-iwa*** (small/quiet-mountain) designates a certain type of small mountain in Ainu, as in Mt. Moiwa in Sapporo. ***Moya***-mountains and hills are commonly found in Aomori prefecture, and they share certain characteristics such as prominence in the environment, mold-like round shapes, and some degree of association with ancestral rites (Yamada 1993b).

Yamada's study was based on extensive field work, as well as regular consultation with linguists such as Kindaichi Kyôsuke and Chiri Mashiho, and native Ainu speakers including the highly respected educator Kayano Shigeru. The Ainu place names discussed above are believed to be consistent with the naming practice of the Ainu and their perception of the ecology and the environment, and thus identical or similar names are commonly found throughout Hokkaidô (Yamada 1982a: 190-201).[133]

It is much more difficult to trace the Ainu heritage in the living languages of the border areas where ethnic conflict between the Ainu and "Japanese" went on for centuries, such as Tsugaru. Still, some such as Fukuda considers the Tsugaru "dialect" to be better termed a mixed language, since it shows significant Ainu lexical and morphological elements to this day.[134] In his morphological analysis of lexical formation of northern "dialects," Fukuda discusses how religious and ritual terminology, and the names for indigenous plants and herbs, are built around a solid core of Ainu words (Fukuda 1997d).[135] The use of Ainu words by the Tsugaru *matagi* has been noted by many, including Chiri and even Hudson, along with the persistence of indigenous customs identical to those of the Ainu (Chiri 1973j, Yamada 1993a:102-111, Hudson 1999: 98). 138

Imposed boundaries, defined ethnicity

National boundaries still obstruct our views and cloud our understanding about the nature of human communication before these boundaries were created. Thus Barnes asserts "...[the] fallacy is to think that the flow of cultural influence was all unidirectional from the China mainland eastwards to the peninsula and islands....It was not....Although

each East Asian nation today claims portions of the mosaic for its individual history, the ancient entities belong to no one and nothing other than their own time....One fallacy is to think that such countries as 'China,' 'Korea' and 'Japan' existed in those earlier periods. They did not" (Barnes 1993: 8; my emphasis).

While Barnes is correct to call for caution in accepting the versions of history claimed by powerful nation states, there might be a limit to historical scepticism of this kind. I am in no position to criticise Barnes for her mode of expression, which was presumably needed for whatever purpose she had in mind. Yet students of material cultures, including archeologists, seldom respect the fact that the artefacts that they deal with are part of the living spiritual heritage of indigenous and traditional peoples, inseparable from their understanding of history, often traced back to the origins of the places where they came to live, or the groups they came to form. The stones and earth being excavated may still be called "grandfather" and "mother earth" in the native efforts to preserve their historical and cosmological links with the natural environment. The past, remote or recent, is part of the living realities of these peoples, and to deny such continuity even in the slightest can aggrevate negative emotions, a sense of powerlessness, and in some cases, anger.

In deconstructing the historical myths of powerful nation-states, what narratives do we seek in discussing the peoples who were not part of the nation-state, who are too often depicted as vanished or vanishing peoples? How inclusive and sensitive can our scholarly discussion on history and ethnicity be? The question is not whether there is historical continuity in general, but whose historical continuity it is, and to what extent it holds true. Unless scholars are willing to consider the often divergent forms of histori-

cal narrative, including oral history,[137] offered by historical minorities and the oppressed as proper subjects of enquiry, they will be in danger of placing themselves in the same hegemonic position as those nation-states.

Similarly, many point out that cultural studies cannot continue to pretend to be a detached, objective science, skeptical and infallible, where although one might grant the "other's" continuing process of "becoming," the researcher him/herself adheres to a forever fixed analytical view, an eternal supreme "being," which turns everything s/he sees into the ruins of an academically pacified ground. The recent vogue for post-modern theories may work well enough in the narrow context for which they were originally designed, the extremely rigid academic world in France thirty years ago, but one must question if they work at all if they are exported beyond that. To say, for example, that all traditions are invented and any uniformity is imaginary, is to assume that human cultures are only passive and contingent entities, having no innate force to transform and adjust in a universal and regular way.[138]

On the other hand, if we understand a culture to be made up of a whole set of communicative symbols and rules, then it is like a living language, which is in a constant process of transformation, regardless of whether or not the process has been officially labelled. Our task is then to identify the less salient and visible aspects of cultural processes, temporal and spatial, and connect them to the "existing scholarly consensus." If one is a field linguist, the method is clear: one gets into the field, converses with the informants, and merges in as much primary data as possible, ideally to the extent that one becomes fluent in the language one studies. In other words, by virtue of being exposed to and involved in the dynamics of human communication, one might internal-

ize the cultural codes which allows you to see it from "within." The view from "within" thus allows one to converse continually with the lives of those who remain outside academia, or beyond national and geographic boundaries, while engaging onerself in the construction of academic discourse. As Geertz put it, "words attach to the world, text to experience, works to lives" (Geertz 1988: 135). Academic discourse in this sense is not bound to be a monolog; rather it is dialogic and open, allowing new meanings to emerge and be shared by the often neglected masses who are at the same time the contributors to and the consumers of academic services.

Yours, mine, and ours: tales from a borderland

We have given above the merest sketch of the historical process which created the image of both the Ainu and the indigenous peoples directly ancestral to them. This emergence was the child of historical denial, facilitated by the modernizing Japanese nation-state, and until very recently, left unquestioned by the majority of Ainu people in Hokkaidô and elsewhere, under constant pressure not to assert their presence.

This process sounds very like the conquest of North America by the Europeans, but in fact there are crucial differences. In North America, the native population was first thinned out by alien diseases, and then swept aside by a vast wave of European migration in the nineteenth century. In Japan, on the other hand, the conquest of Honshû took fifteen hundred years, and the native peoples were actually in the majority for much of this process.[139] Thus the "metis" element in Japan must have played a proportionally greater role, however strongly this may be denied by official history. The pacifi-

cation of the Ainu and other elements of the native population was in fact largely accomplished at the hands of the more assimilated parts of that very same population — the so-called "using barbarians to fight barbarians" policy, a typical imperial technique (Umehara et. al. 1982: 413-5). Moreover, in contrast to the great diversity of indigenous cultures in North America, and their self-awareness of this diversity, in Japan there has been a strong tendency to assume the homogeneity of an indigenous culture, past and present. Since the framework for the interpretation of a cultural phenomenon tends to be shaped by the researcher's own cultural assumptions, the myth of homogenous Japan has contributed to the creation of an equally mythical indigenous homogeneity, the internal "other," in the minds of many Japanese scholars.

The culminating strategy of denial, of course, was the extremely restrictive official definition of "Ainu," devised deliberately to "purify" them, to minimize them in territory and numbers, and enforce closure on them in time as former indigenous people. The success of the policy was such that when in the first flush of post-victory liberalism American occupation authorities suggested to the Ainu that they might wish to become independent of Japan, the Ainu leaders panicked and politely refused (The Utari Association of Hokkaidô 1991: 925-931).

The annexation of Northern Honshû to the southern-based imperial state was a union from the point of view of the south, but a division for the north: the breaking of the link between Hokkaidô and Honshû, attested by some degree of common linguistic and cultural attributes and an association of peoples. The political strength and cultural autonomy of the Ainu-speaking populations had been supported by their northern economic network which linked Honshû, Hokkaidô, and parts beyond. State enforcement

of rice cultivation as the primary mode of agricultural production, an intensive single crop arrangement dictated by southern convenience and tied into the central market system in Northern Honshû, as well as the manipulation of the role of Tsugaru in the northern trade during the Edo period, led to the ruin of this local system, and the end of any remaining indigenous autonomy in Honshû.

We can thus see that the real history of indigenous peoples in northern Japan is potentially as disturbing to the "Japanese" as to the Hokkaidô Ainu, since it is a tale forbidden to both sides. The boundaries between Japan and other countries have been imposed in relatively recent times, just as the definition of "Ainu" versus "Japanese " ethnicity has been. The most powerful myth, the one that must be brought fully to light before it can be discarded forever by the peoples of Japan, is the one that foists on them, "Japanese" and Ainu, an absolutely unique identity, a language, culture, and traditions unrelated to anything else in the world. This myth preempts any serious attempt to reflect on the past. And as Watanabe points out, unless we can overcome such myths and perhaps even question the problematic use of the terms "Ainu" and "Wajin" (Japanese), the people who live on the borders will have no story of their own to tell their children (Watanabe 1993).

Recently, the Hokkaido Ainu have been attempting to restore Ainu history from their own perspective. The late Kaizawa Tadashi, former vice president of the Utari Association, has written:

> I am not totally familiar with the history of colonial control in the world, but I suspect that the Japanese policy towards aboriginal peoples is unprecedented in its cruelty and immorality. The "Former

> Indigenous People's Law" took everything from the Ainu. The history of Japan and the history of Hokkaidô have been created to accommodate the needs of the rulers. The study of correct history from the Ainu viewpoint is what we need (Kaizawa 1993c: 7).

Although I am not certain that the Ainu experience is all that unprecedented, or that the Ainu hold any privileged "suffering" status among the world's indigenous peoples, it is still in this spirit that we need to retell the history of all those who share in the Ainu heritage, regardless of whether they are born "Ainu" or "Japanese." We face the challenge to overcome the gap, both cognitive and real, which remains between the two, the inability of both parties to recognize a "middle." That gap has had a genuine detrimental effect on our perception of the "whole," for the middle has been defined as neither completely "Japanese" nor "Ainu," when it has actually been both.

Such interior perspectives will compliment existing scholarship; not only might they supply it with first-hand and lived information about their heritages but they will also question, clarify, elaborate or validate studies done by outsiders. If Ainu scholarship is to benefit from "all" perspectives, then should light not be thrown onto those "forbidden" tales?

It is in the "middle" where we are most likely to find evidence of the whole stock of indigenous values and practices preserved for many centuries, including some which may have been lost or forgotten by present-day Ainu in Hokkaidô. Ironically, since they were not officially "Ainu" from the view of the central state, the people of the middle have been under relatively less pressure to "reform." In spite of his organization's narrow definition of the Ainu, Kaizawa's great work of scholarship, the compilation of the *Ainu*

shi (*Ainu history,* presently 5 volumes) was carried out in a far more inclusive spirit, as it is easily evidenced by his generous inclusion of references to works relating to a wide range of indigenous customs and traditions in northern Honshû (Ainu Association of Hokkaidô 1988, 1989, vols. 1 and 2).

In the project of reconstructing Ainu history from interior perspectives, Tsugaru is essential. There, we can best see the interwoven strands of "Japanese" and Ainu history, and even beyond; indigenous values, knowledge, traditions, and skills that have been maintained side by side with those introduced by "outsiders." The Ainu component has often been deliberately hidden, especially over the past few centuries, but the closer one comes to the spiritual core of Tsugaru, the more common threads can be discovered.

The particular focus of this study is spiritual traditions and practices in Tsugaru, which reveal the distinct indigenous spirituality and heritage of the Tsugaru people. These traditions are alive and well to this day in Tsugaru, and women have been the chief motive force in their transmission. In the following chapters, I will attempt to examine the structure and contents of the shamanistic traditions and practices originating in northern Japan. Once the veil is lifted, and the hidden cultural foundations of Tsugaru revealed, we will be able to see the continuity of indigenous civilization across the Tsugaru Strait, and perhaps be able to gauge what has been lost from or underemphasized in present-day Ainu culture in Hokkaidô.

Endnotes

1 In this dissertation, "Tsugaru" is used to indicate the western part of the present-day Aomori prefecture, including the city of Aomori. However, in some cases, the eastern part of Aomori will be included when information from it pertains to the history and culture of Tsugaru, especially when discussing experiences and phenomena analogous to those found there.

"Tsugaru" is also an old name for Aomori as a whole.

2 It is probable that "Iwaki" is derived from the Ainu words ***kamuy iwakt***, "god's dwelling."

3 For the purpose of this dissertation, when the term Ainu is used as the name of a language or language family, it should not be taken to imply an absolute homogeneity over time and space, or an entire lack of any relationship with any other language in the world. Moreover, I am not assuming that Ainu linguistic evidence deriving from a particular region, place names for instance, means that the Ainu (as an ethnic group) are/were once its sole inhabitants.

Structurally speaking, Ainu is one of the so-called SOV languages. The general pattern of modification and other features associated with basic word order are consistent with the characteristics exhibited by other typical SOV languages such as Japanese and Korean. One notable characteristic of Ainu which sets it apart from an ideal SOV language is the prevalance of prefixes. Ainu verbs are marked by affixes (prefixes and suffixes) that agree with the subject and object in person and

number, contributing to the polysynthetic character of the language; voice, reciprocals, reflexives, and other derivational functions are predominantly marked by affixes; and the personal (agreement) affixes that mark verbs are attached to nouns in possessive expressions. This polysynthecity, however, is most characteristic of the language of the epics, Classical Ainu; in the colloquial language analytic expressions are more common. In other words, Ainu, along with Chukchi, offers a case of metamorphosis from a polysynthetic language to an analytic language (Shibutani 1990: 17-18. See also Kindaichi 1960 and Chamberlain 1887, which discuss Ainu as a "language isolate," Hattori 1959 and Patrie 1982 for counterarguments, and Murayama's discussion of the relationship between Ainu and other Asia-Pacific languages, including Melanesian, in Murayama 1993).

Evidence is available for a large variety of Ainu dialects, but all of these have basic structural features in common and are by and large mutually intelligible. Vovin, for instance, drew on material from about twenty different sources in his reconstruction of "Proto-Ainu" (Vovin 1993: 4).

Ainu place names, concentrated in northern Japan. indicate the continuity of certain core aspects of the so-called "Ainu" language for many centuries, perhaps even longer. Based on these, Hudson concludes that "It seems safe to assume, therefore, that a language spoken in Tôhoku from at least the eighth century was an earlier form of Ainu" (Hudson 1999: 98).

Some scholars, such as Umehara, points out that the basic spiritual vocabulary in Japanese is either derived from Ainu, or from a common ancient language family.

Its members include the words for soul (***tamashii*** in Japanese and ***ra'mat*** in Ainu), god (***kami*** and ***kamuy***), special person (***hito*** and ***pito***), life (***inochi*** and ***inot***), and spiritual person (***hegurі*** and ***kur***) (Umehara et. al. 1982: 336-346).

We might note as well that the word ***kammi*** in Inuit means "primal, the origin." The close resemblance between ***kami / kamuy / kammi***, in both pronunciation and meaning, suggests that it might be worthwhile to entertain the hypothesis of a common origin. Such cases underline the necessity to ignore modern national boundaries when researching indigenous history.

An official publication of the Hokkaidô Ainu Culture Research Centre in Sapporo provides the following discussion of the history of the Ainu language: "Like many other languages of the Far East region, such as Japanese, Korean and the Nivkh of Sakhalin, the origin of the Ainu language is unknown. Since the Meiji era, due to the Japanese assimilation policy toward the Ainu, the Ainu language had been used less and less for everyday communication. However, during this period, some Ainu people have made an effort to record both what they have heard from others and their own knowledge of the Ainu language and oral tradition. Since 1970, Ainu language classes have taken place in the form of small study groups. At present, Ainu language lessons are held at 12 sites in Hokkaidô, run by the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô. A textbook, ***Akor itak***, was published in 1994 and is being used in these lessons" (Hokkaidô Ainu Culture Research Centre, 1996: 2). This source also provides a brief discussion of the characteristics of the Ainu language: "Today, Japanese Katakana and Roman letters have been adapted for writing the Ainu language.

The tradition of putting the Ainu language in written form started recently. It is said that the Ainu language was spoken as an everyday language in Hokkaidô, Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands and the northern part of the Tôhoku district (northeast Japan). There is little information concerning the dialect which was spoken in the northern part of Tôhoku and its words and grammar are unknown. Only about 1000 words of northern Kuril Islands Ainu have been recorded. The dialects of Hokkaidô and Sakhalin are quite different in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary. There are also differences between the grammar and vocabulary between each region in Hokkaidô" (Hokkaidô Ainu Culture Research Centre, 1996: 6).

4 According to Kimura, "Seal" is 'tokari,' 'tsukari,' 'tsukara' in Ainu" (Kimura 1988a: 380-81). Another interpretation of Tsugaru in Ainu is "this side" "before" (Chiri 1956: 134, following Kindaichi's suggestion). However, neither Kimura nor Chiri was familiar with local oral tradition in Tsugaru.

5 *Chup-ka* means "sun, sunrise, east, moon" and ***kur*** means "people." Even today, Ainu in Hokkaidô call the Kurils "Chupka." Fukuda discusses various place names with their roots in the word *chupka*, including several in Aomori prefecture (1997a). One of these is Tsubo 坪 , in the village of Tenmarin in Kamihoku-gun, Aomori. The *Nihonkôki* 日本後紀 reports that at the end of the seventh month in 811, Ikako and the other Ezo chiefs in Tsumo 都母 village organized an army unit (840).

The *Shûchûshô* (1187) records a place called Tsubo-no-ishibumi: "There is Tsubo-no-ishibumi in the furthest reaches of the Mutsu nation. It is the eastern edge of

Japan. However, when Shôgun Tamuramaro (Generalissimo for the Conquest of the Ezo) was conquering the Ezo he wrote on a stone surface with one end of his bow 'the center of Hi-no-moto' (Sunrise Country). This is why it is called Ishibumi 石文 (stone text)." Although it is questionable whether Sakanoue no Tamuramaro got as far as eastern Aomori, Tsubo may be the result of a Japanese attempt to reproduce *chup* or *chupka* (sun). According to Fukuda, to this day the villagers in the above areas proudly transmit an oral tradition which explains the meaning of "Tsubo-no-ishibumi" in Ainu: *chup-ka i-sht-pa-menasht* (sun-that-great-power-eastern wind-god = Eastern blizzard over the land of the sun), which came to sound like "*chtbo tshtpumt-nasht*," which then became "*tsubo no tshtbumt*" when the Japanese settlers did not understand the original meaning (Fukuda 1997b).

6 The *Tsugaru soto sangunsht* is the most notable, and controversial, written source for this type of information. It was discovered in the storage area of Wada Kihachiro's home in Goshogawara city in central Tsugaru. It appears to be a combination of some original materials, compiled during the Edo period, and other texts from later times. The primary charge against this document is that it contains historical inaccuracies due to its oral transmission and lacks an exact context against which it can be read. The attitude of Japanese scholars towards this document has been all or nothing: either it is history or fiction. It has never been subjected to a careful examination following the accepted standards for the study of oral history materials, and so in my view still presents a more or less virgin field for study.

7 Thus, Mount Iwaki for example was traditionally called "Asobe no mori" ("Forest of Asobe"), obviously named after its volcanic activities (Shibata 1995).

8 See the historical account below, and further Namikawa for a discussion of the destruction of the Tsugaru Strait as an integrated native political and economic unit under the centralized Edo government (Namikawa 1988).

9 The term "nation" is used in this dissertation to designate the indigenous polities in question, in accord with Johnson's definition: "A large aggregation or agglomeration of people sharing a common and distinctive racial, linguistic, historical and/or cultural heritage that has led its members to think of themselves as belonging to a valued natural community sharing a common destiny that ought to be preserved forever" (Johnson 1999, entry "Nation"). "Nation" also has the advantage of being in wide use by indigenous peoples today especially in Canada: "First Nations." Note that in this context, the term "nation" does not necessarily carry the negative connotations it has acquired in some contexts from the excesses of early modern nationalism. A minority population whose social organisation is larger than a tribe, and whose identity and social structure are denied and/or destroyed, can thus be considered to belong to a "nation."

10 The term "metis" is used in this paper following the French-Canadian model. It is interesting and productive to compare the identity problems metis or mixed-blood native people have in Canada and those of the similarly situated population in Japan, including urban natives. In Japan there is no "middle" category for the

mixed-blood people, either official or unofficial — the choice that one can make at present is limited to being either an Ainu or a "Japanese."

In Canada, the definitional problem surrounding the "metis" is notorious and by no means settled even to this day. Metis or half-breeds are originally the offspring of white settlers, British and French, and their native wives. The broader use of the term is considered offensive by some native writers (cf for instance Marsden 1998), since they contend it has the effect of dividing the native community against itself. However, as we can see from the Japanese example, it might play a positive role if it enhanced an aboriginal consciousness in persons who otherwise might believe themselves "pure Japanese."

Although one of the most prominent 19th century metis leaders in Canada, Louis Riel, was only one-eighth native, the 1937 Alberta Metis Population Betterment Act defined a half-breed as a person who had a quarter Indian blood, the latter in turn identified according to federal legislation, the Indian Act (Lussier 1978: 187).

More recently, the term metis has come to include a much wider spectrum of "indigenous" persons, triggering a unity crisis in the group:

(a) a person of mixed blood — Indian and European (no matter what amount). The Manitoba Metis Federation Constitution states, for example, "a non-registered person of Indian descent" (M.M.F. Constitution, 1976, Article III, Sec. 2 (A)).

(b) one who considers himself or herself a Metis.

(c) an enfranchised Indian — one who has given up his/her treaty rights.

(d) one who received land scrip during the 1870's.

(e) one who is identified with a group that identified as Metis.

(f) a native but not a registered Indian.

(g) in some Manitoba Metis federation locals, a non-native can belong to the M.M.F. provided he/she is married to a Metis. For the sake of the administrative records of the organization, that person is counted as a Metis (M.M.F. Constitution, 1976,Article III, Sec. 2 (b); Lussier 1978: 190-191)

11 As was usually the case with the names the early Chinese gave peoples who were culturally alien to them, the word "Wa" (or "Wo" in modern Chinese pronunciation) had a number of unpleasant associations: it can mean, for instance, "dwarf," or "submissive, servile" (and as a matter of fact it has been retained with the former meaning as an ethnic insult for Japanese in modern Mandarin: *wo kou* 倭寇 lit. "Dwarf/Japanese bandits"). What the Chinese account seems to suggest is that when the Japanese became familiar enough with Chinese to understand the undertones of their designation, they modified it, either by inventing a new name, or by appropriating one (Tsunoda: 4 note 2, *Isho Nihonden* vol. 1: 9-10).

12 *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書 (*New History of the Tang*), *juan* 220: 6208, translated Tsunoda 1951: 40. The *New History of the Tang* was written under the direction of Ouyang Xiu between 1045 and 1060.

Miller 1967: 11 translates this passage with all reference to the possible aboriginal roots of the word "Nippon" excised, a curious decision which closed off some fruitful lines of inquiry to him.

13 Takahashi Tomio, an expert on the history of indigenous people in northern Japan, the Emishi and Ezo, asserts that it is nearly impossible to find historical documents to support an argument that the origin of the word Nippon (or its meaning, "sun's base") can be traced to the Yamato court (Egami, et. al. 1982: 387-400).

14 Mark Hudson suggests that Hinomoto was "used by groups such as the Andô who wished to stress their Otherness to Japan" (Hudson 1999: 223-224). In another place, he remarks "not only do we not know whether it [Hinomoto] was an indigenous or an outsiders' name, we are not even sure exactly to what location it referred — indeed, it seems to have meant different places at different times" (Hudson 1999: 242). Nevertheless, the *New History of the Tang* passage we quoted (which Hudson does not appear to have seen) seems clearly to favor the idea that 日本, whether it was read "Nihon" or "Hinomoto," was the name of a pre-ninth century indigenous polity in the Japanese archepelago.

More recently, the Ainu people of eastern Hokkaidô called themselves *sht-chupka*, meaning "true sun" (this is probably a shorter version of *sht-chuka-un-kur*, "true people at the base of the sun.") When the grandfather of Yamamoto Tasuke, a renowned elder from Akan, was asked to provide a Japanese name for the purpose of family registration, he named himself in Japanese as ヒノモトアイヌ "Hinomoto Ainu," because that was what *sht-chupka* meant. However, the local government

office did not accept this name since it was identical to the sacred name of Japan. The office thus unilaterally coined a name for him, Yatarô, which sounds similar to his Ainu name, Yaitet (Yamamoto 1991: 156).

15 The earliest references to the Wa, in the "Treatise on Geography" of the *History of the Han Dynasty* 漢書 (Ban Gu and Ban Zhao, 1st century CE), makes it clear that peoples the Chinese referred to as Wa came to pay tribute at the Han court from time to time (*History of the Han, juan* 28 xia: 1658). The *History of the Later Han* states that Wa people came to the Korean Peninsula to buy iron (*juan* 85: 2819) and that all three of the Korean states were in close contact with the Wa (pp. 2818-2820). Note that the Chinese account is using Wa here to describe the entire pre-Yamato culture area in the Japanese archipelago (and beyond), not in the meaning that Wa came to have later.

16 A Japanese historian, Ienaga Saburô, wrote as late as 1982 that there was a need to provide a more objective evaluation of the history of Japanese culture, neither nationalistic nor anti-traditionalist (under U.S. influence), but enhancing a broader, more universally valuable, livelihood of the peoples who contributed to the making of "Japanese culture" (Ienaga 1982: 8). His stance, which was then considered radical among Japanese scholars and educational planners (partly because he was involved with the controversial legal case stemming from the government failure to approve a high school textbook he wrote), is explicit in his definition of "history." This states that the beginning of history should not be equated with the beginning of a nation-state, though such a view is explicit in ***kôkoku-shikan*** (p. 9).

17 The indigenous peoples of the southern part of the Japanese archipelago maintained some independence until the eighth or ninth centuries at the least, since three indigenous states (one of which can probably be identified with the Hayato people) are mentioned in the *New History of the Tang Dynasty* (Tsunoda: 42 and 47, notes 50 to 52). Smaller offshore islands may have retained some degree of independence longer: even as late as the Chinese Yuan dynasty (13th-14th centuries), the Yuan histories state that there were more than fifty small islands on either side of Japan, all "states with their own names that were attached to it as subjects" 其左右小島五十餘，皆自名國而臣附焉 (*Yuan shu, juan* 99: 2f).

18 Egami's theory can be summarized as follows:

1) About 1000 BCE, the nomadic peoples in the dry plains of central Eurasia, the Black Sea region, equipped with iron weapons, formed aggressive bands of invaders;

2) These horsemen quickly conquered the eastern regions, and extended their power to the Amur River area;

3) The "Horsemen Empire" finally reached the Korean peninsula where they caused centuries of political conflict, and

4) By the third century A.D., the waves of nomadic invasion reached southern Japan, Kyûshû, which was occupied by an agricultural population with metallurgical technology, known as the Yayoi people.

However, his theory has many problems, including the historical inaccuracy reflected in the broad term "Horsemen Empire." It also assumes a narrow and unidirectional expansion of such an empire; for example that it reached the Japanese archipelago via the Korean peninsula alone. Finally, it is largely unsupported by archeological evidence, though physical anthropology seems to confirm a fairly massive, one-time infusion of outsiders from mainland Asia (Kozintsev 1990).

19 There is some evidence that the pre-Yamato population of the Japanese archipelago, divided into more than a hundred polities, was not particularly aggressive. The *History of the Han* "Treatise on Geography" (*juan* 28 xia: 1658) states, immediately before its one-line mention of the "peoples of Wa," that "the eastern barbarians have an innate tendency 天性 to be yielding and compliant, different from the foreign (countries) of the three (other) quarters." One possible meaning for the word "Wa" is indeed "submissive" (cf. Note 11 above).

20 Although many agree that the Han influence on southern populations in the Japanese archipelago was agricultural and metallurgical, Okada (1977) considers Yayoi culture to have actually been founded by Han traders from overseas. Okada's view is interesting, particularly in the light of the indigenous trade network which preceded the so-called Yayoi culture. According to Okada, the Han merchants gained full control over the trade network via the Korean peninsula by 108 BCE, and after that they aggressively developed markets in the Japanese archipelago (Okada 1977: 35).

21 Sometimes this expresses itself in indirect ways, such as Hudson's criticism of Umehara's hypothesis that the Jômon and Yayoi populations became integrated (Hudson 1999: 53). After all, there are only two possibilities: that the populations became integrated in some way or another, or that the Yayoi drove out the Jômon. The latter situation is exceedingly unlikely. Kozintsev states that on the basis of the available data from physical anthropology, "The abrupt change of the cranioscopic complex with the transition from Jômon to Yayoi was definitely caused by a large-scale immigration from the continent. However, the further increase of the Mongoloid component was slow.....The presence of the Jômon anthropological substratum is established with certainty in all Japanese groups. This can be explained by a shift of most Jômon populations of West Japan to agriculture and their mixture with the immigrants during the Yayoi period" (Kozintsev 1990: 265).

Kozintsev's conclusions fit in well with my own ideas, but I remain somewhat uneasy about the methodology of physical anthropology for a number of reasons. For one thing, one would think that there would be an inevitable bias towards upper-class individuals in these calculations, since the rich and powerful would be more likely to be buried in such a way as to preserve their remains for measurement. Might not the Jômon component in the middle and lower classes have been much stronger?

Elsewhere in his book, Hudson suggests that "although the Jômon people were not totally replaced by the incoming Yayoi migrants, their genetic contribution to the later Japanese was small, perhaps less than one quarter" (Hudson 1999: 81).

Before we can judge to what extent the Jômon may have contributed in an extra-genetic way to later ages, it will be necessary to evaluate a multitude of local and regional cultures in the Japanese archipelago and trace their possible Jômon roots, work that by and large has yet to be done.

22 Hanihara 1993, Ota 1981, Umehara 1982.

Umehara's work, both on the Jômon and on other aspects of Japanese history and prehistory, is controversial in some quarters. It must be admitted that some of his proclamations, such as his denunciation of the agricultural lifestyle, are both dramatic and questionable. John Ruskin, the nineteenth-century literary critic, once made a remark about Dickens which seems equally appropriate when applied to Umehara: that we should not dismiss his insights merely because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire.

Umehara's great scope — he is also a philosopher specializing in German thought, a prose writer, and a playwright — and his position as the former head of a major research institute have given a chronic stomach-ache to the more conservative of his colleagues. Sometimes this opposition is expressed in justified criticism of Umehara's flights of fancy — one cannot deny, for instance, that such works as *Deep Layers of Japan: Exploration of Jômon and Ezo Culture* (Umehara 1983) are perhaps better appreciated as literature than ethnography, though even as literature they are undeniably prophetic. But often it surfaces as petty and indeed false charges, such as the claim that his research serves the interests of the imperial Japanese state.

23 A rigidly defined "Jômon space" is also problematic in that it assumes a generally homogenous Jômon "race," neatly bounded spatially and temporally. It is impossible to imagine the existence of such a unified "Jômon race" in the absence of national borders and a politically imposed standardized culture and language.

24 See also Aikens and Higuchi (1982): 304 and 308, Figure 5.38. These figures are for Hokkaidô sites, and indeed Aikens and Higuchi usually operate under the assumption that the Ainu have always been confined to Hokkaidô. Aikens and Higuchi suggest that the earliest dates of Satsumon may well have been at least several hundred years earlier (p. 304).

25 See the discussion of southern and northern history in Fujimoto, where he compares Okinawans and Ainu. Fujimoto coined the term *bokashi no chiiki* (fuzzy area) to describe the liminal nature of northern Tôhoku and southern Kyûshû (Fujimoto 1988).

Sasaki Kômei also examines the extent of the influence of the cultures of the Jômon period on Japanese culture, at the same time describing the diverse origins and contemporary manifestations of the early hunter-gatherer societies in the Japanese archipelago (Sasaki 1986).

26 In the central and southern Japanese archipelago, the Final Jômon or Epi-Jômon period is considered to extend from about 4000 to 2000 years before the present. (Aikens and Higuchi 1982: 97)

27 Aikens and Higuchi (1982): 164-65. The village at Kamegaoka was sited to take maximum advantage of local resources: "on a wooded ridge with a marsh below and the sea only several kilometers behind, a major river just beyond the marsh, and a large bay a few kilometers downstream" (164).

28 *Kawara* are the clay ceremonial images, broadly human-shaped, found in great profusion at the Sannai site (otherwise known as *dogû*).

29 "As a result of carbon-14 dating by the National Museum of Japanese History, it now appears likely that the village at Sannai-Maruyama began about 5100 years ago and lasted until about 3900 years ago. It had been commonly believed that it existed from about 5500 to 4000 years ago — but the start appears now to have been 400 years later" (*Sannai-Maruyama Jômon Era File* 1998 no. 31: 2)

30 Lacquerware was produced in northern Japan six thousand years ago. In Hokkaidô, the oldest surviving lacquer is about five thousand years old. Ainu people favored lacquerware made in northern Honshû and in northeast Asia, but some of them also produced lacquerware themselves. In the Saru region, for example, a lacquered prayer stick, *tkupasut*, was said to have been produced by the Ainu (*Urushi bunka: The lacquerware culture* 1998: 12-13).

31 Okada Yasuhiro reports: "We dug thirteen meters in each direction, and various bone tools emerged, but in places more than half of these were needles. There were needles of various types for which there are no reported precedents. There

were both long and short needles and I saw curved needles for the first time." (*Sannai-Maruyama Jômon Era File* 1996, no. 8).

32 For this reason the original inhabitants of Sannai are often compared to the North-east Coast native peoples.

33 There were about 1300 earthen dolls found at Sannai, plus several stone ones. These were deliberately broken or burnt before they were buried or disposed of. These female "Jômon Venuses," often depicting a pregnant mother, are similar to those found in Siberia including the Maljta site, except that they are flat, indicating the possibility that they were hung against the wall (Okada and Koyama 1998: 3-6)

34 Although the Ainu have commonly been portrayed as foragers who relied heavily on fish and animals, like the Jômon populations, the disappearance of indigenous agriculture in Hokkaidô is a relatively late phenomenon. Studies suggest that plant husbandry was widespread before 1000 CE. The Satsu-Kotoni River site near Sapporo contains numerous cereal remains, grains of barley, wheat, two kinds of millets, adzuki and mung beans, hemp, beefsteak plant, rice, and melon (Crawford and Yoshizaki 1987). Further study is needed to confirm that the plant species cultivated at Sannai were familiar to the aboriginal population in Hokkaidô, and if so, when and to what extent. However, it is safe to say that the plants cultivated by the predecessors of the modern Ainu (except for the safflower) have a long history in the Japanese archipelago (Crawford and Yoshizaki 1987: 209; see also discussion in Egami et. al.: 400-407).

35 See, for example the depiction of the Ainu in *Land of Elms* (Miyajima 1998).

36 Cf. this tale from Chamberlain's collection, where the senior chief has unquestioned (at least unquestioned by human beings) power of life and death over the others. Note too the extreme importance attached to dreams, which are here almost a commodity that can be transferred from one person to another:

> *xxxviii.—Buying a Dream.*
>
> A certain thickly populated village was governed by six chiefs, the oldest of whom lorded it over the other five. One day he made a feast, brewed some rice-beer, and invited the other five chiefs, and feasted them. When they were departing, he said: "To-morrow each of you must tell me the dream which he shall have dreamt overnight; and if it is a good dream I will buy it."
>
> So next day four of the chiefs came and told their dreams. But they were all bad dreams, not worth buying. The fifth, however, did not come, though he was waited for at first, and then sent for several times. At last, when brought by force, he would not open his lips. So the senior chief flew into a rage, and caused a hole to be dug in front of the door of his own house, and had the man buried in it up to his chin, and left there all that day and night....
>
> [The God of the Privy intervenes to save the fifth chief and introduce him to the deity of whom he had dreamed the previous night.]

> ....[The badger-goddess] comforted him, fed him plenteously, and said: "You must deceive the senior chief, saying that the god of door-posts, pleased at your being buried near him, took you out, and gave you these beautiful clothes. He will then wish to have the same thing happen to him." So the man went back to the village, and appeared in all his splendid raiment before the senior chief, who had fancied him to be still in the hole, a punishment which would be successful if it made him confess his dream, and also if it killed him.
>
> Then the good junior chief told him the lies in which the badger-goddess had instructed him. Thereupon the senior chief caused himself to be buried in like fashion up to the neck, but soon died of the effects. Afterwards the badger-goddess came down to the village, and married the good man, who became the senior of all the chiefs. — (Written down from memory. Told by Ishanashte, 16th November, 1886.) (Chamberlain 1888: 44-46.)

37 For instance, Kokubun (1969) notes the considerable resemblance between some of the patterns used in Late and Final Jômon pottery found in Northern Honshû and the motifs which characterize traditional Ainu clothing. It might be added that some Ainu designs have more than a passing resemblance to the *taotte* (double-bodied dragon) found on Shang dynasty bronzes.

38 The repeated references to the indigenous peoples as *mao ren*, "hairy men," raises some interesting questions. "Mao" can indicate feathers as well as body hair, and so

it is possible the Chinese were thinking of "feathered men." Fifth century CE petroglyphs of winged humans have been discovered in Fugoppe Cave near Sapporo, together with drawings of indigenous trading vessels (Ohtsuka 1997: 98-106). It would appear that feather-costumed shamans may have accompanied the ships, a custom similar to that of the natives of the British Columbia coast.

It is particularly interesting that early Chinese legend usually depicted immortals as human beings with feathers or dressed in feathers, and the homeland of the immortals was the island of Penglai in the eastern ocean. We might note too that the earliest Chinese accounts of Japan insisted that the people living there were very long-lived (see Tsunoda 1951: 5, from the *Hou Han Shu*).

39 Takahashi Takashi 1986: 60-75, Obayashi 1994, Kimura 1988a, Yamada 1982, Otomo 1997, Chimeikara bunka o kangaeru kai ed., 1997.

These terms reflect the chronological transformation of the names given by the Japanese state to northern indigenous peoples who resisted Japanese control: first, hairy men; then Emishi/Ebisu; and then Ezo/Ainu. Some consider that the term Ezo began to be used in the 12th-13th century by the Japanese (Oishi 1988); and others trace it back a couple of centuries earlier (Takahashi Tomio 1982, Kikuchi Isao 1994). This disagreement may owe much to the stance one takes on whether the Ainu are indigenous to Hokkaidô alone or to Honshû as well (cf. also *Kodai Aterui no sato*: 29).

The term Ainu became a general designation for the indigenous people(s) in northern Japan only after the Meiji Restoration (Kitamizo 1990: 23). Vovin's work on Proto-Ainu analyzes "Ainu" as "(<*a(n)=inu?), "person," "man (in general)," where the first component, "an," means "I, myself" and the second, "inu," means "person" (Vovin 1993: 82). If his analysis is correct, then "Ainu" would thus mean "I-person."

Still other offer interesting but conflicting views. Kida (1980) argues that the Ainu's original self-designation was Kai, that the Kamu-chadhals called them Kushi, and that the Ainu in Sakhalin are called "Kui" or "Kue" by neighboring peoples. Takakura 1960 (pp. 7-8, note a) traces the name of the aboriginal people known first as Koshi from Izumo eastward, through a series of changes, from Koshi to Kushi, to Kui, to Kai, which became Kainu (? Kai-inu, the "people of Kai"?) or Ainu, and was identified with the Emishi, later Ebisu, later still Yezo. Matsuura Takeshirô, a ninteenth century northern explorer and an Ainu sympathiser, proposed the name Hokkaidô 北海道 which contains "kai" in the middle. It is also reported that the Ainu called themselves "Kainu" (Hanasaki 1993: 12). Chiri Mashiho, a native Ainu linguist, has no hesitation in saying Ezo and Emishi were Ainu (Chiri 1973j).

40 I would stress again that the ethnic category Ainu and the linguistic category Ainu are considered separately here, indicating that Ainu speakers did not necessarily share Ainu or proto-Ainu ethnicity. Only a high level of communicative fluency is implied.

41 "Based on the Tohoku place-name evidence and on general cultural continuities, Ainu seems to be descended from an ancient language in the Islands and is

unlikely to have arrived after the Yayoi. In this case, the chances are good that it is descended from a language of the initial Pleistocene colonization of the region" (Hudson 1999: 101). Elsewhere, Hudson seems to agree that the Emishi language is related to Ainu, though his discussion could be clearer: "It seems safe to assume, therefore, that a language spoken in Tohoku from at least the eighth century was an earlier form of Ainu. Bearing in mind the cultural continuities visible over this general time period ..., it does not seem too much of a shot in the dark to suggest that this ancestor of Ainu may have been spoken in the Jômon period" (Hudson 1999: 98).

42 Kindaichi considers the words *emishi* and *ezo* to be both derived from the Ainu word *enju*, meaning "people," used by Ainu in Sakhalin till recent times (Kindaichi 1925). Others, including Takakura (1960) consider the word *emishi* to be derived from the Ainu word *emush* and/or *yumasa* meaning "sword" (Takakura 1960: 7-8, note a).

43 Takahashi Takashi discusses the method of border creation employed by the "Japanese," which was to build fortified lines (they employed the same tactics against the aboriginal population of Taiwan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century). Nevertheless, the populations adjacent to these lines remained problematic for the Japanese, even after they claimed territorial control. Those who fell within the designated territorial boundary, *fushû*, did not become fully "Japanese" for generations, since the Japanese continued to treat them as second-class citizens. For example, even if they received surnames, these would often indicate non-Japa-

nese origins; and they continued to be exempted from paying taxes, but received gifts or allowances from the Emperor, like all the aboriginal peoples who remained beyond effective control (Takahashi Takashi 1986).

44 The state of Yan 燕 was conquered by Qin at the end of the Warring States in 221 BCE, and many residents of Yan were recorded as having fled to the northeast, probably following an established trade route. The first king of Korea (Chaoxian) recorded in the *Historical Records*, Man 滿 , was a former resident of Yan, and the "Accounts of Korea" in that source make it clear that even before that, Yan had exercised a degree of control or at least influence over the Korean peninsula (*Historical Records, juan* 11: 2985).

45 See *Shanhai Jing*, Yuan Ke edition: 313 note 2, attributed to Guo Pu 郭璞 (Jin 晉 dynasty), for the story of the castaways.

46 The *History of the Later Han* 後漢書 , covering the first two centuries CE, was written in the first half of the fifth century CE. The *Records of the Three Kingdoms* is considerably earlier, having been completed before 300 CE, only about forty years after the end of the Kingdom of Wei.

47 *Records of the Three Kingdoms* "History of Wei," *juan* 30: 854-858, translated Tsunoda 1951: 8-21. The exact location and affiliations of these states is a historical nightmare that our focus thankfully spares us the necessity of investigating in detail.

48 *History of the Later Han, juan* 85: 2819.

Extensive trade is greatly helped by some sort of record-keeping system, and it appears that the pre-Yamato Wa peoples had one, though its exact nature remains unclear. The *Records of a Variety of Things, Continued* 博物志續 , attributed to Li Shi 李石 in the Jin dynasty (4th century CE), contains the following passage: "In the states of Wa, Chen, and Yu 余 , some write horizontally, some write to the left, some knot cords, and some notch wood. Only in Korea 高麗 have they made tracings of excellent models, and corrected themselves according to the Chinese" (*Records of a Variety of Things, Continued, juan* 5; quoted in *Isho Nihonden* vol. 1:39).

49 "There are three varieties of the Han: the Mahan, the Chenhan 辰韓 , and the Pianhan 弁韓 . The Mahan are in the west, and have fifty-four states; they are in contact with Lelang on the north and Wa on the south .... the Pianhan are to the south of the Zhenhan, and they have twelve more states, and are also in contact with Wa on the south .... Its (Mahan's) southern boundary is near to Wa, and it also has people with tattooed bodies .... Its (Pianhan's) southern boundary is near to Wa, and thus they have rather a lot of people with tattooed bodies...." (*History of the Later Han juan* 85: 2818-2820)

50 "To the north of the Queen's land, there is a high official stationed especially to exercise surveillance over those provinces, so that they are kept in awe and fear. This official keeps his official residence in the country of Izu" (*Records of the Three Kingdoms* "History of Wei," *juan* 30: 856; translated Tsunoda: 12).

51 *History of the [Liu-] Song Dynasty* 宋書 , *juan* 97: 2395; translated Tsunoda 1951: 23.This memorial was received by the Chinese court in 478 CE.

52 "Keikôki" is the official chronicle of the era of the emperor Keikô, who ordered Yamato Takeru no Mikoto, a legendary warrior hero, to pacify the Emishi in about the fourth century CE (from "Keikôki" in *Nihonshoki* , translated and quoted Farris 1992: 84). Farris adds, we presume with tongue firmly in cheek, that "The Court believed its duty was to bring the civilizing influences of the imperial state to these misguided people, and from time to time took its duty seriously. The fertile lands and wealth of the region also played a large part in inspiring civilizing efforts by the Court."

53 He is given this title in *Nihonshoki*, "Saimeiki."

54 See also the column "The Ainu people appearing in the *Kojiki* (*The Ancient Chronicle*) and the *Nihonshoki* (*The Chronicles of Japan*)" in an official publication of the government of Hokkaidô, titled *Ainu minzoku o rikai suru tameni* (*To understand the Ainu people*).

55 More conventional gifts were common as well, such as the brocades, silk, and axes given to Inarimushi from Ezo and Shirashuesô from the Jurchen in March of 697 when they came to the southern court to pay tribute (Takakura 1960: 10 note 3).

Though Farris (1992: 84-86) appears to take the Yamato chronicles seriously, and assumes the natives were "defeated," it seems evident that the indigenous popula-

tion was trying to manage the southern nuisance as economically as they could, and as Farris admits, the court had very little control over this area at the time.

As Farris himself chronicles in detail, when the southern court attempted to tighten its grip, the response was a series of rebellions; and even when these were "put down," we may legitimately question the extent of actual Yamato control outside their forts and settlements. The type of resistance that the residents of the northeast specialized in is notoriously difficult to eradicate by conventional military action.

56 *New History of the Tang Juan* 220: 6208. Tsunoda's translation (Tsunoda: 40) is a bit loose and it has been necessary to modify it.

57 *Nihonshoki*, quoted in Matsushita Kenrin, *Isho nihonden*: 115.

"Raw" and "cooked" were traditional Chinese terms to denote the degree of assimilation of aboriginal peoples, the "raw" being scarcely touched by the blessings of Chinese culture, the "cooked" being well on their way to Sinification.

58 Horses were commonly believed to have been unknown to the Ainu in Hokkaidô until relatively late times, though some archeologists such as Yoshizaki hope to find evidence of the existence of horses among the indigenous population of Hokkaidô in the prehistoric period (Egami et. al. 1982: 54). However, Chamberlain collected numerous horse-related stories among the Ainu in Hokkaidô in the 1880s, many of which were believed by the Ainu to go back to ancient times (Chamberlain 1888).

59 Amino and Mori 1992: 10-40; Shibata 1989; see also Umehara et. al. 1982 chapter one.

Although it is commonly believed that iron technology was introduced to southern Japan via the Korean peninsula during the Yayoi period, recent findings concerning iron production in northern China, Korea, and Siberia suggest that this is not necessarily the case. Cast iron technology may well have been introduced to southern Japan by the Yayoi, but wrought iron technology and bloomery may have been well-established in northern Japan long before their arrival.

Wrought iron production in Siberia goes back to the eighth century BCE, and it was later introduced to northern China. The Siberians obtained this technology via interaction with the Scythians. Korean iron technology may have come from the Scythians, as early as the seventh or eighth century (Wagner 1993, 1996). There is no reason why northern Japanese aboriginal populations should not have taken advantage of early Siberian technology, especially given the early trade and cultural links between northern Japan and the Asian mainland (cf. Kikuchi Toshihiko 1986: 152, citing articles by Katô Shinpei in 1975, 1976, and 1976-81. See also Farris 1998).

Iron-making developed rapidly in northern Honshû. In the case of Mizusawa, Atoroi's home ground, the evidence of 4th century grindstones indicates the existence of ironmaking technology and a well-adapted use of iron by that time (Hachiya 1984: 23, Mizusawa-shi maizô bunka-zai chïïsa sentâ 1996: 14).

One of the provisions of the Yôrô Codes of 718 was a ban on the exchange of arrows, bows, and weapons with foreigners. It also stated that "it is prohibited to place smelting installations in the East direction and the North direction" (quoted Fukasawa 1998: 18). Fukasawa and others tend to assume that the traffic in materials and technology would have been from south to north, but one has to wonder, given the high technological level of northeast iron production at all periods. The northeastern ancestor of the samurai sword, the *warabite tô*, has been archeologically dated to no later than the eighth century CE. If we hypothesise that the northeast was in no way inferior in technology, but in some way superior, then the Yôrô ban, and later attempts to restrict trade in iron and iron goods, could be interpreted as a precautionary measure against dependence on a foreign (and potentially hostile) source of superior goods.

The Japanese court forbade all trade with the Emishi in 787, on the part of both farmers and government officials, which as Fukasawa points out, indicates that both groups had been engaging in such trade (Fukasawa 1998: 19).

60 Early Chinese accounts list the absence of horses as a characteristic of the people living in the southern parts of the Japanese islands.

61 The northern part of Honshû had been divided into two polities (***kuni*** or ***koku***), Mutsu to the east and Dewa to the west, the former roughly corresponding to today's Aomori and Iwate prefectures, and the latter to Akita.

62 Aterui, or perhaps more properly Atoroi, is the first Ainu-associated indigenous leader whose name is known to history. Native speakers of Ainu insist that his name in Ainu is most correctly rendered *at-oro-i*. It means "the place to soak elm bark in water" (to make the *atushi*, the traditional Ainu jacket) (see also Yamada 1993a: 95).

On Aterui see Mizusawa-shi 1994: 28-33; Mizusawa-shi maizô bunka-zai chôsa sentaa 1994: 12-47; Enryaku hachinen no kai ed. 1996; Tanaka Katsuya 1992: 97-107.

We should note that Aterui has recently been gaining popularity as an indigenous Emishi hero of Iwate among those who see Iwate as a peripheral region of Japan which needs its image "improved." The discussions taking place in local newspapers show a marked trend towards commodification of the indigenous heritage within a generally nationalistic framework (cf. *Iwate Nippô* 1999 a, b, c, d, & e).

63 In Ainu, *moray/e* means "slow stream." According to Chiri it is derived from *monay* (quiet-river) (Chiri 1956: 61). Ainu people consider More and Atoroi (Aterui) to be historical heroes, and some, such as the Saru region Ainu in south central Hokkaidô, conduct annual commemoration ceremonies for them in Iwate prefecture with the local people.

64 This would be a favorite weapon of the Japanese in their invasion of Hokkaidô as well, as Takakura notes (Takakura 1960: 12 and note 11).

65 Takakura 1960: 10 note 5, quoted from the *Sandai Jitsuroku* (*Authentic Record of the Reigns of Three Emperors*) 27.

66 Takahashi 1991a; Farris 1992: 233-37. In the background of both wars we find trade friction and indigenous people complaining of the poor deal they were getting with the Japanese in trade. For the Japanese, the attraction was not only trade goods, animal fur and the like, but also gold, as Tôhoku proved to be the best source of gold in Japan. In any case, it was after the ruin of the Abe clan, and perhaps even the Kiyohara, that Abe Sadatô was born. Takahashi Takashi has an interesting remark about Sadatô, the ancestor of the Andô family in Tosa: that he was described in historical documents as fair-skinned and huge (Takahashi Takashi 1991a). See also Friday 1997 for the discussion of the Yamato conquest of the Emishi.

67 The Andô often used the lineage name Abe in Tsugaru (Oguchi 1995: 22).

68 It appears that some Emishi people in northern Honshû may have produced and eaten cheese, a custom utterly alien to the later Yamato people, who did not touch dairy products except during the early Heian and Nara, when the court nobles sometimes drank milk, as well as eating a dairy product similar to yogurt (see Sekine 1969: 274, 289-292, for a discussion of a variety of dairy products consumed in quantity prior to the widespread introduction of Buddhism).

69 Shichinomiya 198: 76. Andô is written as 安藤 or 安東 and it is commonly assumed that the first is the earlier and the original. It is interesting, however, to remember that 安東 is pronounced "Andong" in Chinese, and means the pacifier/ruler of the East. Both in ancient mainland Asia and on the Korean peninsula, military settlements with the name of 安東 (Andong) were repeatedly established at strategic

points of trade and military activity. Nîno, for example, thinks that such a link is a possibility but unfortunately states at the same time that it "obstructs" our understanding of Andô since it means that Andô was not "Japanese" (see Nîno 1995: 9).

In Chinese records of the earliest Japanese emperors, the word Andô 安東 appears as part of the full title of the ruler of Japan, confirmed for him at his request by the Chinese emperor: "Signing himself as King of Wa and Generalissimo Who Maintains Peace in the East [Andô Daishôgun 安東大将軍] Commanding with Battle-Ax All Military Affairs in the Six Countries of Wa, Paekche, Silla, Imna, Chin-han, and Mok-han, he presented a memorial requesting that his titles be formally confirmed." (Tsunoda: 22, from the *History of the [Liu-] Song Dynasty, Song Shu, juan* 97: 2395). The Japanese ruler making this request has been identified with Hansei Tennô, who reigned from 406 to 411 (Tsunoda: 25 note 6).

We should also remember that Andô was originally not a family name but rather a collective lineage or group name (Oguchi 1995: 24).

Before the Andô established themselves at the port of Tosa, they, or at least some of them, had resided in the Fujisaki area in central Tsugaru (Irumada 1995). It is said in Tosa that the Andô moved into Tosa and replaced the former rulers, the Tosa lineage. This story sounds like the origin tale of the Nishga'a people in British Columbia, who are said to have driven out the former inhabitants of their lands.

70 Uemura 1990, Shichinomiya 1989, Ohtsuka 1995, Takahashi Tomio 1982.

71 Dewa and Mutsu respectively became the official designation for these regions in the early Nara period (Mizusawa-shi maiziobunka-zai chôsa sentaa ed. 1994: 12). There are, however, still some Uilta people living in Abashiri, northeastern Hokkaidô, today.

There is a strong tendency among archeologists and historians working on the Ainu to trivialize the Okhotsk elements in Hokkaidô history or Ainu culture, and assume that the Ainu have been a linguistically and genetically uniform population in Hokkaidô since the Jômon period: "[There is] little doubt that there has been basic biological continuity in Hokkaidô since the Jômon, notwithstanding some possible minor genetic input from the Okhotsk people" (Hudson 1999: 231-232). However, given the prevalence of Ainu oral traditions which clearly describes the existence of other indigenous groups, such an assumption is perilous. The best known pre-Ainu people of Hokkaidô were the *Koropokkur*, a people of small stature who are believed to have lived under the butterbur leaves, and who were clearly viewed as a different cultural group by the Ainu. The Ainu in eastern Hokkaidô were first assisted by the Koropokkur people, who taught them how to survive, but eventually the Ainu began to put pressure on them. So the Koropokkur left their native land, saying *tokappuch, tokappuch*, "water must dry! fish must rot!" This is said to be the etymology of the place name Tokachi (*Tokachi no Ainu densetsu*, 1986: 1-2).

72 *Hôjô kûdaiki* volume 5, quoted in Shichinomiya 1989: 264.

73 Shibuya 1988: 30-31. Some sources, such as Ootomo 1996: 35, do not agree that *Ezo kanrei* is a valid official title, in spite of the fact that it appears in several canonical texts of the fourteenth century. Endô gives a careful review of the different uses of the term ***kanrei***, regional rule, under the Kamakura government (Endô 1995b: 212-3).However, Shichinomiya points out that the *Azuma kagami* implies that the political exiles from the Kamakura state were sent to northern Tôhoku, and that the Andô, as their overseers, were authorized to be their rulers by the state (Shichinomiya 1989: 57-59).

74 There are four representative family records, ***keifu***: ***Fujisaki-keifu***, ***Andô-keifu***, ***Akita keifu***, and ***Shimono-kuni ikoma abesei no keifu***. The ***Fujisaki keifu*** is transmitted by the Fujisaki (Shiratori) clan which moved to Hitachi, and is considered one of the oldest.The date and author of the ***Andô keifu*** are not known.The ***Akita keifu*** belongs to an Akita branch of the Andô, and the final work, ***Shimono-kuni ikoma abesei no keifu*** is transmitted by those Andô who migrated to southern Hokkaidô. These ***keifu*** reflect the dual motives of the Andô: first, to authenticate their regional "hereditary" authority; and second, to confirm their relationship with the southern state (Shichinomiya 1989. Shibuya 1988).

75 The term *gôzoku* 豪族 is frequently used to designate a powerful indigenous clan / family such as the Andô, or it may simply refer to a powerful regional family. It can be used interchangeably with 土豪 "native power-holder."

76 The Andô are also mentioned as *Ezosata-daikan* 蝦夷沙汰代官 (Ezo affairs agents) in *Nitobe-bunsho* (Endô 1995b: 213).

77 The Andô were not the first to assume this title. Hinomoto ***shôgun*** was not an officially sanctioned title (though it came to be recognized by the imperial family during the Andô era) but rather a self-chosen, local one. According to Shichinomiya, the first to use such a title was Taira Masakado in the Kantô, what is now the Tokyo area, who fought for the independence of his Eastern federation in the mid-10th century (1989: 26-7).

78 Saitô summarizes the three basic positions scholars have taken with regard to the meaning of Andô's role and position as Hinomoto ***shôgun***: (1) Endô Iwao's ***chinjtu-fu shôgun*** theory (a commander in chief for a naval station); (2) Oishi Naomasa, Irumada Nobuo, and Kikuchi Isao's theory of the title as a symbol of Eastern autonomy; (3) Kaiho Mineo's theory of *Ezo datou*, "The Great King of Ezo" (Saitô 1998: 24). Oishi's view is closest to mine, in recognizing the dual identity of the Andô, and their boundary position. However, the concept of "metis" does not exist in Japan and he thus hesitates to defend the Andô's claim to aboriginal status (Oishi 1995).

79 Reproduced in Satô 1990: 128. The pronunciation of the Andô name indicated by the spelling on this map is reminiscent of Ainu rather than Japanese: "Atuy," or "ocean" in Ainu.

80 In the early Meiji period, the Meiji government attempted to integrate the former ruling class into their new centralized structure by giving them noble rank. The former regional lords were asked to provide written evidence of their family trees, which would certify their former territorial authority. The document forwarded by

the Akita family in northern Honshû, a branch of the Andô, caused a controversy among the imperialists. Just as do most of the Andô family family trees, theirs traced its origin to the enemies of the first emperor. The imperial household asked the Akita family to produce an alternative version, with its origin traced to the emperors. The Akita refused to change their family tree, saying, "We are proud of our family origin, which goes beyond Emperor Jinmu's conquest of the East. We and the Izumo families are the only families which have transmitted a family tree prior to the descent to earth of the descendants of the Sun-Goddess" (Shichinomiya 1989: 16).

81 This is something my grandparents and my father told me in my childhood, which has recently been verified by the publication of privately held documents.

82 It is not clear what the author meant by "India's King's City." It might possibly have been Old Delhi.

83 One *cho* is approximately 2.451 acres.

84 The writer of *Tosa Orai* is said to have been Kôchi Hôshi (1334-1337) who lived in a temple at Matsume in southern Hokkaidô (Shiuramura, Oguchi ed. 1995: 362).

85 Sakurai 1989: 56-60, see also Sakurai et. al. 1995. Archeological findings from the Tosa area indicate the Andô's strong connection to China and northern Asia, to the Hokkaidô Ainu, and to the "Japanese" to their south. The area is rich in fine Chinese ceramics, both those made in China and in Japan in the 13th and 15th centuries.

Chinese currency has also been found in the ruins of small-scale communities, made of tipi-like temporary huts (Sakurai 1989: 60-1, see also Sakurai et. al.).

86 Oguchi tells how this war, the Ezo rebellion, was caused partly by trade friction and partly by religious disagreements. The indigenous side felt that the "Ezo ruler" Andô was in bed with the Kamakura ***bakufu*** and imposing an unfair trade deal, at the same time trying to convert them to Buddhism. The Andô's prospective chiefs sought this opportunity to exercise leadership; thus the Ainu and the Andô fought with each other. However, the ***bakufu*** and court nobles saw this war as an Ezo rebellion, and felt that the Ezo people, including the Andô, were challenging central authority (Oguchi 1995: 30-33).

87 Southern Hokkaidô, where the Andô fled, was still an autonomous land of the Ainu, though there were many migrants from Honshû sharing it with them (see the discussion of ***watarîtô*** in Kosaka 1926, ***Suwadaimyôjin ekotoba***). It is thus logical to think that the Andô already had contacts available to support them in this new home, including local Ainu. Oishi thinks that the Andô already had a base there (1995: 178). Within a century, the Andô and Nanbu expanded their power in southern Hokkaidô, building at least twelve forts, each governed by a clan member. They maintained relatively peaceful contact with the local Ainu until the mid-fifteenth century. After the War of Koshamain in 1456, a more uneasy relationship lasted for another century.

Some of the Andô were still trying to restore their political and economic influence as the "unifiers" of the Ezo people even after Tosa was lost. Endô argues that Andô

Morosue of Akita, for example, sent a messenger to Choson dynasty Korea, seeking to establish diplomatic links and obtain a sacred Buddhist scroll. His envoy, who accompanied a Japanese messenger, identified his master as *Ezoga chishima oû Kasyá/Kaya*, which could be interpreted as "the king of the thousand islands of Ezo." Morosue's ambitious move did not, however, succeed and the sacred scroll was given only to the Japanese messenger (Endô 1995a: 96-97).

88 Proponents of the "Ainu = Hokkaidô only" theory, Enomoto and others, find it useful to endlessly coin new categories such as "proto-Ainu," "pre-Ainu," and "Ainoid" to designate the different stages of cultural transformation, in different time periods, of the Ainu, stating that "since ancient times, the Ainu have had very little racial mixing with surrounding ethnic groups" (Enomoto 1981).

Miura, among others, argues that until the end of the Satsumon period (8th to 13th century), northern Tôhoku and Hokkaidô (especially southern Hokkaidô) shared in the same culture marked by the use of ovens, agriculture combined with hunting, and the production of pottery with distinct shapes and designs (Miura 1995, Uno 1998: 4). Satsumon pottery is broadly characterized by the decorative motifs scratched on its surface.

Yoshizaki also denies the possibility that there was a "racial" change at the transition from the Satsumon to the Ainu period (Yoshizaki 1982: 227), and Aikens and Higuchi state flatly, on the basis of textual evidence, that "There are good grounds for identifying the Satsumon people as Ainu....These notices all fall during the Satsumon period, and establish beyond any reasonable doubt the ethnic identity of

the Satsumon people" (Aikens and Higuchi 1982: 319. Higuchi, we note, was a member of the Archeology Department at Kyoto University).

Fukazawa (1998) argues that the archeological feature set used to distinguish Satsumon and Ainu culture will not bear the weight that has been put on it, since artifacts cannot prove a change of ethnic group in the absence of other evidence:

> In the case of the Ainu, it is possible to consider the Satsumon and the Ainu are the same group of people in the historical sequence, since Japanese historical documents give no hint of ethnic replacement or ethnic movements or ethnic migrations between the 10th and 20th centuries....the archaeologist tends to identify a group of people who have left a material culture as an ethnic group.... However, in these circumstances, *only a historical change within the context of the same ethnic group of people can be extrapolated from such a limited aspect of material culture as pottery.* If...a change in the ethnic character of the population is predicated only on the basis of the presence or absence of pottery, the logical conclusion drawn must be that the ethnic group who created the Satsumon culture was completely extinct before the Ainu ethnic group arrived, or that they were completely invaded by the Ainu ethnic group (Fukazawa 1998: 95, my emphasis).

Indeed, even the differences that do exist have been overstressed: "As the study of the Satsumon progresses, it is gradually being understood that highly suggestive

links in material culture do exist between the Satsumon and the Ainu" (ibid: 22). Fukasawa suggests that the lack of prominence of agriculture in later "Ainu" culture was more the result of Japanese repression than of cultural change proper (ibid: 23).

89 Kikuchi's account contradicts that of the Ainu Association, which states that the Ainu in Hokkaidô developed larger regional groups (not smaller hunters and gatherers) in the thirteenth century as a result of trading activities, and some hierarchal structures formed in society (The Ainu Association of Hokkaidô, ***Brochure on the Ainu People***).

90 Ootomo states that in mediaeval times, it was customary to attach the suffix ***-inu*** (dog) or ***-kuma*** (bear) to the names of female children so that they would be protected from demons. When they reached twelve or thirteen, however, their names were changed to adult names, with the animal meanings removed. He points out that Kinume's female sibling and offspring names are examples of this practice. Nevertheless, these names are adult, so Otomo's argument does not hold. He similarly states that mediaeval male infant names are also often marked with the ***-inu*** suffix for the same reason (Otomo 1996: 526-527). While this might be applicable in some cases, there are other cases where the suffix ***-inu*** is considered to have an Ainu meaning. In some cases, both interpretations might be possible, with the Japanese naming custom masking the indigenous one.

91 When Andô is written as 安藤, it is said to be the combination of the earlier Abe 安倍 and Fujiwara 藤原 (Shichinomiya 1989: 44).

92 Some, such as Ootomo, persist in insisting that the war had nothing to do with the Ainu, and try to place this conflict solely within the context of feudal Kamakura politics (Ootomo 1996: 39).

93 It is interesting that the Ainu Association acknowledges the results of this conference as essentially egalitarian and satisfactory by their standards: "The Ainu people tacitly accepts the presence of a Wajin settlement area (*Wajtnchi*) in exchange for the distribution of a portion of taxes collected from commercial vessels travelling across the sea from Honshû to the island of Ezo. This can be interpreted as the Wajin recognition of the Ainu's 'quasi-rights' to land, and can be regarded as a kind of negotiation concluded between the Ainu and Wajin almost as equals" (The Ainu Association of Hokkaidô). However, this account conspicuously fails to acknowledge the role of the Andô from Akita in this negotiation, only mentioning Lord Kakizaki from Matsumae.

94 Shichinomiya 1989: 18.

The Akita family's other treasures include a very rare Japanese sword of the highest quality, made in the 11th century, ***Bizenkoku yûsei***. How the Andô acquired such a national treasure, given only to aristocrats of the highest rank and Shintô priests, is unknown. Contrary to the common belief that the Ainu in Hokkaidô did not know of, and therefore never possessed, high-ranked Japanese swords, some among the wealthiest also possessed Japanese swords of the finest quality (Fujinuma and Koyama 1997).

If it was a gift, it would indicate that the political position of the Andô may have been well known to the court officials in southern Japan, and that at one point they were very important to the Japanese court (Shichinomiya 1989: 18-19).

95 Compare this interactionist and processual understanding of conceptual categories with the seventeenth century Lockeian, prescriptive rules of language use and categorisation, put forward to "avoid the 'inconveniences' of the imperfection of language":

(1) Use no word without knowing what idea you make it stand for.

(2) Make sure your ideas are clear, distinct, and determinate.

(3) Where possible, follow common usage, especially that of those writers whose discourse appears to have the clearest notions.

(4) Where possible, declare the meanings of your words (in particular, define them).

(5) Do not vary the meanings you give to words.

(Paraphrased by Taylor, Locke 1690, quoted in Taylor 1990: 122).

96 Personal communication with Kaizawa Kôichi, 1994. See also discussion of a graph resembling a Chinese character (possibly 夷 , "barbarian") depicted on pottery found in northern Japan during the Satsumon period (Oguchi 1993).

97 Sasaki 1990: 138-149; Bondai 1975. It is interesting in this connection to recall what one early Chinese source said about writing in states other than China (cf. note 48, quoting from *Records of a Variety of Things, Continued, juan* 5, *Isho Nihonden* vol. 1: 39)

98 Cf. for instance the account in *Yuan shu* (*History of the Yuan*), ed. Zeng Kang, 1911, *juan* 99: 5f-v. For a summary of the arguments that the Guwei were Ainu, see Hudson 1999: 226-27.

99 The *Yuan shu* account ends by recording the dispatch of a last ten thousand man expedition, and its final words are, "What happened after that was not recorded in the histories" 其後事史失之 (*juan* 99: 5v).

Hudson takes a rather narrow view of this event, considering it strictly as evidence of Ainu expansion to Sakhalin as a result of their position in the world system, whereby they are linked directly to a dramatic spread in Japanese trade as well as confronted by Mongol aggression (Hudson 1999: 225-229). It appears that the core-periphery system he is assuming (within which they are, of course, seen as periphery) dictates that the influence from the core shall be an absolute determinant of the nature and extent of Ainu political development.

100 This type of interpretation, which attributes the development of a more complex politico-economic structure among "primitive" societies as the result of influence from more developed societies, has been strongly challenged. It is obviously not universally valid, because if it were, how did the first advanced society develop?

Even if the first complex societies were inspired by the visits of space aliens, someone would still have had to teach the aliens how to be "advanced."

Goody, for example, argues that the emergence of more complex and developed politico-economic structures in Asia (more specifically, capitalist-industrial social structures) was only possible because of the existence of pre-capitalist developments that provided the basis for the emergence of powerful industrial countries in Asia. In other words, although many might believe that these developments are sudden, and "invented," Goody's argument is that essentially, the tradition was only transformed, in adaptation to what is known as the "modern" and industrial world:

> While none may have been as dominant as they were in 'modern' Europe, these features existed in other societies where they were capable of being developed into 'modern' structures should the occasion give rise....Indeed, surely that is precisely what is happening in those areas outside Europe where Capitalism is most vigorous at this moment, that is, in Japan, and the four little Dragons (Goody 1990: 486).

Now that most of the Asian economies have crashed in a very Western way, we can say that his argument was even better than he thought.Although the example here concerns the modern world, one cannot help but recognize a parallel to the situation of the Ainu in the thirteenth century.

101 Hasegawa reviews the identity dilemma of both the Nanbu and Tsugaru clans during the Edo period, where they tried their best to cut their connections to the Ainu and indigenous elites such as the Andô upon being confronted with the realities of the feudal hierarchy. This is in sharp contrast to branches of the Andô family, which continued to assert their anti-imperial identity right up to the modern period. Hasegawa points out that the fate of Tsugaru is mirrored in this contradiction: on one hand the Tsugaru clan asserted the authenticity of indigenous rule by emphasizing the lineage link to Andô and the Fujiwara of Hiraizumi, but on the other they denied the existence of such lineages in official documents. The Tsugaru clan, as the region's elites, saw themselves as legitimately Japanese, while considering the indigenous population as pertaining to the Ainu (Hasegawa 1997).

102 Reproduced in *Ishô Nihonden* volume 2: 1412.

103 Ono 1986: 23-6.

After Kanagi was attacked in 1579, the indigenous Ainu fort, *chasi*, in Kanagi came to be called *chashi-tate*, meaning fort-fort, since *tate* is a Japanese word for fort (Ono 1986: 23). This type of "double naming" is common in places where a conquest language has been introduced into the environment of a preexisting aboriginal language. One example in Canada is the Sunwapta River in the Rockies, where "sunwapta" means "turbulent river" in the Stoney language (personal communication, Merrily K. Aubrey, Geographical Names Program Co-ordinator, Historic Sites Service, Alberta Community Development, December 13th 1999).

104 Another version of the fate of the Kiraichi Ainu chiefs appears in Goshogawara city's official history. According to this, Yae and Sasuke were said to have done the same as their colleague Fujiwara Kôan, the head of the Asahi fort in Iizume, who killed himself by burning his fort when it became indefensible against the invading Tsugaru clan (Shintani 1987: 41).

It is also possible that this is the record of the execution of a single person, Yae Sasuke, since "yae" means "I" in Ainu. The name would thus mean "I, Sasuke."

105 In Ainu, *tura* means to be "with." The name of the princess was therefore not a personal one but may have indicated her function with regard to the male newcomer. However, when the word *ture* or *ture-sht* appears in Ainu sacred verses, it stands for a shamaness who is the sister and the wife of an Ainu hero, who is also a shaman-chief (cf. Chiri 1973e). If our Princess Tora was the *ture-sht* of the executed Ainu chief Yae, then the meaning of this oral tradition would be quite different.

106 One possible interpretation is that these official Ainu villages on the northern coast of Tsugaru peninsula consisted a "free zone" for the Ainu. A certain extra-territoriality was ensured as long as the Hokkaidô Ainu kept some degree of political autonomy: they needed to come to Tsugaru for various reasons, not necessarily to trade, and needed a secure cultural zone. These villages disappear from the record roughly twenty years after the last major Ainu-"Japanese" war, Kunashiri-Menashi's War in 1789, when all of Hokkaidô fell under the effective control of the *bakufu* system without serious threat of further Ainu rebellion. There appears to be a

whole virgin field here for the study of the Russia-Japan relationship and the manipulation of Ainu manpower and identity by Matsumae and Tsugaru ***han***.

Mr. Tanaka Chûzaburô, the former director of the Keiko-kan museum in Aomori city, told me, "If you look at official documents, local people do not look like they had much communication. But we know even women crossed the ocean alone by themselves, sometimes carrying babies. They used a small ***tekkobune***, rowboat, to get to the other side" (personal communication, 1996). How easy was the trip? Expert fishermen could commute back and forth between the Tsugaru peninsula and Hakodate three times a week, if the weather was favorable (Yoshizaki 1998).

Yamada discusses his own discovery of the inseparable link between the two sides of the Tsugaru Strait, standing at the northern tip of Shimokita peninsula looking over to Mt. Hakodate on the other side: "If you look at (the official records) sitting in an armchair in Tokyo, the Tsugaru Strait appears as if it were a rigid boundary, but if one comes down here, (one can appreciate that) the local people's exchange with the other side in Hokkaidô goes back for a long time, since antiquity." (Yamada 1982a: 201-202)

107 The ***bakufu*** fortification order was given to the Tsugaru and Nanbu clans about 1807. By 1807, all of Hokkaidô was placed under the direct control of the ***bakufu*** (Takakura 1960: 51).

108 In the early seventeenth century, Matsumae ***han*** trade restrictions on the Hokkaidô Ainu were relatively loose, so they could still travel to Tsugaru and Shimokita

to trade. Trade that required great mobility was no longer possible, at least in an official manner, after the mid-seventeenth century with the establishment of ***akt-nat-ba chigyô-set*** ("feudal clan-controlled trade places") by the Matsumae ***han***, who became the middlemen, forbidding direct business interaction between the Ainu and the merchants from the south (Kikuchi Isao 1994: 77-82). However, in reality, Matsumae often let the Ainu (and Japanese fishermen) in the Tsugaru peninsula sail to Hokkaidô without official permission. *Genshi Manpitsu Fudo Nenpyô* describes how the Ainu in the village of Utesu went to Hokkaidô to fish in the 1780s (Yamada 1982a: 217).

109 *Tsugaru Ittôshi* was compiled in 1731 but its Ainu-relevant part was included in the chapter written in 1669.

110 Yamada speculates that Happila may be derived from the Ainu word ***hat-pira*** (wild grape-cliff), or ***hap-pira*** (black lily-cliff) (Yamada 1982a: 203-204).

111 Villages, once assimilated, were ranked according to their rice-production capacity. As late as 1859 Kiraichi was placed among the lowest, the rank of *ge* 下 (Kanagi town: 447).

Kiraichi appears on the record in 1728 (Kyôhô 13) when a land survey took place. This appears to be the first official survey of the Kiraichi area, but obviously the surveyors were not interested in details here (or the people were not very forthcoming with details), as their account is very brief compared to those of the neighboring villages.

The Kiraichi of that time was a community of 79 households, with a population of five hundred four persons, and one hundred six horses. The interesting fact is that unlike other villages, Kiraichi had the right to "timber" 流木, 67 *tana* 棚 of it, every year. One *tana* is a cubic measurement of piled wood, 180 cm to a side (Kanagi town: 338-9). Thus logging and charcoal making were official primary industries in Kiraichi at that time.

112 Personal communication with Kayano Shigeru, May 1999.

113 The *matagi* are commonly believed to be bear hunters of Honshû, but in reality only a small portion of *matagi* hunt bear today, or even in the past. *Matagi* communities can be found throughout central and northern Honshû, ranging from bear-hunters to *sato-matagi*, trappers of small animals in the vicinity of their villages (Taguchi 1998). Since the Meiji Restoration, *matagi* have been dubbed an uneducated marginal population with vulgar customs, not an indigenous group. However, recently there have been studies confirming a connection between the *matagi* population and indigenous hunter-gatherers in northeastern Eurasia (Satô 1998). Kiraichi is an especially clear case of a *matagi* community (*sato-matagi*) whose Ainu past is well documented.

114 Kanagi Town 1976, Miyazaki 1970, Aomori Prefecture 1987, Nebuka 1991.

The catch is that they might have to buy food at famine prices during periods of shortage; but even then, the hunter-gatherer lifestyle would partially shield them from that necessity except during the worst famines.

115 Kanagi Town 1976: 43.

During the Edo period, the villagers of Kiraichi clung to the idea that the forests and mountains were their "communal" possession, even though they had become imperial property. Villagers appear to have conducted casual private logging, accepting the risk of being caught. The unlucky could be executed. In 1744, a villager of Kiraichi, Jinbei, cut a tree to make a mortar for rice cakes to be eaten during the New Year's. Not only he himself but his whole family was executed as punishment. During the early Meiji period, there were frequent clashes between the loggers and Mountain Resource officers. It appears that the loggers and charcoal makers had an idea of "government land — people's trees" "20% government, 80% people's" and did not understand the modern concept of public ownership and management. In other words, they thought that the forests belonged to their community and did not think they were "stealing" the trees. Everything else, like fish, animals and wild plants, were free, anyway; but one day they had found themselves in a mountain which was no longer theirs. There were some lawsuits launched by village representatives, but they could not of course win (Kanagi town 1976: 124-125).

The defiant attitude of Kiraichi villagers continued into more recent times. Their illegal logging went on even after World War II, according to a former manager of the Forestry Resource department of Kanagi. When the villagers were caught, they would deny the charge and say, "***kiga bikki mottabesa***" ("The trees had babies"; ***bikki*** is an Ainu word for babies) (Tanaka, fieldwork 1998).

116 However shadowy their presence may have become to official eyes, the Tsugaru Ainu may still have left "official" traces. During my fieldwork near Kiraichi, I came across an old family registration covered with black dots. It belonged to an acquaintance of mine, who could trace her husband's family back through it to the 1820's. Numerous characters in the text had been completely blotted out some time after it was written; in most cases one, sometimes more than one. These single erased characters were found between the name of the village and the personal name that follows. We tried to figure out what the characters were, but whoever blotted them out had done a thorough job.

The family of my acquaintance's husband had traditionally worked in the mountains, and more recently in the construction business: they were not farmers. They are mostly from traditional (not ***kaitaku*** or frontier) villages in the northern Tsugaru peninsula, including Kiraichi.

This type of deletion in the family registration is very common among Hokkaidô Ainu. Their Ainu names and anything indicative of their Ainu ancestry (which was first set down at the time of registration) were later erased by the bureaucrats. The Ainu Association of Hokkaidô has been working on identifying the erased characters. Further research is needed to find out why a similar type of modification is also found in the remote areas of northern Tsugaru.

117 The late Yamada Hidezô is a highly respected Ainu place-name specialist whose "footwork" resulted in massive documentation of Ainu customs and language use. His unpublished manuscripts and notes are being reviewed by the Ainu Culture

Centre in Sapporo, and they contain a great deal of information about the Ainu heritage in Aomori and Akita (Tanaka, fieldwork, 1998).

118 As already noted in several places, scholars often take for granted that Japan is to a large extent linguistically homogenous, and that this linguistic "homogeneity" in today's Japan is the result of a gradual process of assimilation over many centuries (Hudson 1999, Lehmann 1996). This is completely wrong. The imposed and perceived linguistic "homogeneity" of Japan is the result of the government's efforts to forcefully promote a national language within the vast ocean of linguistic diversity which characterized early Meiji Japan, and traces of this diversity still remain in many remote regions today, including Tsugaru. The following paragraphs summaries this process briefly.

In 1868, the Edo feudal government and its official isolationist policy were brought to a close by an alliance of local military leaders from the southern island of Kyûshû. The subsequent Meiji period was characterized by a massive effort to import western values and commodities. Nationalism, democracy, colonization, mass-education and industrialization were all introduced under the general rubric of "modernization," presented as a necessity for national survival.

The organization and articulation of this effort seemed to require a common linguistic medium, a standardized "national" language that could be publicly spoken, written, and taught, and understood by all. Such a language was only beginning to emerge in the early Meiji period. However, since the town of Edo continued to be the capital, under the new name of Tokyo, it was inevitable that such a national

language would be based on the language found there. Of all places, the answer was found in the *yose*, vaudeville theater, where two forms of popular public narration, ***rakugo*** and ***kôdan***, or "historical narrative," were regularly performed. These two forms constituted the only ***kôwa***, or "public discourse" easily accessible to every level of Tokyo society, being in this respect somewhat similar to radio and television broadcasts today. Thus, ***rakugo*** came to play a vital role in the promotion of a uniform national language.

Rakugo influenced the political oratory of Meiji politicians, many of whom came from the south, to communicate with the Tokyo urbanites (Iwabuchi 1988:91, Tanaka Akio 1988: 6-9), as well as shaping modern literature. The most difficult task that the Meiji language planners and educators faced in the standardization of a national language was probably the unification of the spoken and written languages: the traditional diglossia (split between spoken and written languages) was seen as a serious obstacle to public literacy. This inspired the movement known as ***genbun itch undô***, or the unification of the spoken and written languages, initiated by the new wave of literati in Tokyo seeking a fresh literary style (Iwabuchi 1988: 91, Morioka 1988: 45-53).

This movement would have been much hindered without the contribution from professional storytellers, most notably Sanyûtei Enchô (1839-1900), the father of modern classical ***rakugo*** (the popular story-telling art). The new literati, who desired to create national literary works that could compete with Western literature, believed that in "modern" (= western) nations, the spoken and written lan-

guages were unified. In their attempts to create their own identity, they thus sought their model in Edo language and the culture it expressed, especially the *rakugo* performed by Enchô (Morioka 1988: 47).

Enchô's contribution to the national language was also recognized by educators. The early Meiji period saw the establishment of a compulsory education system, and by 1902, over ninety percent of primary-school-age children in Japan were attending public schools. The primary aim of the public education was the promotion of literacy, which was considered synonymous with the promotion of a national language. The foundation for the all but universal literacy in present-day Japan was thus laid in early Meiji. Since this education was implemented in parallel with the movement to unify the written and spoken languages, educators acknowledged the importance of the spoken form of Tokyo-based standard Japanese (Iwabuchi 1988: 85-59). This was one of the major reasons why Enchô's biographical work, *Shtobara Tasuke Ichidai-ki* (*The Biography of Shtobara Tasuke*) was adapted for ethical education textbooks in 1892 (Nagai 1971b: 241).

We should note however, that in their desire to promote the national language, the educators and language planners regarded the vernaculars spoken everywhere in Japanese archipelago as "evil." Like many early ESL educators, their assumption was that multilingualism was detrimental to progress, especially if it involved the vulgar, "unrefined" vernaculars of non-literate populations. Thus they often forbade the use of dialect in classrooms; if the student spoke a non-standard language, s/he would be punished by having a *hôgen-fuda*, dialect tag, placed on them, and being

forced to carry out demeaning duties. Public education was thus clearly discriminatory, and had no sympathy at all for those who could not keep up with the expected pace of "modernization" (for more detail, see Toyota 1968, Tanaka Sherry 1993).

119 In fact, eastern Aomori has become the chosen ground for nuclear power. Most recently, the fishing community of Oma on the northern shore of the Shimokita peninsula, only five miles across the sea from Hakodate in Hokkaidô, became the newest site for a proposed nuclear power station. Controversy surrounding this development led environmental activists and intellectuals outside the community to join their protest; however, at present, it appears that, as far as the fishermen are concerned, the matter has been settled by financial compensation.

It is little known that the prefecture of Aomori has been one of the chief military staging grounds in modern Japan, both domestically and internationally. Since the 1780s when the Japanese saw the Russians encroaching on their territory in Sakhalin, the Tsugaru Strait has been a vital point of national defence. Hence the heavy military built-up in the prefecture of Aomori dictated by the central government in the early Meiji period, which can be seen as directed both at domestic and external foes, the Ainu and the Russians. After World War II, Aomori prefecture was directly controlled by the U.S. military for a short period of time. One legacy of this is the large U.S. Air Force base in the city of Misawa in eastern Aomori. Although its original purpose, strategic defence against Russia, is no longer very pressing, its recent activities have concentrated on cruise missile testing. The

much-resented target flight path borders on the last wildness reserve in northern Japan, Mt. Shirakami in Tsugaru.

120 *Ktraw-kor-ekashi* means "the male elder with horns." It could possibly imply a warrior status.

121 *Au-un-moy*, is "inside-exist-quiet gulf." The suffix *-moy* indicating a gulf is said to have derived from the shape of the female uterus, also called *moy* (Yamamoto 1991: 99-100).

122 Conversation with Sawai Aku, June 1999.

123 One of the reasons why many Ainu did not wish to "come out" is that if they did, they might lose their jobs and once again become the target of racism. In the summer of 1993 when the Ainu organized an international forum for world indigenous peoples in Nibutani, the organisers receivied continuous phone calls from Ainu asking them to stop their efforts, for they were afraid of becoming visible. One mother phoned in tears, saying that her daughter, who had gone to the forum, might not be able to get married once her Ainu identity became public. It was still relatively common in the eighties for an Ainu college graduate to be rejected by prospective employers, including public school authorities, on the ground of "ethnicity."

Though their situation is somewhat different from the Hokkaidô Ainu, I have collected similar stories in Tsugaru. For example, some local people suggested that if the Ainu heritage of Tsugaru becomes public, then the people of Tsugaru would be

pressured again by the authorities. Thus many older people did not wish to "wake the sleeping babies."

The Ainu identity is still far from being "secure" to the extent that young Ainu can be openly proud of their heritage — not quite yet. Their situation should not be thoughtlessly equated with cases such as Koreans or Okinawans, whose perceived unity is supported by both having a territory of their own and a relatively greater political and social distance from the Japanese or Chinese states.

124 The proposed New Ainu Law, *Ainu shinpô*, is not to be confused with the recently implemented Ainu Culture Promotion Act, *Ainu Bunka Shinkô Hô*, which replaced the Former Hokkaidô Aborigines Protection Act in 1997. The New Ainu Law is more comprehensive: it includes proposed economic and social measures, and a definition of Ainu, in addition to a general request for Ainu education in public context, including the establishment of post-secondary level Ainu studies. From the Ainu viewpoint, the Culture Law is a less than satisfactory compromise, and many call it "money-spreading tactics," the government's attempt to distort the whole indigenous rights issue by temporary disbursement of financial support (cf. Kayano et.al 1997: 141-162).

125 Although I defined the Ainu to be from the territories presently claimed by the Hokkaidô Ainu Association, which cut the Ainu off from the "Japanese" at the southern border of Aomori prefecture, this remains a problem for those claiming indigenous heritage in other parts of northern Honshû where the Ainu language and/or "proto-Ainu" was spoken in the past. I have recently been contacted by an

indigenous person from Iwate prefecture, who considers himself to have Ainu ancestry, and who has been participating in the on-line forum for Japan's minority peoples, hosted by Japanese Koreans. He expressed in this forum the identity problems he has had since childhood — he did not look "Japanese," and he did not feel he fit Japanese norms — and how he discovered that some of his ancestors had come from formerly *fushû* villages in Iwate. From his perspective, as long as Iwate is seen as no more than a border province of Japan, the Iwate people's "regional" identity will be trapped within Japan's nationalistic social framework. If the Ainu (including Aomori Ainu) deny a link with Atoroi and other so-called Emishi warriors, they would be promoting discrimination towards their own ancestors, for this person knows (and he is correct here) that many Honshû Ainu moved to Hokkaidô from regions south of Aomori several centuries ago (see the Han World site, Zainichi ML at http://www.han.org./a/).

126 Indigenous studies challenge the academic institutions developed by and for non-indigenous populations, and view the traditional scholarly consensus in the fields dealing with human cultures with a high degree of skepticism. The proposed Coolongatta statement on indigenous education includes the following:

> 2.5 How and to what degree non-Indigenous people are involved in Indigenous education must be determined by Indigenous people at the local level. Once this role is determined it is the responsibility of non-Indigenous people to respect and adhere to the wishes of the local community.

2.5.1 Because non-Indigenous people come from a different cultural background and because Indigenous education is centered in Indigenous culture, non-Indigenous people must only be involved in the process of achieving educational objectives as determined by Indigenous people. They, non-Indigenous people, should not involve themselves in the process of Indigenous decision-making.

2.5.2 Non-Indigenous people through the various levels of government and bureacracy have an overriding responsibility to accept and uphold the education rights of Indigenous people and to know that these rights and freedoms are not negotiable (www.wipcehawaii.org/coolongatta.htm).

The indigenous people here, however, are not defined by outsiders: the definition relies on each cultural group's own identification, backed up by the socio-historical processes of marginalisation, and the present importance of their perceived indigenous roots.

At the WIPCE Hawai'i conference, for example, Celtic people from North America and Europe, Jewish people from Israel, and Korean people held legitimate Indigenous status among more "conventionally" known indigenous populations such as Ainu, Maori, or Ami from Taiwan.

127 Haugen states:

> The impossibility of stating precisely how many 'languages' or 'dialects' are spoken in the world is due to the ambiguities of meaning present in these terms, which is shown to stem from the original use of 'dialect' to refer to the literary dialects of ancient Greece. In most usages the term 'language' is superordinate to 'dialect,' but the nature of this relationship may be either linguistic or social, the latter problem falling in the province of sociolinguistics. It is shown how the development of a vernacular, popularly called a dialect, into a language is intimately related to the development of writing and the growth of nationalism. The process is shown to involve the selection, codification, acceptance and elaboration of a linguistic norm (Haugen 1972: 97).

Although the language spoken in Tsugaru is commonly called a dialect of Japanese, its "dialectal" relationship to standard Japanese is social in nature, given the forced linguistic assimilation which took place in the area begining in the early Meiji period, as I mentioned, and the criteria of mutual intelligibility, which traditional Tsugaru and Japanese fail. (For a good comparison, see Kamei's discussion on the common but inapproprite use of the term "dialect" by Japanese linguists for mutually unintelligiuble tongues such as Ryûkyû in Kamei 1960. In the Meiji period, the Ainu language was also called a "dialect.")

The dominant native language spoken in Tsugaru until at least the end of the sixteenth century is likely to have been a variety of Ainu, and there is considerable evidence that this language never died out completely in the area.

128 "A pidgin language is, by definition, one whose structure and lexicon have been drastically reduced and which is native to none of those who use it. A creole, likewise by definition, is a pidgin language which has become the native language of a speech-community" (Hall 1972: 142).

129 For Japan as a whole, see Ôtomo 1997, Kimura Keiichi 1998a, and Nenaka 1983.

130 Imada discusses 370 Ezo names discovered from inside the Amida *nyorai* statue of Gyokukeiji in Shiga prefecture in 1979. These names are those of some of over 46,000 donors from different parts of the Japanese archipelago who contributed to the making of the statue in 1212. The Ezo names contain clearly identifiable Ainu names including ones ending in "*-tnu*," a typical Ainu mark (as we have noted, it means simply "person"). These personal names in Honshû may be interpreted as the evidence of the existence of an Ainu-speaking population which was well established in Honshû by the early thirteenth century (Imada: 188-198). Kitamizu also discusses Ainu and Ainu-like personal and place names found in Japanese official records from the seventh century onwards. These personal names are mostly those of Emishi (Kitamizo 1990: 31-35).

131 Yamada argues forcefully that the Ainu place names in northern Honshû are not the result of Hokkaidô Ainu moving south for trade purpose and naming their set-

tlements, but the result of indigenous occupation of the interior by speakers of the Ainu language (not necessarily Ainu people). For example, interior Ainu place names tend to be concentrated in the mountains rather than on the plains, indicating that agricultural land came to be occupied by non-speakers of the Ainu language (Yamada 1982a: 119-121).

132 What little written evidence there is from early times tends to reinforce our trust in this method rather than undermining it. For instance, a Latin text from 1591 quoted by Hudson names the modern Hokkaido "Ainumoxori," easily recognizable as the present Ainomoshir (Hudson 1999: 208).

133 The place name Ikokuma 易国間 was earlier written as 異国間 . The name indicates the Japanese interpretation of the place as a trade port: oral tradition says that during the later Edo period Kakizaki Kurôdo from Matsumae received horses and soldiers from Russians on the continent. However, it is highly possible that the place name at least partly derives from the Ainu word ***kuma***, drying poles. The renowned indigenous chief Asitaka lived in the Ikokuma area (Yamada 1982a: 203).

This name was borrowed to be that of the young Emishi hero in the ***anime*** film "Mononoke hime," which many Ainu consider a misrepresentation of indigenous history.

134 To quote a few lexical examples of Ainu-Tsugaru common features (Nibutani dialect of Ainu), "mother" in Tsugaru is ***appa/aba***, and ***hapo/abo*** in Ainu; "uncle" is

aya in Tsugaru and *acha* in Ainu; "shoes" are *keri* in both Tsugaru and Ainu, as is "cow," *beko*; "dog," *seta*; "cat," *chappe*; "baby," *bikki*; "grain-cake," *shitogi*; "water" *wakka*; "rope," *tana/ra*; "mountain knife and hand knife" *tashiro* and *makiri*.

For more information, see Chiri and Kimura's studies of the Ainu lexical items found in other northern "dialects" such as the Akita "dialect" and the *matagi* "dialect" (Kimura 1988b; Chiri 1973j). Gotô discusses how the traditional *matagi* of Tsugaru and Akita also commonly use Ainu words, and practice customs and use folk crafts similar to those of the Ainu (Gotô 1989). Ainu describe their traditional hunting during winter as "doing *matagi*."

See also Yanagida's discussion of Ainu language and customs in Iwate in "Tôno monogatari" ("Tales of Tôno"; Yanagida 1989). Yamada discusses how he relied on northern Tôhoku "dialects," including Tsugaru, to identify Ainu placenames transcribed in Japanese sounds: local people often use authentic Ainu pronunciation instead of the Japanised version. He points out a need for Tôhoku dialect study for the purpose of understanding possible phonological change which might have taken place in some of the Ainu dialects spoken in Hokkaidô (Yamada 1982b:202-206)

The Ainu linguistic elements in Tsugaru "dialect," and the persistence until quite recently of Ainu speakers in rural Tsugaru, have often been ignored by those who consider themselves students of Ainu and/or Japanese. Neither Miller 1967, nor Vovin 1993, nor Shibatani 1990, nor even Hudson 1999 has the faintest idea of

either of these facts. We must always remember that the defining criteria between language and dialect is mutual intelligibility.

135 Fukuda 1997d. In contrast to some others, Fukuda's morpho-syntactic analysis of botanical terms in northern Honshû recognises that the dialects presently spoken in northern Honshû (which he calls Mutsu language) retain both older forms of Japanese and Ainu lexical items, often coexisting. Ainu and dialect names make up the great majority of the names of wild plants in Aomori, Iwate and Miyagi prefectures. The dialect names tend to retain the Ainu meaning even when the sound and morphological structure are transformed. For an example, a field horsetail is called *tsukushi* in Japanese but *suna-gusa* in dialect and *ota-shtp-shtp* in Ainu, the latter both meaning "sand grass" (Fukuda 1997d).

136 In historical linguistics, examination and comparison of lexical items and morphological constructions are common methods of analysing the relationship between languages (Lyon 1982: 179-215).

137 The study of oral tradition, the "oral literature" of "non-literate" populations has received a great deal of attention in recent years. In many traditional studies of oral literature, 'orality,' the spoken mode of communication, is depicted as fundamentally incompatible with 'literacy,' the written mode. It has been generally assumed by students of oral literature that there are fundamental differences in both form and function between the oral and literary texts they were describing and the canonical written texts which formed the subject matter of literary scholarship per se or the measure of a "developed" civilisation. Lord, however, in his study of

Homeric verse, *The Singer of Tales*, pointed out the incongruity inherent in this artificial distinction between oral and written (Lord 1960).

While the traditional view, an unfortunate legacy of 19th century folklore studies, is still widely held, it is becoming increasingly a minority voice. It has been especially challenged by researchers examining "secondary orality," oral tradition surviving within literate societies, as opposed to "primary orality," oral tradition in non-literate societies (cf. Ong 1982). This interest in secondary orality has provoked the development of more dynamic analytical frameworks for the study of oral tradition, that is, a communicative interaction in context (see Labov and Waletzky 1967, Bauman 1977, Tannen 1982).

138 Goodheart remarks,

> There may be something purgative in the deconstructive process, in the endlessly regressive self-interrogation that enables us to see the difficulties in any position we might take. But it would be delusive to think that such an activity as an end in itself does not risk the frivolity of a mere game or that it can satisfy needs to which a criticism of conviction and commitment is addressed....Skepticism is an historically conditioned view of experience, which does not disqualify it as a method or a system of thought, but its historical character should bar it from putting on metaphysical or universalistic airs. Certainly in the hands of *epigoni* and graduate students who possess neither the experience nor the conviction of deconstructive skepticism, deconstruc-

tion may become an absurd and wholly unjustified mechanical excercise (Goodheart 1984: 179).

139 This estimate is based on information about the final battles between the Ainu and the "Japanese" in Honshu. Hasegawa discusses several Ainu-Japanese clashes near Tosa-Minato in the Tsugaru peninsula in the late 16th century (Hasegawa 1993: 150-156).

CHAPTER THREE

AINU SHAMANISM AND ITS COSMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

> "Who will return (the Ainu tradition) to love, what would you do to return it?....You are given life for that purpose. I travelled with you to the place of death. If I do not help you (then you are) in trouble, that's why I am speaking."
>
> Aoki Aiko's *torenpehe*, a guiding spirit

In Chapter Two, I discussed the indigenous history of northern Japan in the context of the Ainu culture complex defined in Chapter One. I briefly examined the fate of the Ainu people in the Tsugaru region and the Tsugaru Strait area during the Edo period, and noted the discrepancy between the official story imposed by the outside authority, that the Tsugaru Ainu have been completely assimilated for many centuries, and the reality perceived from inside and recently documented by field researchers, that these Ainu are far from gone. I also pointed out that the Ainu are not a homogenous people, with at least three ethnic subdivisions mentioned in the histories written by outsiders, and that the indigenous population in the Tsugaru Strait area were members of one of these, the so-called Wataritô, the group culturally closest to the southern "Japanese." I supported the historical presence of this group of Ainu by an analysis of place names in the Tsugaru Strait area.

Having established the place of Tsugaru in Ainu history as a whole, we now turn to examining Tsugaru culture within the larger whole of Ainu culture, through a comparative study of shamanism. However, before we discuss shamanism in Tsugaru, we must first introduce Ainu shamanism and its related spiritual beliefs and practices. That is the purpose of this chapter, which will examine major aspects of the Ainu shamanic traditions in Hokkaidô and Sakhalin.

Shamanism is among the least studied aspect of Ainu culture, and thus reliable written sources are very few. We will focus below primarily on indigenous material, including works by Chiri Mashiho, a native Ainu scholar, Fujimura Hisakazu, who wrote on Ainu beliefs and spiritual practices based on extensive field work with the Ainu, and Nagai Hiroshi, who collaborated with the Ainu shamaness Aiko Aoki from Nibutani. The material covered is drawn primarily from Hokkaidô, from the late nineteenth century to the present, with examples from Sakhalin used from time to time for comparison. Although there is a very strong tendency among students of Ainu culture to present that culture as a unified and homogenous whole, I will indicate regional variations where it is appropriate and justified. Such variations usually tend to organize themselves into two broad groups, divided by a line between southwestern and northeastern Hokkaidô.

The approach adopted in this chapter follows Irimoto's suggestion that shamanism be seen as a complex institution:

> Shamanism is a dynamic institution which has responded to cultural, social, and historical changes and develops along various lines. Thus, for example, Ainu society has not only shamans (female healers who have limited functions), but also a wide range of means of expressing

> shamanistic phenomena, such as oral tradition, rituals, and dramas. (Irimoto 1997: 22)

In the following paragraphs, I will first try to reconstruct major features of traditional Ainu shamanism and its spiritual foundations, with particular emphasis on the roles women came to play in different times. The features to be discussed include: (1) shamanic cosmology and the shamanic worldview; (2) the terms for and definition of "shaman," and the kinds, abilities and functions of shamans, in both theory and practice; (3) the shamanic foundation of Ainu life; (4) shamanic verse and sacred oral traditions transmitted by women; (5) recruiting, initiation, training and masterhood; (6) gender-based division of labour; and (7) shamanic performance, dress and instruments. We will then take up a case study of the late Ainu shamaness, Aiko Aoki. I will also discuss, where possible, the relationship with, or similarity between, Ainu shamanism and other shamanic traditions in the Asia-Pacific region. Finally, I will examine patterns of regional variation in Ainu shamanism, as well as providing a brief account of public policies during the Edo period which may have influenced the development of Ainu shamanism in Hokkaidô.

(1) Shamanic cosmology and the traditional Ainu worldview

The following paragraphs discuss some of the key features of shamanic cosmology proposed by Eliade (1964): the three cosmic zones and the world pillar, animism and belief in souls, spirit guides, the cosmic mountain, and number symbolism. In addition to these, I will include discussions of core elements of the traditional Ainu worldview, such as the anthropomorphic understanding of the environment, the belief in sacred directions, beliefs about death, and the divine and cosmic origin of the Ainu people.

(a) The three cosmic zones and the world pillar

The Ainu world has three levels: upper, middle, and lower. The upper world, ***kanto***, is the world of deities, ***kamuy-moshir***.[1] ***Kanto*** can be further classified into lower heaven, upper heaven, and furthest heaven, the last of these being the dwelling place of ***kanto-kor-kamuy***, the ruling deity of heaven. The middle world is called ***Ainu-moshir***, the human world. The underworld is called ***pokuna-moshir***, and this is the home of the ordinary dead. Below ***pokuna-moshir*** is ***teyne-pokuna-moshir***, the wet and dark underworld, or hell, where bad souls go (Chiri 1973g: 232).

These three worlds are symbolically connected by a central axis, which makes its presence known in various ways, including the Pole Star, holy trees, holy mountains, and objects which represent these.

The pole star, as it is obvious from its Ainu name of ***ci-nukar-nociu***,[2] "the stars that we see," serves as a world axis, a common concept among peoples in circumpolar communities (Eliade 1964: 260-261). The Ainu also revere and worship holy mountains, and each mountain is marked with a holy tree, which serves to protect and guide travellers. In ancient times when the Ainu still lived in tents, their central house pole may have represented the ***axis mundi***; later, when they came to build rectangular thatched houses, they placed ***inaw***, shaved wood sticks representing various deities, inside the hearth at the centre of the house and at the eastern corner of the house, as protective deities. Outside the house, an altar would be built in the sacred direction, which differs regionally, with numerous ***inaw***, differing in shapes and meanings, dedicated to a variety of deities.[3]

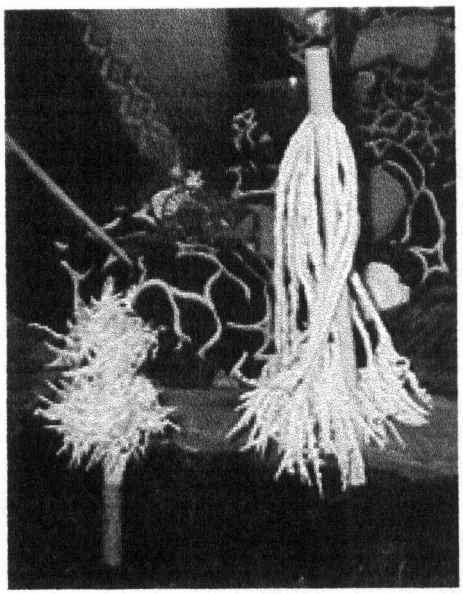


Figure 3.1:
Modern *inaw*

The altar is shaped like a mountain, and it may face a mountain. The deity of the altar is female, the ***nusa-kor-kamuy***, which appears in the form of a snake to warn humans of danger (Chiri 1973: 360).

A pair of ***inaw***, miniature cosmic trees, can be placed at the entrance of a house, offered to a holy tree, or held in a shaman's hands as ***materia medica*** during his/her seance. The ***inaw*** is also associated with birds — reminiscent of widespread beliefs in Siberia that cosmic trees reach the top of the sky — since the shaved wooden part of an ***inaw*** is referred to as ***inaw-rapu-hu***, the wings of the ***inaw*** (Fujimura 1982: 87).

(b) Animism

Ainu belief is essentially animistic: that every life form, plant, animal, wind, star, and so on, has a spirit just as humans do, and thus humans are by nature on an equal footing with every other living thing in the universe.[4] Thus the Ainu universe is made up of not only materials but of their emotional and spiritual counterparts, which are understood in mythological and metaphorical terms. Of these creatures and phenomenon, natural and man-made, those which cannot be controlled by humans are called ***kamuy***, "deities." These even include some humans who are considered truly exceptional.

There are both good and bad ***kamuy***, working for or against humans. Both types are personified, and it is understood that they have human shape when living in the spirit world. They take the form of an animal (or plant, for instance) only when they visit humans;[5] but whatever their outer form, they remain incarnations of higher beings, ***kamuy***. Thus animal husbands and wives are a common subject in Ainu sacred poetry, ***kamuy-yukar***, and shamans in particular have a close relationship with certain animals, such as the fox, wolf, otter, and snake, which can function as their spirit guides (Chiri 1973g).[6] The Ainu world is thus full of playful animal gods, creatures of fantasy such as ***mintuci***, the river spirit, the monster bird ***hurt***, and even the mischievous dead who fool humans.[7]

Irimoto relates that a variety of animals and birds appear as helping spirits of Sakhalin Ainu in their sacred oral traditions. However, with the Hokkaidô Ainu, there is a predominant tendency for the shaman's helping spirit to take the form of a snake (Irimoto 1997: 33).[8]

(c) Toren-pehe, the spirit guide

According to Fujimura, the Ainu in general believe that each human and each group of humans have a spirit guide, *torenpe-he* (Japanese: *tsuku-gami* 憑き神). Individual human spirit guides come in two kinds: the innate *toren-pehe* and the acquired *toren-pehe*.

There are two kinds of innate *toren-pehe*. Every human, regardless of his/her talent, has one to three spirit guides. A spirit guide can be the same or a different gender from

the person to whom it attaches itself. The more spirit guides one has, the more talents one is supposed to have. In addition to these *toren-pehe*, a shaman has a special innate *toren-pehe* which allows him/her to shamanize: as we noted, among the Hokkaidô Ainu a shaman's *toren-pehe* is most commonly a snake.

There are several kinds of acquired *toren-pehe*. First there is a temporary spirit guide for emergencies. This *toren-pehe* can be summoned in cases of sudden illness or other critical situations to help sustain life. Thus a sacrificial doll can be made for a sick child to help him/her recover.[9] Another type of acquired spirit guide is that which protects a human being as a reward for his/her contribution to the spirit. There are also harmful spirits which attach themselves to a human with or without causal relation to motivate their unwelcome attentions.[10]

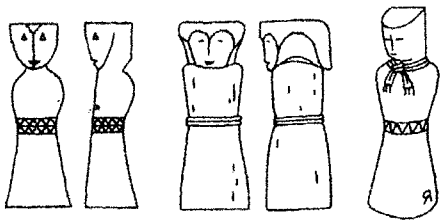


Figure 3.2: *Nipopo* sacrificial dolls from Sakhalin

Fujimura identifies five kinds of group *toren-pehe*, of which two are innate and three are acquired. The former are the lineage/clan *toren-pehe* which is a group's ancestral deity, and the spirit of the deceased ancestor. The lineage *toren-pehe* are animal deities and each clan has an origin tale depicting a marriage between an animal deity and a female human being. The concept of these group *toren-pehe* seems to be equivalent to the Japanese notion of the protective deity, *mamori-gami*.

The latter type of spirit guide, those which are acquired, are: 1) a divine being which permanently protects a village; 2) a divine being which protects a family; and 3) a divine being which protects a village in emergencies. The first of these protects all areas of the village. They are either divine beings which benefit humans either regularly or as

needed, or powerful beings which harmed the villagers in the past and which desire to make recompense for their wrongdoing. The second, the family protection spirits, are those which become special protectors of a family as a result of an encounter or in compensation for harm previously done. The last, the protector in emergencies, is a being whose aid is solicited temporarily at times of widespread disease, natural disaster, or famine (Fujimura 1982: 26-29)

The individual's spirit guides are believed to dwell in the hollow of the nape of the neck, and thus an Ainu traditionally offered a few drops of *saké* to this part of the body when invited to a drinking feast. It was also customary to acknowledge the company of one's *toren-pehe* when visiting or departing from someone; and prayers were offered to one's *toren-pehe* every month.

The *toren-pehe* grows and ages as its host human does, which explains why talent may flourish either early or late in one's lifetime. It is believed that one's *toren-pehe* manifest themselves through the action and thoughts, and a child under seven was thus under constant adult observation to determine his/her spirit guide(s).[11] If the adult could not figure out the child's *toren-pehe*, s/he would be taken to a *tusu-kur*, a shaman, who could see the spirits (Fujimura 1982: 32-34).[12]

(d) Souls

The Ainu generally believed that a person's soul could be stolen during his or her sleep, and that this could cause death or illness.[13] They believed that a soul could take the shape of an animal such as a bird, which could be captured and used to resurrect the

dead.[14] When an insect or butterfly flies over a sleeping person, it must not be killed since it may be the manifestation of that person's soul (Chiri 1975: 686). The soul also travels during sleep, and this is the cause of dreaming; when one loses consciousness, his/her soul will leave the body and sit on the ceiling pole for a time (Fujimura 198: 99).

The soul's usual dwelling is in the heart. The word for heart, *ram-at*, means "mind-string": the Ainu believed that the heart was suspended by strings inside the chest (Obayashi 1997a).[15] However, it is believed that even after an animal is killed and cut up, its soul lingers above its head, between the ears, for one night. Thus in the bear ceremony, *t-omant-e*, the head of the sacrificed bear is decorated and placed in the guest's seat after the body is removed and eaten: the bear is treated as the guest and offered *saké* and food.[16]

The Ainu believed that after death, the soul goes to the other world and joins the dead, where it continues to live just as it had in the world of the living. The only difference is that everything is opposite in the other world: right is left, and above is below. The living can enter and leave the world of the dead, for instance through a cave, often found near the community, but such a traveller will be invisible to the residents of the other world (Chiri 1973c, d).[17] It is also thought that in due course, the dead leave the world of the dead and re-enter that of the living, being reincarnated in a later generation of their own families (Fujimura 1982: 112-113).

Some scholars, for instance Fujimura, think that the underworld cave leads to a mountaintop, from which place the dead person ascends to the sky. Others, such as Matsui, note that the underworld is believed to lie at the other side of this world, beyond the sea, where the sun disappears (Matsui 1993: 126). I believe that both of these concep-

tions were present in Ainu thought, at different times or places. Moreover, there is an underlying unity between the two: in both, the soul is released from this world in the direction of the setting sun, and in both, the next world is a mirror of this one, whether horizontally (this side/that side) or vertically (below/above). The co-occurrence of the two concepts may be the result of the co-existence of originally different world views, one north Asiatic highland, and the other southern Oceanic. We shall see these north-south dichotomies or "tensions" manifest themselves in many different ways in Ainu culture.

The Ainu distinguished between a reincarnating soul and a non-reincarnating soul. The former is believed to go to the eastern sky, the latter to the west (or the western sky). There are still other souls which do not ascend but wander about in the world of the living: *Aɪnu-ramat*, *aɪsɪr*, and *Aɪnu-tukap* designate ghosts, and *wey-sune* ("bad torch light") is a death fire. At the present time, these terms have all been more or less assimilated to the Japanese concepts of fearsome ghosts and death fire, though originally they referred to entities that were neither good nor bad, just spirits or souls (*rei* 霊 in Japanese).[18]

The Ainu seem to have believed that souls could attach themselves to the back of a living human being, a belief reflected by such expressions as *sere-mak* (one's back-rear) and *Aɪnu-kurseɪ* (human-soul-carry in the back-it) (Chiri 1973l: 245). They also held that a (female) shaman could resurrect the dead by blowing air strongly at a dead person,[19] a type of magic known as *hussa* (Kayano 1977: 262-263).[20] This indicates that the Ainu distinguished the life force, the breath, from the soul, which resides primarily in one's heart, in contrast to some researchers such as Obayashi who deny that the Ainu made

this distinction. Finally, in some places such as Shiranuka in northeastern Hokkaidô, it was believed that a human being possessed six souls (again we note the sacred number six), of which five could be lost without losing life itself (Fujimura 1982: 20).[21]

(e) An anthropomorphic understanding of the environment

The Ainu understanding of nature is by and large anthropomorphic. For instance, the rivers, *nay* or *pet*, are female, since they give life to children (smaller rivers) as one travels along them from the sea towards the interior. Ainu place names often reflect this underlying assumption: *o-sat-nay* "vagina dry river," dry river mouth; *pet-o* "river anus," river mouth; *o-ni-ushi*, "vagina trees grow-many person," a river with a forest at its mouth. When a pair of islands, rivers, ponds, or so on, are found close to each other, the smaller one is marked with the prefix *pon-*, which means "child," and the larger one *poro-*, "parent," as in *pon-to* (small lake) and *poro-to* (large lake) (Chiri 1956: 72-73, 98-100; 1973k: 256-258). Mountains too, are commonly believed to be presided over by female deities, and thus in the past it was forbidden for women to climb them, since it was said this would make the mountain goddess jealous.

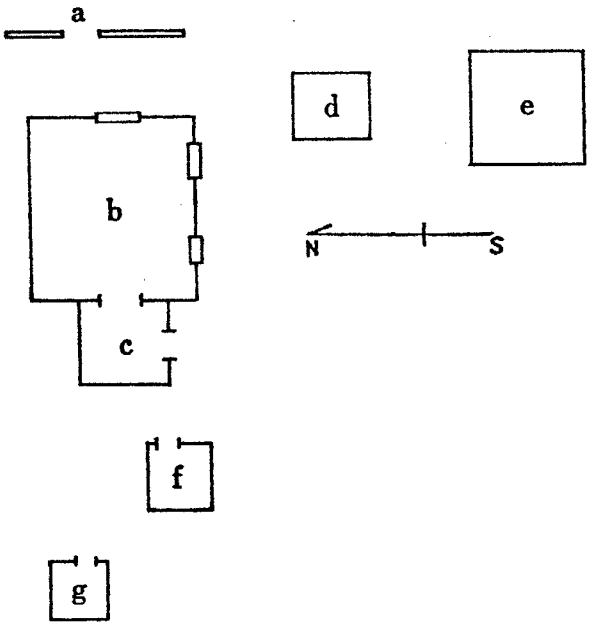


Figure 3.3:
Layout of the traditional Ainu house
(Nibutani style)

This anthropomorphic construction of reality extends to man-made objects such as houses. The house itself is seen as a mother standing on the ground with her head towards the east, with her baby on her back (cf. diagrams from Chiri 1973f: 222, Nibutani style, south central Hokkaidô). In the diagram given above, (a) is *inaw-san* or *nusa-san*, the outside altar; (b) is *cise*, the main house; (c) is *sem*, the storage area;[22] (d) is *heper-set*, the bear cage; (e) is *pu*, the storehouse; (f) is *okkayo-ru*, the men's toilet; and (g) is *menoko-tu*, the women's toilet. The roof of a *chise* is called *chise-kitay* (the house top), or *chise-sapa* (the house head).[23] The side walls are called *chise-umam*, the house waist, and inside the *chise* is the *cise-upsor*, the heart of the house. A triangular hole in the roof is *etu-pok*, below the nose. The bent roof of the eastern window, the sacred entrance to the house, is the *etu*, nose. The window covering (which is usually a mat) is the *puyar-sikrap*, "window's eyelashes." The dented part on top of this covering is stuffed with shaved wood, and hence is referred to as *cise-noyporo*, the "house brain." The wood of the frame of the house is thought of as its bones, and the thatch, as its flesh and skin. During festivities a flower mat is spread over the walls, and this is called *cise-a-sipinire*, "to dress the house with its former costume." When a fire is first lit in a new house, it is called *cise-ramaci-a-kore*, "giving the house its soul" (Chiri 1973f: 228).

Scholars usually consider the entrance into the *sem*, storage area, to be the main entrance to a *cise*, and indeed it functions as such for most practical and mundane purposes. But it is in actuality the back door: the true main entrance is the eastern window, *kamuy-kun-puyar*, "the window where *kamuy* enter." The east is the main opening for the sacred, the direction from which it is received. When a bear, *kim-un-kamuy* (mountain deity) is captured and brought to the village, it is through this window that the body

is brought inside. Because this is the main entrance, the north side of the hearth is called the right side, and the south side, the left.

This arrangement is not invariable among the Ainu, though it appears to predominate in southwestern (SW) Hokkaidô. In some areas in northeastern (NE) Hokkaidô, such as the Akan community, the sacred direction is north, and the sacred house window-entrance faces north (Haginaka 1980: 165). Moreover, in the Abashiri area further north of Akan, the sacred direction is the direction of the mountain, and the common entrance area faces the river (Hokkaidô History Museum 1974: 4). Similarly, in Sakhalin, the summer houses are built with their casual entrance facing the shore, and their *inaw* altar and sacred window on the opposite or mountain side (Yamamoto 1970: 64). Ohnuki-Tierney also reports that in Sakhalin, the Ainu traditionally picture a house as a body lying on its back with its head in the direction of the mountains and its right hand, the sacred hand, to the north, an equally sacred direction (Ohnuki-Tierney 1974: 34).

(f) East and west: directions of significance

The usual arrangement of the traditional Ainu house in SW Hokkaidô leads us into a more general consideration of directional beliefs. Like the house arrangements, these show a certain amount of regional variation; but some basic regularities can be detected.

The direction where the sun rises is believed to be associated with the sacred, *kamuy*, and hence in all regions prayers were commonly offered to the rising sun. [24] It appears that, as a general rule, the Ainu preferred to site their houses and communities in such a way that their worship of the sun would not be obstructed. This may be why

former Ainu settlement areas have place names relating to the sunrise, *asahi* 朝日 or 旭 in Japanese.

In Sakhalin, a distinct seven-meter tall special *tnaw* was offered to the sun at the back of the house, the *chup-kato-tnaw* (sun-shape-*tnaw*), on occasions of prolonged bad weather. It was also common in Sakhalin to conduct an annual sun worship ceremony (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973a: 11-13, 27-28). When animals are sacrificed, their heads are placed in the altar outside the house, and they are most commonly sent back to the east because they are considered *kamuy*. Sacrificed animals such as bears and owls are expected to return to the human world, to bring success in hunting. The east is thus the spiritual source of life, symbolizing rejuvenation, rebirth, and the continuity of cosmic creation.

In contrast, human beings are usually not welcome in the east immediately after death. Human souls set forth in the direction of the sunset, the west. According to Chiri, the oral epics of the Saru region of SW Hokkaidô say that when a person dies, his/her soul ascends to heaven making a sound like thunder. If the sound echoes in the eastern sky the soul is pushed back by the *kamuy* and thus returns to this world, and if the sound echoes in the western sky, the soul is never to return. This is why corpses were traditionally buried with their heads to the east and faces to the west, so that s/he would find his or her way straight forward.[25]

After death, the dead person is expected to walk to the other world, through the dark, with a stick in his/her hand, which also helps to guide the soul to the light. This stick is called *okkayo-kuwa* for a man, *menoko-kuwa* for a woman, and it doubles as the tomb marker. The shape of this stick varies depending on the region, as can be seen in

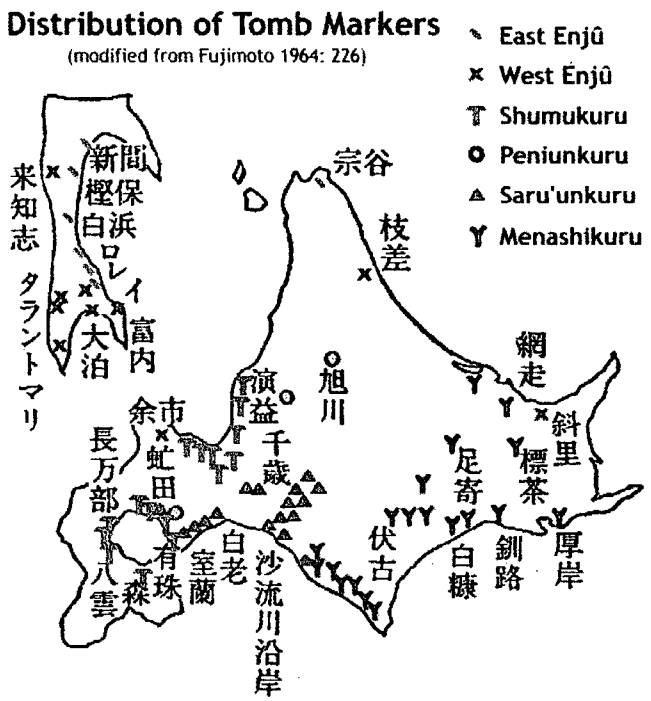


Figure 3.4:
Distribution of different shapes of tomb marker in Hokkaidô and Sakhalin

the map to the left, but in some areas in south-central Hokkaidô, for example, the male one is arrow-shaped at its top and the female one is shaped like the eye of a needle (Fujimoto 1964: 19; Matsui 1993: 40-43; see the map to the left for distribution of differing types).

(g) Beliefs about death and funeral practice

As we have mentioned, the Ainu believe that the deceased will eventually return to life after fulfilling their duties in the other world, and this belief underlies their complex funeral practices. During the traditional Ainu funeral in SW Hokkaidô, which may take days to complete since many guests come from far-away villages, the decorations and the furniture inside the funeral house are reversed — the mats are layered in reverse or placed with their right and left reversed. The charcoal, which is normally burnt from the branch end, is burnt from the root end (Fujimura 1985: 176). The following details are taken from a study by Fujimura, who conducted in-depth field research in Shizunai, SW Hokkaidô.

The visitors, after giving their condolences to the deceased's family, proceed to speak directly to the corpse, sobbing, expressing their personal sorrow in the form of melodious verse, each in his or her own manner.[26] The funeral then proceeds under the direction of the funereal chairperson, appointed by all present, with the division of labour determined by gender: men make the tomb marker from a tree found in the mountains, and do other manual labour such as digging the pit in the mountain side, while women prepare food, including *shttogi*, a round grain cake,[27] and sew the grave clothes. While the pit is being dug by several men, a woman tends a fire beside them in order to let the fire goddess welcome the deceased, and to prevent evil spirits from working mischief in the new pit (Fujimoto 1964: 44).[28]

Until the funeral rites officially begin, the dead person, lying on the floor, is treated as if s/he is still alive. Food is served to him or her as well as to visitors, and afterwards the portion for the dead is eaten by his/her relatives. Often, tobacco is offered to the deceased as well, a visitor sharing the smoke afterwards.

When the preparations are complete, the deceased is put into his/her funeral dress. Traditionally, the deceased is dressed by his/her lineage members, according to gender. Then the men address some last words to the soul of the deceased for its guidance in the passage to the other world, such as to keep a tight hold on his/her tomb stick, believed to be the departed's guide to the other world. The corpse is wrapped in a straw mat, hung from a carrying pole, and carried to the burial ground, feet facing its destination. When taking the corpse out of the house, a hole is made in a wall, since the Ainu in the Shizunai area believe that if the entrance door is used, the departed might come back through it. Moreover, the burial ground is situated on the east side of the community so

that the dead will not wander about in the places where human beings live. The tone of the funeral procession is set by the crying of the participants, especially the women.

The deceased are placed in a pit, called the *toy-cip* (earth boat), which is covered with straw at the bottom and with mats at the side and above, making it a miniature replica of the inside of an Ainu house. The name *toy-cip* may derive from an ancient practice of sending the deceased down into the sea, whose contemporary reflection we can find in various "sending" ceremonies ending at the water side. The straw, twigs, and mats which are used are cut with knives, ensuring that their souls will also depart with the deceased. The deceased's household implements such as bowls and knives, as well as other accessories, are buried; and offerings of food are placed in the pit, close to the corpse's head. To ensure that the deceased returned to the world quickly, and spends as little time as possible in the underworld, most of the things buried with the dead are intended to decay quickly.

The funeral ritual is completed by each participant rubbing the tomb stick with the soil around it, sobbing. Water is poured over the top of the tomb, and the water container is thrown onto the tomb, upside down; its bottom must be broken. The participants must leave the site quickly, never looking back (Fujimoto 1964: 45-46).

Another notable aspect of Ainu burial practice, which continued in some communities in Hokkaidô until forbidden by law, was to set the deceased's "death" house on fire as part of the funeral ritual.[29] The Ainu believed that this way, the deceased could be sure of having a home in the other world. Inside the house the belongings of the deceased, as well as basic household implements such as pots, plates, chopsticks, a mattress, and so on, were all provided to be burnt, and they had to be burnt thoroughly.[30] This way, the

Ainu believed that a dead person could take with him/her what was necessary to live in the other world. It is obvious from these practices that not only humans and animals, but the house itself and objects of common use were all considered to have "souls" which would continue to live after their destruction.

There are of course exceptions to these general practices. In cases of accidental death or the death of a young child, or a pregnant mother, special procedures were required. If a pregnant mother died, the fetus must be separated from her body, and buried next to her; otherwise, the baby could not be born again (Fujimoto 1964: 51). The most difficult case to handle was a miscarried baby or the death of an infant, since according to Fujimura, the Ainu generally feared the soul of a dead infant: it was full of resentment, they believed, due to the suppression of its life by its mother and other adults. Its will to life was strong, and so it would not be easy to console its soul.

The funeral procedure for the death of an infant under four years old is thus somewhat different from that outlined above. In such cases, the deceased is buried close to its mother, within the domestic area, such as beside the lady's toilet outside. The baby's corpse is placed in a small pit, and when covering it with soil, a small wooden stick is placed by the side of the head. This stick is removed after internment, making a little hole for the soul of the deceased baby to come out (Fujimoto 1964: 49). This practice reflects a belief continuous from Jômon times, where children's corpses were placed in earthenware pots with small holes at the bottom, such as those found at Sannai. The address to the deceased also differs, in that the temporary nature of the departure is stressed, and it is promised rebirth with the same mother.[31]

The above practices appears to be common in NE Hokkaidô as well (Hokkaidô History Museum 1974: 19-20) though in some areas such as the Shiretoko peninsula in the eastern tip of Hokkaidô some differences can be observed. These include the use of the ordinary house entrance for the removal of the deceased from the house (instead of making a hole in the wall), placing the deceased with its head to the south (the mountain side), and the failure to break the water container at the end of the whole rite. In the small community of Shari west of the Shiretoko peninsula, funeral practice follows the Shiretoko pattern except that the deceased's head is placed to the north (the beach side) (Hokkaidô History Museum 1974: 27-28, 37). In Raichishi, Sakhalin, the general pattern followed that in Shizunai with one major differences: the *ru-tonpa*, purification on the way back from the tomb. In this, each participant pulled up grass and the leaves of wild plants and scattered them on the earth as they walked, leaving a line of leaves (*ru-tonpa* means "to solidify the passage to the other world"; Hokkaidô History Museum 1974: 37). Nearing the house, they purified their bodies with the grass by the side of the road, or if it was winter, with pine branches. This was called *yay-e-ptr*, meaning "myself-by it-hurt = purify by myself." After arriving home, they would all cut their hair into a short-bob style with scissors (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973: 9).

(h) Holy mountains

As we have seen, many Ainu believed that ancestral spirits went to the mountain tops: after one died, the soul would eventually arrive there, unless it ended up in "hell."[32] Thus mountain tops and hilltops are sacred spaces for worship, including especially revered high places called ***kamuy-iwaki*** or ***kamuy-eroki*** (dwelling of ***kamuy***), ***kamuy-***

mintar (playground of ***kamuy***), ***kamuy-nupuri*** (***kamuy***'s mountain), ***poro-shir*** (parental mountain), ***kamuy-shir*** (***kamuy*** mountain), and ***sinot-mintar*** (sacred dance ground) (Chiri 1973e: 22). According to Chiri, all of these mountains and hills were associated with ancient ceremonial areas for the mountain god, where shamanic performances were held in conjunction with communal ceremonies, later reduced to mere festivities all but devoid of shamanic participation, conducted within the village (Chiri 1973e: 14). The legacy of such events can be seen in the more recent ***chi-nomi-shir*** ("our prayer mountain") where each Ainu clan offers prayer at their local altar to the specific mountain they worship.

According to oral traditions, such sacred mountain tops often had permanent stone altars at which offerings were made.[33] According to the explanation given by the Ainu themselves, their mountain worship goes back into distant antiquity. There are a number of oral traditions explaining how after the great flood some mountain tops were dry, but they had barely enough space for humans to set out the ceremonial vessels and spread the ropes.[34] Thus Ainu regional groups originally had ***twa-oro***, "ceremonial places," in the local mountains, where they worshipped their ancestors, though today these have come to be known as ***twor***, which simply means hunting territories.[35]

Such sacred mountains usually were reputed to have a mythical lake at their tops, known as ***kamuy-to*** (***kamuy***'s lake) or ***kay-kay-un-to*** (lake with white waves). It is believed that this lake is filled with sea water, and in it grows kelp, shellfish, and all sorts of sea monsters. Its shores are covered with things that have been discarded, or offered to the ***kamuy*** by humans, or objects buried with the dead. These mountains are also said to have caves on their slopes through which one can travel to the world of the dead. It is

highly likely that the ancient Ainu situated their burial grounds on the tops of their holy mountains or on hillsides, since such practices were common among north Asians, such as the ancient Pazyryk peoples (Chiri 1973e: 22, Polosmak 1994).

The Ainu believed that the ruler of lakes was a gigantic feathered snake or dragon, the ***rapusht-nupur-kur***, "feathered shaman god." The sacred snake is believed to have originally been a pair, male and female.[36] The dragon deity is also believed to be the ruler of the upper world, ***kanto-kor-kamuy***, or ***kanna-kamuy***, the latter meaning "thunder god."[37] Thus the dragon's favorite home is a ***kamuy-to***, where thunder and lightning signal to the villagers the descent of the higher deities.[38]

Modern Ainu are in general, forbidden to go to these holy mountain tops or ***kamuy-to***, and those who do go are either said to be mad, or to have gone mad and died.[39] Chiri associates such explanations with the shamanic trance state which came to be seen by many modern minds as hysteria and madness: before the visits to the ceremonial grounds in the holy mountain ceased among the Ainu, shamanic states (ASC) must have characterized the experience of the participants in the ceremony. With the decline in shamanic practice under Japanese rule, the mountain ceremonies were largely forgotten by the Ainu, with a few exceptions, occasional visits to offer ***saké*** and prayer in places such as Ashoro (Chiri 1973e: 17-20).

(i) Fire worship

Another important set of beliefs concerns the origin of the Ainu people. They are the children of the fire goddess, ***cht-ktsa-nt-kamuy*** "we-make fire-wood" (witch elm).

The fire god is the closest of the ***kamuy*** to the Ainu, and it was the first ***kamuy*** which descended from the sky world to the human world when that world was created. Ainu offer prayers to the fire first, in all ceremonies and rituals, because they believe that the fire goddess can convey a human message to other deities, even when the human power of expression is inadequate. Drinking water is also believed to be the breast milk of the fire goddess. According to an origin tale transmitted in Biratori in SW Hokkaidô, Chikisani-kamuy, or Ape-huchi, is the sister of two more important ***kamuy***, the ***hashi-naw-uk-kamuy*** (hunting ***kamuy***) and the ***nusa-kor-kamuy*** (altar ***kamuy***, ***kamuy*** of agriculture), all produced from a witch elm tree. In Nibutani, her siblings include ***kimun kamuy*** (the bear ***kamuy***), and ***kina-sut-kamuy*** (the snake, grass roots ***kamuy***) (Chiri 1973l: 364-5).

No matter how close she is to her worshippers, the fire goddess is among the most sacred of the ***kamuy***. She is the goddess of light — the source of life — in charge of not only burning fire but the warm rays of the sun as well, as she is depicted as possessing a golden fan with burning sunlight on one side, and the burning flames of fire on the other (Haginaka 1980: 25-28). The higher ***kamuy*** are addressed in many different ways, and she is no exception: ***moshir-kor-kamuy*** (the goddess of our land), ***moshir-kor-hucht*** (grandmother goddess of the land), ***kamuy-hucht*** (grandmother goddess), ***ape-huchi-kamuy*** (grandmother fire goddess), and ***t-resu-hucht*** (grandmother who takes care of us). In a more formal prayer, politer forms of address are used: ***ape-meru-ko-yan-mat*** (the goddess with rising shining fire) or ***una-meru-ko-yan-mat*** (goddess with rising shining ashes) (Haginaka 1980: 26-29).

The fire goddess also has what might be called family ties with the household: in the Saru region, her husband is believed to be the house god, ***chise-kor-kamuy***, a house ***inaw*** placed at the north-eastern corner of the house to which other ***inaw*** are offered. Depending on the region, it may also be provided with new clothes made of shaved wood twice a year. In Shirahama in Sakhalin, the ***chisekor-kamuy*** is an ***inaw*** made of a willow stick, but in Raichihi it is the dug-up root of a young tree placed upside down.[40]

This practice of treating ***chisekor-kamuy*** as though they were idols, or guests, is comparable to similar customs found in Tsugaru and discussed later, so I would like to add a few details here. In the past, in Shirahama, the ***chisekor kamuy*** was not only clothed in new shaved wood every spring (April) and fall (October), but also other ***inaw*** were offered to it. These ***inaw***, called ***so-pa-inaw*** (seat-above there-***inaw***), come in two sets, each set representing male and female deities respectively, and each set consisting of three ***inaw***. The main one of these is called ***nusa*** (altar), the two which accompany it, ***inaw-kema*** (***inaw***-legs). Different kinds of tree are used for each male and female set, and the tree used also differs according to the season. It is said that this elaborate ritual is no longer practiced today (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973a: 12, 26-27).

(f) The number six

The number six, ***iwan***, is the Ainu sacred number. It is said, for instance, that one must try six times to succeed in a pursuit, or have something in a set of six to be complete, such as six brothers on an expedition. In Ainu sacred verses, six is often repeated to make up a set of twelve:[41]

no-ou an-aine	(as I fight)
no-ou tane-anat	(since then)
no-ou sak-pa iwan-pa	(six summers)
no-ou mata-pa iwan-pa	(six winters)
no-ou u-koiki-an-aine	(gone fighting)

(from "Monster bird on a pine tree" in Kayano 1988: 473)

In other cases six is made up of two threes, as in:

no-ou u-kunne-rereko	(three nights)
no-ou u-tokap-rereko	(three days)
no-ou noiwan rereko	(six full days together)

(from "Monster bird on a pine tree" in Kayano 1988: 468)[42]

(k) The home in the sky

When one reads Ainu sacred verses, one often encounters phrases and expressions indicating their intimacy with the sky world, a sense of freedom from gravity and the deep conviction that their true home is somewhere in the heavens among the stars. This sense of freedom may stem from the fact that the Ainu were once sailors and sea traders, not limited by the boundaries of the land, as discussed in Chapter Two. Indeed, to this day this seagoing outlook is ingrained in their ordinary life. They still name their hearth in relation to the sea: the wooden frame around it, which is used for placing food from the large pot over the fire at the center, is called *t-nun-pe*, which means "to fish." In epic poetry, the ashes in the hearth are often compared to sea water (Chiri 1973e: 41).

The Ainu believe that the sun, moon and stars are ships, travelling in the sky. The Ainu cradle, ***shtnta***, is also seen as a ship: one lullaby contains the verse "the sleeping ship has come down, ***ho-chtp, ho-chtp***," where the refrain ***ho-chtp*** is derived from ***ho-chtpo***, meaning "row the boat!" The immediate presence of the stars and the sky, cosmic awareness, permeates traditional Ainu life, just as the sea currents and river streams do.[43]

In another lullaby the ***shtnta*** is in the sky. The following poem is called "Six Cradle" and I quote it in full since it provides a context for the discussion here:

Why do you cry?
You are crying because you want to know,
Then I tell you
How they are
Passed the misty sky,
through the starry sky,
then next,
through the true heaven
the beautiful river runs
let's go along the river
at one side, there are
silver oak trees, silver stones,
and the field of silver mugwort
at the other side, there are
golden oak trees,
golden field of mugwort,

golden stones,

that scene, shining

still walking along the river,

there is a golden house, a large house

one side of the house

old clouds, ice clouds

are drawn,

one side of the house,

sun clouds, burning clouds

are drawn, in that house,

the soul creator god,

hangs sixty ***shinta*** (cradle) on the upper seat

hangs sixty ***shinta*** in the lower seat

they rock as the god faces the lower seat

they rock as the god faces the upper seat

baby cries are flowing over

Ainu ***moshir***

over human's land

then that which is born

is sleep, so it goes,

but you are crying

wanting to hear

so I tell this to you.

(Kayano 1977: 264-266)

In this poem, a child is still in the hands of the creator of all life forms, safely guarded in the cosmic symphony of all children in creation.

The ***shinta*** is also the spaceship of the gods who visits the Ainu land from the upper world. In a ***kamuy yukar*** called "Shower of embers" a deity, son of the thunder god or the dragon god in high heaven, descends to the land of human beings riding a ***shinta***. When he finds himself unwelcome in an Ainu village led by Samainkur, he hits the "head" and "tail" of the ***shinta***, pulls its ropes fore and aft, sending down showers of rocks and burning embers, and eventually destroying the whole village.

Although in that poem the ***shinta*** is simply referred to as a vehicle, in another story called "Fire horse" the flying vehicle is a horse. In this story a young Ainu man faces a trial: to ride two horses to the upper edge of heaven six times and to the lower edge of heaven six times. One of them was a fire horse, the other was an ice horse. The hero is given a magical fan which has the sun on one side and ice on the other side, which he uses to deal with the two horses (Kayano 1977: 131-140, 193-212).[44] Yet another ***kamuy yukar***, "A servant of the ***kamuy***," depicts a ***kane-shinta***, literally a "metal cradle" or space ship inside which a pilot is located. The pilot in this poem is a little raccoon, a servant of the ***kamuy*** in heaven, who saves the lives of human beings by stopping a tidal wave with his iron fan (Nefski 1991: 200-206).

The complex of beliefs about the sky is also reflected by the sacred sites in different regions, where the divine culture heroes of various groups of Ainu descended from the sky, or ascended back to it. In the Nibutani area for instance, this is a sacred mountain which is believed to be the place of descent of the divine culture hero Okikurumi.

(2) Terms and definition of shaman

Having sketched the broad themes of Ainu shamanic cosmology, I will now examine various aspects of Ainu shamanism and related issues connected with gender. I will begin by first discussing how the Ainu shamanic profession can be located within the broad definition of shamans and shamanism used in this study. Moreover, this discussion needs to be placed in the context of actual operation, since what people say and what they actually do tends to differ.

In the case of the Ainu, a critical review of studies of Ainu shamans reveal the highly complex nature of their present existence and historical evolution. In short, scholars such as Irimoto contend that Ainu shamans, known as *tusu-kur*, are essentially trance possession mediums. Nevertheless, in reality, the classifications the Ainu themselves make are much less rigid, and their discourse about shamans tends to be guarded, cautious, and allusive. This is understandable and justifiable given the socio-historical circumstances they have been placed in by Japanese rule (Irimoto 1997).

In Chapter One, I defined shamanism to be a universal "religious" experience which provides its participant the experience of direct contact with the metaphysical and the belief in the survival of souls, which manifests itself in a variety of culture-specific ways

(Cardena 1989; Hamayon 1994; Heinze 1988, 1989; Pattee 1989). A shaman is a person who communicates with what is culturally considered divine or "supernatural," and restores balance between the human world, the natural environment, and the cosmic Order. Shamanism is not a quirk, or a consolation prize for the mentally or physically ill, but has been, can, and should be a natural product of optimum human cognitive ability, though in common with other innate human talents, the shamanic gift will be present to a different degree in each person. I believe that the above definitions are sufficient to identify the shamanism and shamans of the Ainu, among whom all women were traditionally devoted to shamanic duties of some sort, as is the case in some other indigenous shamanic traditions in Japan.[45] This is contrary to the still dominant belief that shamans are born entirely different from the rest of the population.[46]

Indeed, in order for us to understand shamans and the shamanic profession in the Ainu world, we need to first envision a society where, to use Ridington's words, everyone is given an opportunity to learn and thus "little bit know something" about shamanism and omnipresent "power." Classical studies of shamanism, too often depict shamans as individuals devoted to a full-time divine profession, "chosen by the spirits," standing out completely from the common herd: shamans are seen as an absolutely extraordinary category of humans whose privileged status is recognized and respected by the community at large: "specialists." The usual definitions of shamans and shamanism, as seen for example in the classical authenticity debate on the Siberian male-shaman type marked by the flight of the soul rather than spirit "possession," has taken place entirely detached from the day-to-day realities of the peoples who culturally engage in the so-called phe-

nomenon of shamanism, including the indigenous peoples of northern Japan (Eliade 1964, Lewis 1971, Ridington 1997).

This conception of shamans as permanent and fixed indigenous "religious specialists" is undoubtedly a product of preconceptions about the nature of religion, religious authority, and the divine common to researchers who have grown up within literate and bureaucratized state-level societies, whose religious assumptions are heavily influenced by the great Middle Eastern monotheistic religions and their concept of supreme Deity as an absolute, awesome, omnipotent Other. In this tradition, there seems to be an unconscious assumption that to be directly touched by the divine is an overwhelming, supremely rare experience that usually has a stunning, indeed shattering, effect on the ordinary psyche: a bolt of lightning on the road to Damascus. One could hardly ask for a worse presupposition when studying societies where shamanic duties are a matter of collective concern and social routine. No wonder many indigenous people tend to deny that they have shamans in their communities: that kind of shaman would be intolerably disruptive in any earthly society. As I have been told first-hand by many traditional practitioners of indigenous shamanic arts, real-world shamans consider such unstable figures to be at best troubled, and at worst simply sick.[47]

Statements such as the one below, which is typical and by no means the worst example that could be cited, reveal some of the commonest mistakes such outsiders are apt to make:

> As a professional, the shaman was born with special skills or initiated by the spirit. This implies that not everyone could become a shaman. (Lin 1994: 294)

Where I come from, northern Japan, no shaman is born with special skills or permanent power, or becomes a shaman simply by means of initiation by a spirit. To become a shaman, and to remain one, requires individual will and commitment, in addition to whatever gifts one receives at birth or develops during one's life, a combination of natural talent, training, and social support. Some might argue that shamans are born with special souls; indeed, in some societies the shamanic succession is determined by tracing the reincarnation of these souls. Nevertheless, even if one is born with a special soul and seeks to follow the shamanic profession, one can never become a fully fledged shaman without learning appropriate social codes and displaying attitudes and skills judged satisfactory for a shaman by others.

Nor, of course, is it true to see shamanism as a mere dramatic presentation of a shamanic cosmology or story, "shamanism without shamans," as Irimoto puts it (Irimoto 1997). This takes the "essence" of shamanism away from the shaman and puts it into an performance (easy to commercialize and commodify), but it still assumes that there is an "essence" to be isolated, a pure shamanism. Between the two extremes, the shaman as the chosen "superhuman" and the shaman as the empty and ultimately disposable bottle for some mysterious elixir known as shamanism, is the reality embedded in the lives of real humans.

In short, there is no such thing as an abstract, immutable, inert shamanic power which can manifest itself naturally without being exposed to a shamanic culture; nor is there a shamanic "performance" that will grind out shamans and "shamanism" like a sausage-maker grinds out wieners, a uniform product regardless of what was fed into the machine at the start. Shamanism cannot be reduced to a neat essence and packaged as a

cure-all for the spiritual ills of modern society: take three times a day and call the spirits in the morning. Nevertheless, this is what all too many so-called "neo-shamans" seem to aspire to, either a decontextualized and rootless elixir to soothe themselves, or — in the more dubious representatives of the genre — the oldest and surest form of alchemy, shamanism as a magic potion to turn other's hopes and fears into gold for their own pockets.[48]

All this is illusion. Becoming a shaman and keeping up with the "profession" is a constant process of learning, like any other profession or social task. The most commonplace professional pianist has a far better understanding of the discipline needed to become a shaman than any of the "neo-shamanic" illusionists will ever command. Shamanic ability is a talent, just like musical ability, present in everyone to varying degrees. It may increase, decrease, or evolve during a shaman's life, for any number of reasons, as we will see in the case study of Aoki Aiko in the later part of this chapter. The fact is that shamans are real individuals who choose by their own will to serve others in this calling, or to take on shamanic duties from time to time, not puppets of "spirits" or their society. This point is all too often ignored by observers. If a shaman is to be accepted by society in that role, indeed if he or she is to successfully interact with the spiritual powers, then s/he must have a strong desire to be a shaman, and a conviction that it is a meaningful vocation.

In some, perhaps many, small-scale traditional societies, this desire for spiritual maturity is constantly encouraged, and spiritual development forms the core of all aspects of education. Opportunity is distributed more or less equally to community members, but the choice remains with the individual. In such societies, including indig-

enous communities in northern Japan, shamanism is not an exclusive activity reserved for professionals or chosen individuals alone. In many small-scale traditional societies, even the most gifted shamans live as ordinary persons, indistinguishable from the rest of the community for most of the time. They have no tags to wear, no signs to raise, no glory to express: they are just doing a duty for the community.

I am by no means indicating that all individuals in an Ainu community are equally considered "shamans." The Ainu do distinguish those whose innate talent is strong and who work hard to develop it, just as we can perceive the difference between a concert pianist and an unpracticed beginner. My point here is that even so, it remains in the end a matter of degree, and the distinction between shaman and non-shaman depends heavily on context. The Ainu approach to the sacred is grounded in their own practical needs, and hence their dealings with the spiritual are essentially matter-of-fact: an experienced and gifted Ainu takes on a shamanic duty when and only when his or her contribution is required by others, and they do not even seek compensation for their labour, since it is a responsibility rather than a "job."

For many scholars, shamans and shamanism are nothing but words on paper; and their interest tends towards the manipulation of a reality "dead" enough to be controlled. But as Ridington and others have suggested, those who wish to engage in a reciprocal conversation with the keepers of a living shamanic heritage must try not to lose sight of the often divergent elements of reality embedded in the lives of shamans and their followers (Ridington 1997, Cruickshank 1990, White and Archibald 1992, Robinson 1992). I, for one, have no intention of becoming a living expert on dead shamans.

(a) Kinds, abilities and functions of shamans, in theory and practice

Ainu shamanism may have developed from an earlier system where the two classical shaman types, "soul flight" and spirit possession, coexisted, with a division of labour, complementing each other, though in more recent times the female trance-mediums commonly known as ***tusukur*** have become the norm. ***Tusu*** means ***fu-jutsu*** in Japanese, or shamanic practice, and ***kur*** is an honorific meaning "person," hence ***tusukur*** means "honorable person who conducts shamanic practices."(Irimoto 1997: 30). The ***tusukur*** diagnoses and heals diseases through trance-possession, during which ***kamuy*** and ancestral spirits can reside in her, and possesses knowledge of the spirit world, taboos, and medicinal herbs.[49] Some of them are also clairvoyants searching for lost things, fortune-tellers interpreting dreams, and midwives. But as far as the documentation on Hokkaidô Ainu is concerned, their role in modern times was more or less confined to pragmatic issues such as curing the sick or locating lost things, rather than to public performance or ceremonial masterhood. Furthermore, as I will show below, it is a mistake to assume that Ainu shamanhood falls entirely within the ***tusukur*** classification.[50]

According to Chiri, the only native academician on Ainu language and customs, shamanism was at the core of ancient Ainu culture. It included both male and female shamans, and it consisted of numerous shamanic ceremonies and festivals throughout the year. Before traditional Ainu shamanism went into a decline after the mid-Edo period, Ainu society was based on a developed theocracy which functioned through elaborate rituals grounded in a complex belief system. In those days, shamans, especially male shamans, had political power as chiefs, and even led military forces in times of war (Chiri 1973e).[51]

Chiri believes that originally there were both male and female shamans, though over time a gender-specific division of labour developed, which we will return to below: male ceremonial masters who conducted ceremonies and sacrifices, and female shamanesses who managed practical dealings with the spirits.[52] Shamans cured the sick through seances and traditional medicine, performed the roles of various deities in shamanic dramas, and gave prophecies while possessed, a practice known as *tusu*, or divination.[53] The various rituals of Ainu justice, such as ordeal by hot water or burnt rock, may originate in shamanic practice.[54] Ainu shamans, especially in Sakhalin, are also known to have performed magic tricks such as rope and/or net escapes (Chiri 1973e).

Chiri considers Ainu shamanism as a whole to have deep historical roots and pluralistic origins, and he feels it is likely to have gone through several transformations. This can be observed in the great variety of words all relating to the meaning "to shamanize": *tusu*, *nupur*, *kinra*, *kinin*, *uere*, *ue*, *imu*, *oyna*, *saman*, *saymon*, *romoc*, and *sinot*. The Ainu words for shaman are equally numerous. *Tusu ainu/kur* and *nupur kur* are common designation for actual shamans but there are mythological shamans of all sorts: Ainu-rak-kur, O-ainu-orushi-kur, Wariune-kur, Oyna-kamuy, Aeoyna-kamuy, Samain-ur, Okikurumi, Yairesupo — all half-human half-god culture heroes celebrated in sacred verses; and Kotan-kor-kamuy, Kotan-nukur, legendary giants suggestive of ancient shamans. The terms designating monsters such as *pawc*, *topoc*, *uekur*, *kimn-ainu*, *koshamain* etc. are also considered to have originally meant a shaman or a shaman's spirit guide (Chiri 1973e: 28).

It has been noted, however, that there are regional differences in the modern practice of shamans between Sakhalin and Hokkaidô. For one thing, the persistence of male

shamans among the Sakhalin Ainu can be contrasted with the near-monopoly of women in Hokkaidô. Male Sakhalin Ainu shamans clearly show the influence of Siberian shamanism, not only in their shamanic regalia, characteristically Siberian, but also in their practices and beliefs. Pilsudki described in 1905 how they heal diseases, protect against epidemics, restore good fortune in hunting, identify thieves, and predict the fortune of a journey. Some shamans are said to be able to quiet storms and transform rough waves into wind, while others can control rain, thunder, and storms. In general, Sakhalin Ainu shamans seem to retain a more individualistic and impressive display of shamanic ability in a much less constrained way than has ever been ethnographically recorded of the Hokkaidô Ainu *tusukur*. Their style of performance is showy: they announce the arrival of helping spirits by imitating the roars and cries of wild animals, or the sound of trees in a storm. The shaman walks around the fire while praying and chanting, with rhythmical, quick steps, through the smoke and the scent from the fire on which elm branches have been placed (Pilsudki 1909: 27-28, Wada 1961: 13-14, 18-19, Ohnuki-Tierney 1974: 110-115).

The Ainu may have borrowed the term *saman* directly from their northern neighbors, the Tungus-speaking peoples in Siberia, through contact with them or others influenced by them.[55] However the word came to them, it took on a different meaning among the Ainu, one which did not necessarily have much to do with the spiritual experts common among the peoples in Siberia. *Yai-sama*, for example, is a spontaneous oral poetry meaning "I-*saman*" ("I-sing-myself"). Again, the Ainu trial by ordeal of boiling water is called *saimon*, indicative of a link with Siberian shamanism. The otter is called *e-shaman* in Ainu, and Chiri suspects a link between the animal and shamanic divination

techniques using otter skulls, called *e-shaman-ki*.[56] In short, the Ainu concept of "shaman" is somewhat analogous to the Inuit concept of "snow": a paucity of general, overall terms but a rich selection of more specialized vocabulary.

Among the contemporary Ainu, persons with spiritual abilities are named according to the abilities they display. According to Nagai, the Nibutani Ainu recognize several varieties of spiritual ability: *tusu* (trance-possession), *u-e-inkar* (clairvoyance), *u-e-potar* (incantation and curse), *tek-e-inu* (the healing hand), and *imu* (a kind of spontaneous trance). Of these, *tusu* and *u-e-inkar* are key attributes of a shaman, and so persons with these abilities are called *tusukur* and *u-e-inkar-kur*, where the honorific *kur* means "person," as already noted.

Even though in a formal sense these abilities may have different names, this does not imply that they designate mutually exclusive functions or roles. In practice a person may have more than one shamanic ability, as was the case with Aiko Aoki, who had all of those listed above. Ainu women traditionally produced *tusukur*, and their legacy, *kamuy-yukar* (sacred verses) are said to be created during trance. Chiri says that women in general were traditionally considered *tusukur* and that the functions of the community, men's hunting, and even war depended on their existence (Chiri 1973e).

None of this means, however, that the Ainu failed to distinguish those particularly gifted and skilled in shamanic talents from the rest. It is simply that the persons most vital to the shamanic heritage are not necessarily found with the overt label of "shaman," *tusukur*. In my view, midwives, *i-ko-inkar-kur*, played a crucial role in transmitting the spiritual and medico-physiological wisdom and skills of the Ainu people, at least in some areas in Hokkaidô. As we will see, Aoki Aiko was an expert *tusukur*, *ueinkarkur*, and a

fluent Ainu storyteller, but what made her truly "professional," in the sense that no one else could replace her, was her training as a midwife. The arts of the midwife mastered by Aiko reveal the achievement of Ainu science, unknown to ethnographers. Under this blanket category, Aiko subsumed the highly esoteric aspects of Ainu traditional medicine, permeated with both spiritual learning and biological and medical knowledge proper, including that pertaining to pharmaceutical and neurological science. While the status of ***tkoinkarkur*** in and of itself does not designate an overall shamanic category, in practice midwives came to be the most important and loyal keepers of the sacred heritage of the Ainu.[57]

(3) The shamanic foundation of Ainu life

As we have indicated above, although the Ainu do recognize expert shamans, shamanic practices are by no means solely in their hands. Before we get into a discussion of these more committed, trained, and gifted shamans, it will be useful to provide a brief account of the overall shamanic foundation of Ainu life, to illustrate how mundane it once seemed for the Ainu to practice "magic" or perform ceremonies with and for spirit beings.

Ainu shamanism once featured dramatic performances of sympathetic hunting and farming magic, rain and wind sacrifices, and other incantatory acts, accompanied by songs, dance, and music.[58] The legacy of these dramatic performances can be seen in the renowned Ainu bear sacrifice, the *iomante*; and the owl sacrifice.[59] But in the past, similar ceremonies were done on a large scale with respect to sea creatures of major signifi-

cance, the killer whale and whale, ***atuy-koro-kamuy*** (the ruler of the sea), and even for dogs.[60]

Although it is no longer practiced in the traditional manner today, the ***tomante***,[61] a winter hunting ceremony, used to include the use of the fresh bear skin just after the bear was killed, by a young villager who re-enacted the bear's behavior during the ritualized hunt. As we will see, this bear-skin dance was commonly performed by ***matagi*** in northern Japan as part of their bear ceremony until relatively recently. Chiri speculates that this rather bizarre performance is a legacy of older, more fully dramatized forms depicted in sacred verses, ***kamuy-yukar***, where shamans put on a mask and costume to disguise themselves as a bear, and acted out, through dance and songs, the whole scenario of the bear ceremony, beginning with the bear's coming out of its cave, wandering in the mountains where it is hunted by the hunter, and finally returning to the spirit world with gifts from humans (Chiri 1973e: 10-11).

The ***tomante*** is rarely conducted today, and recently it has come to be held during the winter. It was originally a sacrifice offered to the mountain god at the beginning of the winter (probably around the time of the winter solstice). ***Iomante*** is, however, acquiring a new life on stage as a musical drama performed by an Ainu fusion music group influential in the Ainu ethnic revival. Scholars such as Irimoto contend that such performances produce essentially the same shamanic experience with the audience as does the traditional ceremony by Sakhalin Ainu shamans: as we quoted before, "Shamanic sphere without shamans" (Irimoto 1997: 39). If he is correct, Ainu shamans indeed have no genuine significance in their cultural revival;[62] but I think his ideas are a combination of wishful thinking and sheer nonsense.

Another example of Ainu sympathetic magic involving a shamanic performance is the wind sacrifice, passed down in communities with a strong fishing tradition. In order to appreciate the significance of the wind sacrifice, we need to appreciate the influence of the eastern blizzard, called *yamase* in Japanese, which affected hunting, farming, and especially fishing. Thus, the Ainu developed a ritual drama to tame the blizzard, *pewre-chep-ekanok-inomi*, which has been transmitted in the community of Yakumo in southern Hokkaidô under the name of the *pewrecep-ekanok-inomi* (running salmon welcome ceremony).

In fall when the salmon fishery begins in the rivers, the cold blasts of the *yamase* can interfere with it for days on end. When this happens, the Yakumo Ainu gather at the mouth of the main river, on the beach, and create an altar made of many *inaw* called *nusa-san*, to pray. After the prayer is offered, four young people are chosen from the community to perform the roles of the four winds, west, south, north, and east. The first three are good ***kamuy*** and they dress up in beautiful costumes and hats, but the last, the eastern wind, is a bad ***kamuy*** and hence is dressed in old ragged clothes. The first to appear in the dance is the eastern wind ***kamuy***, then the rest join, each beginning from their own directions. The eastern wind dances violently, throwing sand and splashing water at the audience. The other three chase the bad ***kamuy*** into the sea until he comes out, exhausted, and apologizes to the audience and the good ***kamuy***, begging for forgiveness. It appears that the role of bad (*wen*) ***kamuy*** was originally played by a shamaness, the village chief's wife (or "sister"), as recorded in ***kamut-yukar*** in many parts of Hokkaidô. The village chief also appears as a shaman, the master of ceremonies (Chiri 1973e: 8-10).[63]

In fact, animism and shamanism were an integral part of every aspect of traditional Ainu life, to the extent that shamanic practice made up a varying but never entirely absent component of every ordinary activity. This was still true in some communities, with a great degree of regional variation, well into this century. To sum up, there is no fixed boundary between the sacred and profane in traditional Ainu culture, and every moment in life is an opportunity to learn something about the shamanic present (which some might call "power") and to engage in reciprocal conversation with the forces of creation. This understanding of spiritual knowledge is similar to that of the First Nations traditions in North America now actively pursued by indigenous educators, including those in post-secondary institutions, in which respect for all beings and forces operates at every level of conversation and interaction (White and Archibald 1992, Ridington 1997).

There appears to be an underlying philosophy of natural conservation which dictates that at least in theory, the Ainu should respect every life form they utilized: trees, birds, animals, plants, none could be killed and used by the Ainu without an expression of respect and reverence for them. For example, the Hokkaidô Ainu expressed their joy through dance and song upon encountering the bear mushroom.[64] This kind of mushroom is especially treasured among the Ainu since it often grows to a huge size, which is what inspires its name.[65] Among the Sakhalin Ainu, when they harvested bear mushroom in the fall, they imitated the action of bear hunting upon encountering the mushroom, with men holding spears in their hands. In their mind, the harvesting of bear mushroom this way was a type of sympathetic magic, anticipating their success in hunting during

the new season at the same time that it celebrated the life force of the mushroom, which had enabled it to grow so big.[66]

Another common piece of Ainu sympathetic magic was performed in cases of difficult labour. In Sakhalin, it usually took the following form. A man, holding a large dog's food dish made of a long log with *inaw* placed on top, stands right outside the pregnant woman's house, opens its entrance door slightly, and says, "Why did you not tell me that my grandchild is suffering this way? Since I came, she will give birth quickly!"[67] Then another man by the hearth inside stands up, walks towards the entrance, opens it widely, and rushes out, saying, "Sorry it was my fault, I knew you were my neighbor but I forgot about it, sorry I did not tell you sooner!" It is believed that the baby is sure to be born safely shortly after this ritual is concluded. The reason why the first man holds the dog's food dish is to pretend that he is a dog, since dogs are believed to have easy labours.[68]

Again, straw dolls were used to prevent the entrance of disease into Ainu villages.[69] The Ainu believed that all diseases are caused by *kamuy*: smallpox, for instance, is called *pa-kor-kamuy*, "year-control-kamuy," since the Ainu considered the smallpox to travel like a migratory bird. A common and important method of repelling smallpox involved the use of *imos-kamuy*, straw dolls, placed at the river mouth or village borders.[70] In Nibutani, for example, a bundle of mugwort was used to make the *imos-kamuy* (see the picture to the left) with willow sticks stuck into the bottom to

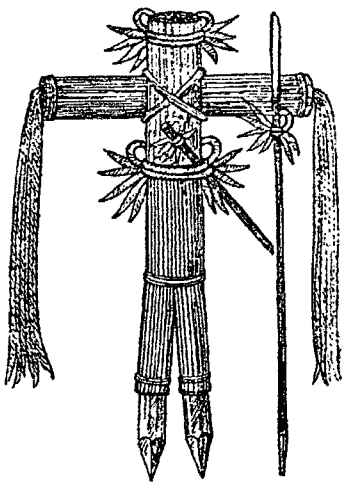


Figure 3.5:
Traditional straw doll

make legs. Its head and waist were decorated with shaved wood bands, and its hands were similarly decorated with long pieces of shaved wood; a spear made of mugwort, *noya-op*, and a mugwort sword, *noya-emus*, were dedicated for it.[71] The straw doll was given five "hearts," made of charcoal, in the chest, legs, and arms, so as to make it five times stronger (Kayano 1977: 191).

To sum up, Ainu life was once full of magico-dramatic forms of expression, personal and collective, reciprocal dialogs with the invisible forces, ***kamuy***, which could bring benefit to humans. It appears that there were great regional and seasonal variations in these dramatic expressions, though today most of them are only preserved through oral traditions, not actual performance.

These shamanic performances lie at the heart of Ainu culture; but personal rituals are equally valuable. Few Ainu at the present time still offer rice and ***saké*** to the ancestral spirits whose presence is felt everywhere: carrying a sack full of rice and a small container of ***saké*** at all times was not peculiar to expert shamans but a practice of many ordinary women. Thanking the ***kamuy***, and maintaining a good relationship with them, was as frequent and ordinary an activity as cooking and eating, since according to Ainu belief one never eats alone: even when food is only served to you alone, you are sharing it with the ***kamuy*** (Nogami 1992; 59).[72] There is a host of opportunities to speak with the sacred in every aspect of Ainu life, just as is the case with the spiritual teachings of native Americans.

Last but not least important, I should note the central place dreams have in Ainu life. Dreams are considered manifestation of the sacred, and as I discussed in Chapter Two, the Ainu treasured good dreams to an extent they considered them a purchasable com-

modity to bring good luck. Having dreams is essential to figuring out the course of things in general, but especially so for matters concerning subsistence, such as hunting. Traditionally, when Ainu men go hunting, ***matagi***, their activities are guided by the dreams they have in the mountains. Dreams are often interpreted in discussion with people around, such as other hunters or family members. If one wishes to have a message delivered during one's sleep, one prays to deities before one goes to sleep, so that s/he can have meaningful dreams (Fujimura 1982: 100-102). Not all dreams are equally valid; many resemble individual hallucinations and fantasies. But some dreams carry messages which are targeted at other people, or the community at large. The most memorable and impressive dreams are considered "true," dreams which carry a message.

Some appear to have a special gift to see things through dreams, rather than through ***tusu***, and in such cases they too, have a special guiding spirit, which is often though not always a snake (Matsui 1993). However, these dream seers do not seem to be granted a status equal to the shaman. Shamans, on the other hand, always rely on dreams and visions (clairvoyance) as much as they do on ***tusu***.

Dreams constitute a vital part of Ainu reality, and frequent dreamers, of colorful and vivid dreams, have an important function in their society, and are not considered abnormal. However, some Ainu informants told me that some modern psychiatrists had approached their dreaming with curiosity, considering it a pathological condition and telling them that colorful dreams indicate mental illness. Upon hearing this, they began denying having had any dreams at all, and indeed the frequency of their dreams decreased (field work 1998-1999).

(4) Shamanic verses transmitted by women: Kamuy yukar as sung narrative

Ainu oral literature can be classified into two main categories, prose and poetry. Of the two, only the poetic forms are called *yukar*, originally derived from *yuk-kar*, "to imitate the prey." According to Haginaka, *tusu-sinotca*, the shaman's song produced during the possession known as *tusu*, is considered the general basis of Ainu *yukar*. These *tusu-sinotca* were originally spontaneously delivered prophecies or divinations for specific occasions, but some of them enjoyed broad circulation and further refinement over time, and entered the repertoire of Ainu oral literature as *oyna* or *kamuy yukar* (Chiri 1973g: 239). The following is an example of *tusu-sinotca* quoted in Haginaka, transmitted in the Iburi region of central Hokkaidô. Here, a village chief's wife became ill and a *tusukur* was asked to find the cause of her illness, a message which she delivers in sung-narrative form. The shamaness is possessed by the snake, which is the spirit guide of the sick woman, and hence the refrain particular to the snake deity, *sa-e-e-sa-a-o-o* is used here:

sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o tane te-ta	Right now
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o a-un-nisuk kusu,	I am asked
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o inkar-as ko,	to see, then
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o kotan-kon-nispa	The chief
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o machi toyta ita,	his wife when farming
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o cipiyak nok	used snipe eggs
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o ari haru	with the grains
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o petneka-an ko	wet them
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o sino-karu	produce a lot

sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o an-pe ne ari	so they say
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o wpaskuma	old wisdom
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o an-pe ne kusu,	there were
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o cipiyak nok.	snipe eggs
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o nepkor an-pe	looking like those
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o okay awa	there she saw
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o ari amam	and took fox tail millet
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o petneka awa	soaked in them and then scattered
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o oroyachiki	unexpectedly
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o isepo nitne-i	evil rabbit
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o irara kusu	tricking her
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o hoiyo wa,	jokingly
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o nokihi are	put his own testicles
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o ruwe ne awan.	there.
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o tempe kusu,	Thus
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o isepo nitne-i	the evil rabbit
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o po oture kusu	trying to get his testicles back
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o chise-kor-katkemat	this lady of the house
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o sampe-atu kuy-kuy	biting her heart's string
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o kor-an ruwe ne.	is what he is doing
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o tampe tasumi	her illness

sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o ikkewe ne	is caused by this
sa-a-e-e sa-a-o-o ci-pita hawe ne.	so I explain.

(Haginaka 1980: 14-17; translation mine)

A *tusu-shtnotcha* can deliver messages pertaining to illness, or the causes of all sort of things, etymological explanations, the origins of things, or fortunes or indications of impending danger – it is a divine message spoken by a natural creature other than a living human.

Yukar are further divided into two categories, *kamuy-yukar*, sacred verses, and *yukar*, epic poetry (Haginaka 1980).[73] Our discussion here focuses on *kamuy-yukar*, the most ancient and ornate form of all Ainu oral literature, created and transmitted primarily by women, which uses classical Ainu vocabulary and phrases, *atomute-itak* (decorative words) (Chiri 1973a: 164). *Kamuy yukar* are rarely performed today, and their transmitters are all quite elderly and very few in numbers. Like other oral Ainu literature, *kamuy-yukar* must be learned and memorized. Traditionally, there were feasts and ceremonial occasions to enjoy a variety of oral literature, but today such opportunities are quite rare.

Kamuy yukar can be broadly subdivided into two types, *kamuy-yukar* and *oyna*. They are both first person narratives sung with refrains known as *sake-he*, but they have major differences. While the pivotal characters of *kamuy yukar* are natural deities — animals and natural forces such as fire, wind, and thunder — those of *oyna* are half-human and half-god, shaman/culture heroes of the Ainu *oyna-kamuy*, whose names vary in different regions.[74] *Kamuy-yukar* thus reflect the beliefs discussed earlier, that beings and forces of nature are equal to humans, and are kin to the extent that a totemic rela-

tion can be expressed; and that they manifest themselves in various forms to the eyes of humans, but in another world, on a higher level of existence, they take human shape. *Oyna*, however, reflect a more hierarchical relationship within Ainu society, where the influence of a powerful man, a shaman-chief, can determine the well-being of the clan society. Thus Chiri considers the ***kamuy-yukar*** type to have existed prior to the *oyna*, since the latter assumes human superiority over ***kamuy***, culture over nature (Chiri 1973a: 156-7).[75]

However, it is also possible that the concept of *oyna* was introduced to the Ainu from their northern neighbors, and came to acquire a different meaning among them, as already noted. Corresponding to the Tungustic word *saman*, Yakut has *oyuna* (Eliade 1964: 4). This may be why sacred verses in general are called *oyna* among the northern Ainu, including those in Sakhalin.[76] Indeed, the original meaning of *onya* also includes "to be in contact with the sacred through shamanizing" and "to lose a sense of self through shamanizing (the ecstatic action of the shaman him/herself.)" Once introduced to the Ainu, by a natural transference, *oyna* came to designate the sacred message delivered through a shaman or shamaness (Chiri 1973a).

Oyna is moreover linked to the act of crying, which is seen as a divine phenomenon, as evidenced in such expressions as ***cisht-oyna-kar*** (to cry to become *oyna*) and ***cisht-kamuy-kar*** (to cry to become a god). Shamanesses may have specialized in crying to gain divine power, as some ***yukar*** depict: Princess Moisam in a Sakhalin Ainu poem entered the shamanic state of consciousness via crying; shaking her head and body as she cried, she began singing divine songs (Chiri 1973a: 162). This function has been preserved to this day in funeral services, as crying women, ***ray-cis-kar-a*** (for death-cry-con-

tinue), though we have no detailed accounts of public occasions of this function today in Hokkaidô (Hokkaidô History Museum 1993a: 6).

It is important as well to note regional variations in the concept of sacred verses among the Ainu. Such concepts are expressed through a variety of names in different regions, in a somewhat similar manner to the terms referring to "shaman." All genres of sacred verses share the following essential characteristics: (1) a refrain; (2) a first person narrative structure; (3) a relatively shorter length than epic poetry; and (4) the use of ornate classical words. The genres in question are: (1) ***yukar*** — used in Akan area in eastern Hokkaidô, "to imitate the prey/***kamuy***"; (2) ***kamuy-yukar*** — used in central Hokkaidô where the term ***yukar*** came to mean epic poetry; (3) ***kamuy-kar*** — used in central Hokkaidô, meaning either "to imitate ***kamuy***," or "to be possessed by ***kamuy***;" (4) *oyna* — northern Hokkaidô to Sakhalin, meaning "to be possessed by ***kamuy***"; (5) *sakoraw* (*sa-kor-haw*) — used in Kitami area in northern Hokkaidô, meaning "story with refrains"; (6) *sakorpe* (*sa-kor-pe*) — used in Teshio region in northern Hokkaidô, meaning "to have refrains"; (7) *macukar* (*mat-yuk-kar*) — used in Kushiro and Kitami in NE Hokkaidô, meaning "women's ***yukar***"; and (8) *matnukar* — used in Kitami in NE Hokkaidô, to mean the same as (7) (Chiri 1973b: 225-6).

Chiri holds that the Ainu originally had both male and female shamans, and they both performed sacred verses. These sacred verses, moreover, were once part of magico-religious performances in which shamans and shamanesses danced and sang, imitating their prey, the verbal aspect of which later developed into ***kamuy-yukar*** and ***yukar***. The former came to be performed primarily by women, and the latter, by men. Hence in some areas such as Kushiro and Bihoro in NE Hokkaidô, where ***kamuy-yukar*** are trans-

mitted by women, they are called *mat-yukar*, women's *yukar* (Chiri 1973a: 161-168, Haginaka 1980: 18-19).

The above discussion indicates that there is a crucial relationship between Ainu shamanism and their sacred verses. As far as the Ainu are concerned, the difference between a poet and a shaman is irrelevant, since in practice, a *tusukur* is a divine singer. More precisely, not all Ainu poets are shamans, but all Ainu shamans are divine poets. The following account by a female shaman in Sakhalin will illustrate this point:

> I became a *tusukur* at the age of forty. When I was fourteen or fifteen, I felt like singing something, but I was very shy then, and did not know what to do — by three or four in the afternoon, I would lose consciousness — the divine force got so powerful that I could not control it any longer when I was thirty-seven or eight — I use a *kaco* (drum) now but I delivered the message that time without anything — and when I smell (the burning wood and plants offered to a shaman's deities), I feel so good and the message comes through me. I now know that the feeling I had when I was young, wanting to sing, is to do *tusu* (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973: 16).

It is general knowledge that poetic forms assist in the memorization and reproduction of a narrative, and the exploitation of formulaic devices is one chief characteristic of the oral literature of a non-literate society (cf. Lord 1960). Thus a divine singer is a storyteller who frames the divine story in a musical manner into a shamanic genre of narrative which is culturally acceptable. In this light, a *tusukur* is a storyteller of a special kind. We can observe a very strong emphasis on words and verbal communication here — the mastery of poetics and storytelling is at the heart of Ainu culture and its spiritual heritage.

A tusukur is thus an ***oral historian*** who can explain the origin of things, or tell stories about past things which are still relevant to the present. She is also a prophet because she can fetch stories from the future; and she can cure the sick, for she can use her words to bring forth the divine. As we shall see, the shaman's mastery of the spirit of words and her function as a storyteller - oral historian is a common and essential characteristic of female shamans in northern Japan.

(5) Recruiting, initiation, training and masterhood

The recruitment of Ainu shamans seem to be a combination of family demand and a spontaneous "calling." In theory, anyone can become a *tusukur* if she is gifted and chooses to follow her "call." In practice, family has played a key role in transmitting knowledge and skills, as well as providing essential training. As a result, very few people become fully-fledged *tusukur*, since they need both native talent and training, and also the will to follow the path to the end.[77]

Traditionally, every extended family relied on a *tusukur*; every community had recognized spiritual experts, including midwives who were offered *tnaw* for their services since their profession was considered divine and thus others revered and respected her spirit guide, just as was the case with *tusukur*. Initial spirit-illnesses may appear in some cases when a person becomes a *tusukur*, but they may also come at a later stage in one's shamanic career. A life crisis due to physical illness or some other misfortune often contributes to the development of shamanic power, regardless of age. In Aiko's case, after her cancer operation in her forties, she became *u-e-inkar-kur* (clairvoyant) and no

longer needed to do *tusu*. Equally important is training in dream interpretation, which is also a gradual process of learning, beginning with open discussion among family members about the meaning of particular dreams. Those skilled at interpreting dreams are also said to have special spirit helpers (Matsui 1993).

Initiation and training appear to be a gradual process of learning tasks and responsibilities one by one. Initiation may be marked by prayers offered by a male elder or a relative, but there can be more than one such occasion, as there is more than one ability or skill to master. Although it was customary in the past to involve a male elder in the initiation of a novice shaman, today, due to the shortage of male elders capable of fulfilling this function, female shamans do initiate novices by themselves, in the presence of witnesses.

There is no written record of any Ainu secret society or public initiation rite specifically for women entering shamanhood. Instead, the practice is deeply ingrained in domestic household activities and responds to the practical needs of this area. However, Chiri indicates that in the past, the training and initiation of Ainu shamans may have been more organized and disciplined (Chiri 1973e).

(6) Division of labour according to gender

The worship and celebration of gods are a monopoly of male Ainu, just as is giving prayers. If a female Ainu wishes to pray to the gods, she had to depend on male assistance. However, shamanism and all the magic associated with it is women's territory.

Male shamans seldom appear, except in Sakhalin, and their presence there is exceptional and the result of influence from other peoples (Nevski 1991: 33).

This statement by Nevski outlines a contradiction that no male Ainu or Ainu expert seems to wish to discuss in detail. As Chiri points out, ***kamuy*** are originally magical beings, not "good" gods, yet even among the present day Ainu, shamanism tends to be associated with a negative image of "black magic" rather than being something the Ainu can be proud of. Why and how, then, did the Ainu come to devise this separation between prayer and spell, the more "religious" and the more "magical"? What lies behind this gender-based difference?

Moreover, if shamanism is as fundamental to traditional Ainu life as Chiri maintains — and I believe he is correct — then women should have a central place and a high status in Ainu culture. They do not, as is clear in the following statement by Irimoto:

> The Bear festival is a very formalized ritual conducted by male elders (*ekashi*) according to established ritual procedure. Shamans do not appear in the festival ritual. Women are barred from the main ritual site, which is a place for exchange between humans and the deities. (Irimoto 1997: 39)

What happened to the Ainu women, and for that matter, the Ainu men?

In Chapter One we discussed this central gender question from the standpoint of the family system and the effects of intermarriage; in Chapter Two, we returned to it with evidence of matrilineality and the participation of women in warfare and trade in historic times. Now we will take it up once more, this time in the light of the gender-

based division of spiritual labor in Ainu society, and the denigration and indeed denial of the duties that fell to women.

First, we should recall that as detailed in the previous two chapters, the earlier division of labor between men and women was by no means as strict. Women participate in both trading and battle in classical Ainu literature, and even today, women elders are likely to have a far better knowledge of the "religious" side of their culture than their male counterparts, even though they have been forbidden to practice it (Fujimura 1982: 9-10). Early sources show men engaging in shamanic activities: indeed, the greatest of the Ainu culture heroes, Okikurumi, is shaman in both his name and his actions.

Even apart from the damage done to cultural transmission by intermarriage, it is not hard to imagine historical reasons for the narrowing of spiritual roles and their increasing gender specialization in Ainu society in the context of invasion and forced contact with the Japanese colonizers. Although I wish to leave a more detailed discussion on the effects of colonization on the Ainu spiritual heritage to the final part of this chapter, I would suggest here that the most obvious factor was the gradual beating down of Ainu men in every sphere, as they were deprived of political independence, culturally denigrated, forbidden to trade, weakened by starvation, and humiliated by the mistreatment of their families and relatives.

During much of the Edo period, Matsumae ***han***, while maintaining an essentially separatist stance, attempted to ease its trade relationship with the Ainu by appointing village chiefs and leaders as *otona* and ***kozukat***, positions which were within the framework of the lower levels of the feudal bureaucracy. But after 1799, when the central ***bakufu*** government took direct control over the land of Ezo, the growth of this imposed

feudal bureaucracy was accelerated there. Ezo came to be divided into a number of administrative districts with an appointed *Sô otona* (chief *otona*) supervising the others:

> The instruction of the Bakufu were passed on to the natives themselves to settle. However, the Ezo were not left complete responsibility to settle such matters, for a basic law was enacted which was administered by officials with broad authority, so that in the governmental relationships of Ezo the natives played a subordinate part (Takakura 1960: 80)

We should also note that in this feudal system, created by male warriors known as samurai, there was no room for women to be Ainu representatives on official matters. While it appears that it was customary among the Ainu to consult female shamans and elders when making important decisions for the community or to settle litigation, the Edo feudal system emphasized male authority only.

The consequences, I think, were two: Ainu men tended to become emotionally detached, cast in the role of suppliants in most aspects of their lives; and their frustration distorted their relationship with those in their society who were even weaker than them, and dependent on them, particularly women. Now, the role of suppliant parallels that of the ceremonial master, the spiritual worker who carries out a routine in a relatively detached manner, asking for something in return for something else, not making himself part of the situation and entering the context fully as an equal player. We might suggest that this is one reason why recent Ainu attempts to revive tradition have sometimes concentrated on surface, "priestly" functions such as sacrifice and prayer, rather than shamanic practice. As above, so below: those who had been taught by bitter experi-

ence to keep their distance from their temporal superiors were not likely to be less inhibited when dealing with the spiritual world.

What are the conditions for success if one is a ceremonial master? Humility and obedience, detachment and keeping to routine. Here we see the problem that politically and socially repressed Ainu men would have with shamanism. It was in fact a replication in miniature of the problem that all hierarchal structures of authority have encountered with it.[78] Shamans do not remain detached; they enter the situation, with respect and reverence to be sure, but they still engage in dialog rather than supplication. Thus, allowing them status and prestige would create an intolerable tension. Constantly under the influence of a Japanese social order that incessantly preached the inferiority of women and their duty to submit, under the same pressures to submit and obey themselves from Japanese society and government, the traditional shamaness would be at the best an intensely irritating reminder to Ainu men of what they had lost.

Social repression tends to degrade the status of women in another way which would have affected shamanesses by virtue of their gender alone. Males "feminized" by social pressures all too often turn on the women in their society, repressing them still further in order to remain relatively masculine at least in the context of their own immediate circle. The adjustments made to compensate for this can be quite radical: it has been suggested, for instance, that the increasing importance of Confucian book learning in medieval China, and the consequent denigration of physical activity, leading to men becoming less active physically and more feminine in appearance, was the driving force behind the spread of footbinding in Chinese society. Footbinding, by crippling Chinese

women, made them still more "delicate" and weak, it is argued, and so allowed their men to remain "masculine" in their own eyes (Ebrey 1993: 40-43).

These two factors, working together, seem to go a long way towards explaining the denigration, denial, and isolation that such later Ainu shamanic masters as Aoki Aiko had to face. They were kept at the edge of society, and often employed with reserve and even distaste, only when absolutely necessary. Even today, the Nibutani shamaness Yamamichi Yasuko is on the one hand utilized for her talent in managing troubled youths, and on the other, slandered behind her back by male elders whose wild gossip concerning her activities often verges on the pornographic. Yasuko nevertheless carries on her role as an educator and a ceremonial master, when she conducts ancestral ceremonies in and out of Nibutani, including those to commemorate the indigenous warriors of northern Honshû, such as Atoroi.

What does this situation remind us of? Witches in medieval European society, for one; carriers of traditional wisdom who were feared and socially marginalized, but employed as healers and (in secret) as practitioner of magical arts. Nevertheless, there was no attempt to physically eliminate Ainu shamanesses, as was the fate of the European witch. Why?

Partly the persistence of shamanesses in Ainu society reflects the lack of power on the part of those closest to them: the Japanese state and official religion, State Shintô, made some enthusiastic attempts to ban shamanism in the Meiji, but they did not hunt its practitioners down in the manner of the Inquisition. Moreover, unlike European witches, Ainu shamanesses were rooted in the same tradition as the patriarchal male

Ainu. Herein lay both their safety and their potential for later recovery: they were both a disruption to the routine, and part of the routine.

Ainu ancestral services demonstrate how difficult it would be to remove women entirely from the Ainu spiritual tradition, or degrade them beyond a certain point. The ancestral festivals, most commonly known as *i-car-pa* (that offerings-spread-many) or *sin-nu-rap-pa* (truly-tears-drop-many), were traditionally held in spring and fall as a concluding part of pre-hunting and pre-fishing ceremonies and optionally in winter as part of the *tomante*.[79] These festivals are integrated with trade activities, and drinking feasts are an essential element. A pair of *inaw* specifically designed and created for the ancestral festival is offered to each descent line, maternal and paternal ancestors.

Traditionally, these ancestral rites were held at a family altar, but today with its disappearance they are held as part of other events, or in case of Sakhalin, at the burial grounds. Most Ainu who still practice ancestral rites combine them with the Bon festival (mid-August in Hokkaidô), unless they are conducted together with other large Ainu cultural events.[80] After male participants finish their prayer, females begin, and there are usually more females than males. In these public ceremonies, female prayers tend to be shorter than male ones, but the procedure and manners are the same.

After the prayer, participants eat what is left of the offerings and scatter some of them around the altar, and go inside the home to have a large feast. However, in some region such as Saru, males go home and females remain, to begin a drinking feast called *menoko-ko-i-omare* (women-about-it-pour). Women friends are invited regardless of *sine-upsor*, the common maternal descent line. These ancestral rites are the only time that a women's drinking feast is allowed (Hokkaidô History Museum 1975: 23-27).[81]

We thus see that the social and intellectual position of Ainu men, and the pressures on them, have put Ainu society in the awkward and unstable position of denying something that is essential to its most fundamental workings, the spiritual role of women, particularly in day to day negotiation with spiritual powers, rather than formalistic and detached prayer to distant deities. As we have noted before, the result has been cultural impoverishment.

As patriarchal authority slowly erodes in Japanese society as a whole, women are beginning to reclaim their place in Ainu spiritual life. Fujimura hypothesized that even though women may not know much about the esoteric aspects of religious profession proper (the "priestly" functions), their ordinary day-to-day lives are framed by religious beliefs, so the truth about Ainu religion should be manifested in their stories. He thus proposed the reconstruction of Ainu religion from the women's perspective as a project for the future (Fujimura 1985).

For some women, the future is now. Matsui quotes the words of an Ainu female elder, Oda Ito from Chitose, who does ***kamuy nomi*** for her spirit guide, the snake: "In the past, when my husband was giving prayers in public, women were absolutely not allowed to even speak about ***kamuy nomi***, so I could not say anything about it, and had to pretend that I heard nothing. If I heard, they said that I was imitating men, and would not teach me, or if I listened to it attentively they would get angry at me. But now, no men do traditional ***kamuy nomi***, so a women can pray if she is sincere, I think" (Matsui 1993: 264). Decay on the one hand holds the seeds of revival on the other, as the latent spiritual power of Ainu women is released from its bonds.

But still, there is an unanswered, important question. As Chiri and others observe, if traditionally both men and women were shamans in Ainu society, though women may have been a numerical majority, what happened to male shamans in Hokkaidô? Are they only a mythological existence or was there anything which caused them to disappear, leaving women to take over the profession? There are cases of "feminization" of shamanism reported from other parts of the world, where prominent male shamans disappeared because they were most visible to outsiders. I will return to this question at the end of this chapter, and again in the next chapter when I discuss the "feminization" process which took place in Tsugaru shamanism.

(7) Shamanic performance, dress, and instruments

We have noted above the significance of dramatic performances of the shamanic arts in the ancient past, and today's Ainu in Hokkaidô maintain discrete subgenres of these performances, such as song and dance. Dance remains by far the most expressive art among the Hokkaidô Ainu today, but primarily as a form of entertainment, devoid of shamanic purpose. Nevertheless, shamans danced and sang the sacred songs in the past, as indicated by the ending of many *kamuy yukar*, *ari xx kamuy yae-yukar*, "thus the xx god expressed his/herself in movement" (Chiri 1973a: 168).

Chiri considers that there are basically two kinds of Ainu dance, both with magico-religious functions. The first is a large shamanic procession to scare away demons, and the second is a shaman's dance on ceremonial occasions. Contemporary Ainu dances such as the *niwen-apkas* (confrontation walk), *tap-kar* (foot dance), *horippa* (jump

dance) and ***rimse*** (circle dance) are all derived from the first kind, shamanic processions. These characteristically emphasize heavy steps or jumping, in order to ward off demons and get the attention of the spirit guides, in cases of individual duels, war, natural disasters, and accidental death or injury. Indeed, these processions and dances often accompany ritualized cries to appeal to deities, such as "Whooooy! Wooooooooy!" and characteristically employ gestures indicating confrontation and jumping movements. On the contrary, the ***hetchirí*** (bear dance) and other animal dances trace their origins to the shaman's dance.[82] ***Tonkippo-harae*** and ***arahukkun*** are descended from incantatory drama: the former is an imitation of war, performed originally in anticipation of success at the farewell feast, and the second is a dance to exhaustion by two women, a mimicry of the death match depicted as ***u-sanpe-tusmak*** in the ***yukar*** (Chiri 1973g: 241-243, 1973m: 34-47).

These dances and shamanic performances traditionally used drums, ***kacô***, though in the more recent past only the Sakhalin Ainu appear to have maintained these.[83] The women who play drums are called ***kacô-ta-mat***, and there is even a ***yukar*** with that title. Drums have been conspicuous by their absence among the Hokkaidô Ainu in modern times. However, they do beat the wooden frame of the hearth with sticks, ***rep-ní***, when they sing ***yukar***, and beat the ***sintoko*** (large lacquered round container for ***saké***) with their hands as women sing and dance. Sometimes, in both Sakhalin and Hokkaidô, men lie flat on their backs and cover their eyes with one hand, and beat their stomachs as they sing (Haginakam 1980: 75-76). The use of the ***repní*** is depicted in a ***kamuy yukar*** entitled "Sowae-sowae":

> Then the two ran around in the forest and brought a lot of dry branches, made a large fire, sat by it, making their own *repni*,
>
> until they finally began singing *yukar* in a beautiful voice like the returning of *kamuy*.
>
> What fun I was having!
>
> I was totally absorbed, shouted Hey! Hey! and hitting my *repni* and then all of a sudden, he rose
> and began hitting my head with his *repni*! (Chiri 1973a: 220)

The ***mukkuri***, mouth-harp, is a common shamanic instrument in Siberia, but Ainu experts have considered it simply as a musical instrument for entertainment and personal comfort. Nevertheless, the sound it produces has a modulated vibration, sounding like a heartbeat or spirit voices, and mastery of the ***mukkuri*** is considered a major accomplishment. To this day, Ainu handle a ***mukkuri*** very carefully, in the belief that mistreating it will bring bad luck.[84]

The *tonkori*, a large three- or five-stringed instrument, is said to be from the Sakhalin Ainu, and it shares these shamanic origins; however today it is played only by a few Ainu, including one new-wave musician, Kanô Oki, son of the renowned Ainu carver, the late Sunazawa Bikki. The Ainu also enjoyed Russian string instruments such as the balalaika, although few details of such musical performances are available (cf. permanent exhibition, Hakodate Museum of Northern Peoples).

Traditional Ainu had a clear idea of the costume appropriate for a shaman, which included a sacred hat, sacred dress, and sacred gloves.[85] This is indicated, for example, in the manner in which their shamans are depicted in sacred verse. Okikurumi, the Ainu culture hero, is half-human and half-god, and he can be identified as such by the way he

dresses: he wears an *atushi* made of elm bark fiber with flames along the hems, the collar, the cuffs, and the lower hem, as well as the hem of the hat and the scabbard of his sword. As signified by the name Okikurumi, "the one with shining fringes," his dress was fire-rimmed and decorated with *sep-piranka*, beautiful metal ornaments. Okikurumi's ornamentation is common among shamans in Siberia and even beyond Alaska into North America, where shining metal was treasured for its magical quality as well as its bell-like tones.

A traditional shamaness might also be identified by the appearance of her face and hair.[86] Today, a legacy of female shamanic dress can be observed in the mirror and large bead necklace, *tama-say*, worn by female elders.

Ainu dress, decorated in spirals and wave-shapes with bright colors around the neck, at the wrists, at the back, and at the bottom, is said to reflect the belief they are the children of the fire goddess *chikisani-kamuy*. Just as was the case with the dress of Okikurumi, these designs represent the invisible fire and sparks protecting the Ainu who wear them. Ainu designs have "eyes" to signify life, in front of the headband, *matanpushi*, or on the back of their dress. This may be a legacy of older traditions in northeast Asia of wearing masks and animal skins with the head attached for shamanic performances.[87]

The props for the shamanic performance included tobacco or smoke, *sake*, *ikupasui* (prayer stick), *tuki* (sake-bowl), and fire. *Inaw* (shaved wood sticks) are also sometimes used.

Saké is an important instrument in all ceremonies for the Ainu, and for their shamans as well, since there is no record of any more exotic mind-altering ingredients consumed by the Ainu for shamanic purposes.[88] To this day the making of *saké* is the responsibility of Ainu women. Before rice became regularly accessible, the Ainu used coarser grains such as millets (and probably wild fruit) to make their wine. Although today women tend to be barred from the ceremonial space where men offer prayers to deities, their significance as the servers of intoxicants, *saké*, signifies their earlier, more prominent role: the shamanesses may have used *saké* to soften the minds of men in a festive context, which usually involve some kind of political negotiation.

Although Ainu today offer *inaw* to altars rather than using them in shamanic performances, in the past, at least in some regions, they held *inaw* in their hands as they shamanised. An *inaw* might be held in a shaman's left hand in Hokkaidô, or as was reported of the Sakhalin Ainu, the shaman might hold the *inaw* in both hands and move them in the air (Pilsudki 1955).[89]

There is a story that the first *inaw* were a pair, male and female, given from heaven to the Ainu (Nefski 1991: 169-178).[90] Another theory (Chiri 1973e: 27) suggests that the *inaw* was originally a wooden stick, with a power animal such as the snake or the owl attached to it at the top, so that a shaman could become that animal itself. This later became shaved wood representing a particular animal, and even though the function is no longer remembered, it may be reflected in the existence of *inaw* with shavings resembling owl head feathers. Another possibility is that they were fire-starters or fire sticks connected with the worship of the fire goddess, who is central to Ainu religion.

Inaw appear to have been simpler in their construction and appearance in the past, and to have become more elaborate and decorative in recent times. (They can in principle be as simple as a few cuts on a stick.) Willow is the usual wood of choice for their manufacture, though there is some regional variation.

Food is always offered along with *saké* in religious services. However, a modern Ainu shamaness, *tusukur*, may not need any of these since possession may be spontaneous, or there may not be any trance-possession at all if the shamaness is *ueinkarkur* (clairvoyant). It is a mistake to think that shamans must conduct a seance in order to deliver a divine message, or that their shamanizing must signify an absolute departure from the ordinary sequence of things. The full set of regalia and instruments are certainly not required in every case.

(8) Shamanesses in the modern world: Aiko Aoki, the Ainu master shamaness

The traditional status of midwives, *tkoinkarkur*, appears to have been communally endorsed for much of Ainu history. Shamanic and medical services were considered voluntary duties and those who served the community had to combine them with subsistence-related labour. This meant, with a minimum honorarium in kind from the clients, spiritual experts gained no wealth or prestige, but they did not starve either. However, with cultural disruption and the destruction of communal unity, and increased dependency on cash income, the *tkoinkarkur* have lost their economic stability. As a result, the sacred profession has been deprived of communal feedback. Aiko, for instance, was permanently short of money, since she committed herself to helping others in the light

of the spirit: she went on welfare to carry on her profession. She demanded little or nothing in return for her services. She was feared, revered, called on, and depended on, and avoided when not needed, by the people in her community.[91]

Aiko Aoki was an expert *ikoinkarkur* (midwife), *tusukur* (trance-possession shaman), *ueinkarkur* (clairvoyant), and healer. As an *ikoinkarkur* she attended approximately five hundred fifty deliveries, including a number that were high-risk, without a single failure. As a shamaness (巫女 *miko* in Japanese), she possessed a great talent for *tusu* (trance-possession) and *ueinkar* (clairvoyance). Her *tusu* began in May of 1946 at the age of thirty-two, and her *ueinkar* nine years later, after a bout with cancer.

People visited Aiko, seeking advice from the ancestral spirits, which would use Aiko's body during *tusu*. However, when she acquired the ability of *uweinkaru*, she no longer needed to perform *tusu* since the knowledge came to her directly in a seemingly ordinary state. She also conducted ceremonies such as *kamuynomi* (prayers to *kamuy*) and used *uwe-potara* (charms). As a healer, she gave chiropractic treatments, *seitai*; prescribed and produced traditional Ainu medication; and gave dietary supplements. She knew over one hundred different types of Ainu medication and had experience using all of them. She also manifested an often ill-defined emergent spiritual condition known as *imu*, a so-called "culture-specific syndrome." Aiko did not, however, practice moxabustion, as her mother had done, for her own reasons.

It is estimated that Aiko was visited by over 50,000 people before her seventieth birthday, given the reasonable assumption that she had an average of five visitors a day for thirty years. She had eight children of her own, and all of them grew to adulthood in

spite of generally harsh and unfavourable socio-economic conditions. This fact in itself demonstrates her superb ability as a healer.

In the following paragraphs, I will describe Aiko's person and her work as a shaman under the following headings: (a) her skills as a shaman; (b) her *ikotnkarcur*, midwifery; (c) her healing resources and techniques; (d) her initiation and training; and (e) her shamanic lineage. I base myself largely on Nagai Hiroshi's report, *Upashtkuma* (*Wisdom Words*), co-authored with Aiko (1988).[92] Some of the details of the discussion below may not be directly relevant to the comparison with shamans in Tsugaru in the next chapter. Nevertheless, I have tried to be as complete as possible since such information about Ainu shamanism and medical science has not hitherto been available in a western language.

(a) Aiko's skills as a shaman

(i) *Tusu*

As we have already mentioned, a *tusukur* is a trance medium who calls in spirit beings from another dimension and lets them speak through him or her (Nagai 1988: 200). Aiko performed two general types of *tusu*. One was at the request of a third party, and the other was spontaneous. She was rather reluctant to perform the first type, since if the spirit that was called was that of a sick person, then she herself would get sick as a side effect. Aiko believed that such a spirit had gone to *pokunamoshtr*, the dark and wet underworld, or hell.

When Aiko performed this first type of *tusu*, she would prepare an offering of *saké* in a *touki*, a lacquered Ainu wine cup, with a *toukipasui* (prayer stick) placed over it. She then began a prayer which lasted up to ten minutes. In this spontaneous prayer, Aiko would transmit the request of her client to various deities, such as *trekamuy* (the fire god) and ancestral deities. She would lose consciousness completely during a *tusu* and could not remember afterwards what she had said or done.

There are also several varieties of spontaneous *tusu*. The first might be called "defensive *tusu*," which might occur when someone was hurtful or disrespectful towards Aiko. When a scholar was treating her disrespectfully, for instance, her ancestral spirits took over her body and began scolding him. Another type might be dubbed "congratulatory *tusu*": when something good happened to Aiko, spirit beings would come to say something congratulatory. For instance, when Aiko initiated Nagai after his prolonged physical illness and frequent visions, she went into *tusu* and delivered congratulations from her shaman ancestors. The third type of spontaneous tusu is "emergency *tusu*," and is similar to the second except that it happens in an emergency situation. This last kind of *tusu* may involve dancing and other physical action.

Aiko delivered narratives during her *tusu* in a typical sung-narrative form, *tusu-shi-notca*. She sometimes began speaking in tongues, or manifesting abilities she normally did not have, such as knowledge of Chinese characters. On occasion, she began speaking in *atmute-itak*, the classical and ornate language of *kamuy-yukar* that only a very few have mastered in recent time. Aiko in fact possessed a rich repertoire of *kamuy yukar* and even some epic narratives, as she spent most of her youth with the elders in her neighbors, rather than with the children her own age. Aiko was one of the last genu-

ine singer-storytellers from Nibutani whose Ainu did not have a "Japanese" accent — even the most prominent Ainu educators of today speak a "modernized" Ainu which is phonetically influenced by standard Japanese, according to critical observers.

Below is an example of Aiko's *tusu-shinotca* delivered in Japanese while in trance:

I wanted to help you, so

came out came down

came back came out

came from Heaven

Haaaaa!

I'm happy so happy

I, from several hundred years ago

Haaaaa!

Lonlonlonlon

lonlonlon

A-lonlonlonlon

lonlonlon

This lonlon

From which beginning to which end

I don't know

Just like this way

Lonlonlonlonlonlon

so people sing these words

I don't know what's going on

> But *kamuy* from Heaven who helped the Ainu, you know, the first one, you know.[93]

The picture below shows Aiko's ***kamuy-nomi*** offered to ***kinasut-kamuy***, the snake deity. As can be seen, her offerings to the snake deity included ***saké*** and raw eggs.[94]

Figure 3.6: Aiko's *kamuy-nomi*

(ii) ***Ueinkar***

The art of "seeing" has characterized shamans all over the world. In some societies, vision quests are an important rite-of-passage for every young male; in other societies these are considered a gift given to a fortunate few. Among the Ainu, they are thought of as a shaman's speciality, though no known systematic quest is carried out.

U-e-inkar means "shamanic technique-by-see things." It is the ability to see through things (Chiri 1952). Aiko's ***uetnkar*** began after her ovarian cancer operation at the age of forty-one, and she no longer needed to do ***tusu*** afterwards. Her ovaries and uterus were both removed. However, her surgeon accidentally left a piece of gauze inside her in the ovarian region. Upon his confession of his mistake, Aiko refused his proposal to operate on her to correct it. She appreciated the doctor's honesty and did not wish to trouble him. Instead, she prayed to her ***torenpehe***, guiding spirits, and the four generations of her ancestral spirits of ***tkotnkarukuru***, that his mistake would be corrected.

After the prayer, Aiko entered a ***tusu*** state with her ancestral spirits, and did not sleep all night. During this time, she was visited by an ancestral person, dressed in full Ainu formal dress. His face did not look Ainu and his legs were not hairy, but she understood him to be the husband of the first Ainu ***tkotnkar*** of her community. Ainu songs echoed as he watched her affectionately. One week passed without any pain. Then, Aiko felt that something was being ejected inside her vagina, so she went to the bathroom and removed the dark-colored gauze herself. This was the beginning of her ***uetnkarkur***.

How does one "see" when one is an ***uetnkarkur***? Many people asked Aiko, but she could only say, "Everything is visible, that's all I can say." For her, the seeing was as clear as seeing with physical eyes, or sometimes better. Unlike some shamans who might require a seance or a prayer, Aiko's ***uetnkar*** did not need anything special. When she engaged in a conversation with a person, she could see things about him/her, the past, present and future. As a matter of fact, she did not need to be in a meeting with that person; he or she could be a thousand miles away. When she thought about a person, she saw things about the person, no matter where s/he was.

The information Aiko received this way transcended time and space. For example, a sick person might come to receive Aiko's treatment. He might offer her payment for her service, put in an envelope. She would see how much money was in it, and that her client had borrowed the money from someone; his family, their poverty, and their problems. She was thus unable to accept his money. A businessman might come to seek her advice, and she would see how his business might prosper, as well as his future love affairs. A woman once came to receive medical treatment from Aiko, accompanied by her husband. Aiko immediately saw the death of her husband, which occurred a few days later.

Aiko's *uetnkar* was a critical asset in her medical diagnosis. For one thing, when Aiko treated a pregnant woman, she could tell whether the fetus was male or female. She saw the lateral side of the infant's body at the time of birth, and could tell its gender from the shape of its pelvis, rather than from the sexual organs. She could also see things in magnification, such as the white and red cells of the blood. She could detect abnormality in the amount of white cells in a sick person, and could also see viruses and abnormal cells (cancer) clearly. She could inspect the white and red cell tissue layers in human bones. She saw into women's wombs and men's genitals, and the eggs and sperm in them, allowing her to diagnose the causes of infertility. When she treated a patient with mental disorders, she saw the flow of cerebrospinal fluid. If she perceived an abnormality or difficulty that was beyond her competence to treat, she would send the patient off to the hospital.

There are also things and entities which are supposedly invisible or "non-existent" but which she also perceived. For instance, Aiko saw the spirits of the dead. She lost a

close friend in a car accident, and her friend visited her on the forty-ninth day after her death, speaking to her. She saw her friend joined by her deceased family members, singing together, which meant that her friend had finally departed to the next world. But sometimes, Aiko saw the dead still wandering about in this world after the forty-ninth day. She believed that these were people who had gone to ***pokunamoshtr***, the underworld or hell, and that these included dead dogs and cats. Aiko could also see and hear the ***kamuy*** from ***kamuy-moshtr***, the ***kamuy*** land, in ***rtkun-kanto***, the upper world/heaven. The ***kamuy*** that she saw were mostly Aiko's ***tkotnkar*** ancestors and their husbands.

Aiko could see the light (aura) of each person. Bright ones are rare: most humans are rather dimly lit. Her ***uetnkar*** showed her that brightly lit persons are dedicated to serving others without expecting any return; the very dim ones have an obsession with the material world, and are dishonest, often drug addicts and involved with prostitution.

Nevertheless, it would not be quite correct to say that Aiko saw things as they were. Often, what she saw were metaphorical images which required interpretation. On one occasion, Aiko attended a friend's funeral. She saw the deceased person travelling on a train, going into a deep valley, through a long, winding, dark path. Aiko felt that this indicated her friend was lost in ***pokunamoshtr***, hell, instead of going straight to ***rtkun-kanto***, heaven, due to a lack of ***u-tek-ant***, love, while he was alive. Nagai points out that this kind of metaphorical "seeing" which required interpretation was influenced by Aiko's domestic and cultural background, and her interpretations may not have been one hundred percent correct. Nevertheless, she still appears to have been accurate most of the time.

Aiko could not control what she saw and did not see, and she often wondered why she could do ***uetnkar***. She understood that her ***uetnkar*** came from her ancestors, and it was the ***kamuy*** who were making her see things. There were, however, things she could not see. These included the future for herself and her family, even though Aiko wished to know this. Aiko believed the traditional teaching that the souls of the deceased which went to the ***rikunkanto*** would return to this world in future. Indeed, she could sometimes see her mother and her grandmother in the next world. But she could see neither the past nor the future of her own soul.

(iii) ***Tekeinu***

Some consider healing practice to be a universal characteristic of shamans, found throughout various societies at different times. Shamans have a fair claim to be the world's first healers, first diagnosticians, and first psychotherapists, and they may have developed sophisticated medical models over the centuries (Krippner 1988). But for the Ainu, healing begins with a human touch. Thus I will speak of the art of touch therapy first, without which all the other more sophisticated medical skills and knowledge becomes mere technology.

Tek-e-inu (hand-that-does) is the "healing hand," a medical diagnostic tool as well as a therapeutic device. It is a power that was conferred on Aiko by her mother just before the death of the latter, when Aiko was already over thirty. Aiko's hand could detect whether an infant was healthy or abnormal, and identify abnormal cells and organs. Her healing hand therapy, however, appears to have been a combination of healing power and her expertise in chiropractic treatment, and Nagai cautions that it should not be confused with some sort of trance-state therapy.

(iv) *Uepotara*

U-e-potara means shamanic spell or incantation. Aiko knew of two kinds of spell, *wepotara* and *uwen-uepotara*, the latter being a curse. She would not agree to demonstrate her *uwepotara*, so Nagai could report on only one case, part of which he witnessed himself. He indicates that Aiko had concerns for its possible negative effect on him, and that she had a rather critical attitude towards *uepotara* in general.

Uepotara was conducted when Aiko treated a patient who was possessed by bad spirit(s). She would identify the possessing spirit through her *ueinkar*, and perform *uwepotara* to remove it from the patient. This was in imitation of the manner in which her mother would treat certain neural diseases with *uepotara*.

The *uwepotara* that Nagai witnessed concerned the removal of a fox spirit from an autistic child. The patient had nearly dropped out of school, and showed no improvement after visiting several mental health clinics. Aiko's treatment began by identifying, through *ueinkar*, the child's birth and upbringing, and the parental responsibilities for the welfare of the child. She then treated the patient with some sort of physiological therapy. After the therapeutic session, she asked the child, "Say if this treatment was painful!" The child responded, "A little." Aiko then asked the child her age and name, and the child slowly begun speaking.

This session alone improved the child considerably; however, a week after, she took the child to a river bank and performed an *uwepotara*. She told Nagai afterwards that the child was possessed by a fox spirit and thus the condition might recur unless the spirit was removed. She offered dumplings and deep-fried *tofu* to the spirit, and then

sent it away to the river. She was particularly careful in conducting *uwepotara* because whenever a spirit of this sort is removed, it tends to relocate in the nearest convenient human and take possession of them.

As for curses, *uwen-uwepotara*, Aiko never spoke about them. She indicated that there used to be people who employed *uwepotara*, but she was unwilling to say anything more about it. [95]

(v) *Imu*

There have been over seven thousand studies of the Ainu published since the early Meiji period. However, there are only a few on the Ainu spiritual heritage, with the exception of a number on *imu*, most of which are by medical researchers who consider it a "culture-specific syndrome." Nevertheless, the *imu* phenomenon remains poorly understood. Most recently, Irimoto defended *imu* as "accepted as positive in Ainu society," and "something which everyone can enjoy," but labeled it himself as "a disease specific to Ainu women."[96]

According to Chiri, the word *imu* is also found in the Giliyak language, but neither its etymology nor its morphological construction is clear (Chiri 1973n). Chiri identifies three uses of the word *imu*. First, *imu* is a broad designation for a reactive response, such as jumping when surprised at something, speaking nonsense words, or the nonsense words themselves. These nonsense expressions bear no apparent logical connection to the immediate context or situation. They vary individually, yet tend to be a vulgar expressions such as *heppe* (sexual intercourse or "fuck"). These are manifestations of a "light" degree of *imu*.

The second usage of *imu* is common among medical researchers. It designates a spontaneous "hysteric reaction" commonly found among the Ainu (Uchimura et al. 1938). This reactive hysteria, a response to a shock, can be divided into two types: imperative negativism and echolalia/mirroring. Imperative negativism is active defiance of external stimuli, such as responding by saying the opposite, left as opposed to right for instance. Echolalia/mirroring is either a repetition of the words or mimicry of the actions of the communication partner or object of attention. Chiri reports that among the Sakhalin Ainu, the latter type of *imu* was more common. Reported examples from Sakhalin include cases where a hunter catching a seal on the ice imitated its writhings, and a person observing an airplane in the sky imitated its flight.

The third type of *imu*, semantically the oldest, is the jump a shaman (= a *tusukur*) automatically performs when s/he enters an altered state of consciousness. This type of *imu* is observed both before and after a *tusu* session. The "jump" may or may not be physical, but as was the case with Aiko, it is often a brief possession phenomenon which makes her respond to other's questions in an altered state of consciousness. Aiko's *imu* included what she herself called *saktbashtri no imu*, the forerunning *imu*: she would often answer questions yet to be delivered, or speak words someone else was about to say. In this sense, *tusu* and *imu* can be very close; yet *imu* does not seem to produce a complete sung-narrative form.

If we accept the third meaning of *imu* as primary, then the boundary between *tusu* and *imu* becomes somewhat blurred. The shamanic "jump" implies transcendence, a shifting from "rational" consciousness to a shamanic state. In conversation with Ainu women in Hokkaidô, I have often found that *imu* is used interchangeably with *tusu*.[97]

According to Irimoto, however, *imu* and *tusu* differ: *imu* only makes people laugh. *Imu* and *tusu* have different cultural functions, in that *imu* manifests temporary possession by the snake, and *tusu* is the practice of shamanism itself. Another important difference between *imu* and *tusu* is that although a person cannot control *imu* behavior, she is aware of it and remembers it, while a *tusukur* completely loses consciousness and does not remember what she said.[98] All the same, we have a report from Sakhalin that a female shaman claimed that she did not totally lose consciousness during the shamanic rites, and expressed suspicion about other shamans who claimed not to recall what had gone on during their possessions.[99]

The person who conducts *imu* is called an *imu* woman (*imu-huchi*) or snake-possessed old woman (*tokkoni-huchi* or *tokkoni-bakko*) (Akimoto 1932: 1, Kubodera 1938: 10, quoted in Irimoto 1997: 35). According to Irimoto, if someone becomes *imu*, whether by inheritance or by mimicking other's *imu*, she has two choices: to become a *tusukur* or remain as *imu*; and if you choose the latter, you may go insane. An *imu* woman may become *tusukur* by means of formal ritual involving the advice of a mature *tusukur*, or she may request the elders to initiate her as a *tusukur* (Munro, ca. 1940, MS; 1963: 109, Irimoto 1997: 35). Thus, while the phenomena of *imu* and *tusu* can be quite similar in some cases, the persons who are identified with these functions have very different roles: one is a divine healer, and the other is, at best, a "comedian." Irimoto concludes that "Ainu society has a structure for integrating all individuals into society by offering a specific social role to the *imuhuchi* who fail to become *tusukur*" (Irimoto 1997: 36).

Finally, the extent to which *imu* is "culture specific" requires further consideration given examples such as the following, a clear case of *imu* which appears to have been created by behavioral reinforcement — in this case, a work pattern:

> There was a man in Sakhalin who worked at a fishing post and it was customary for him to pick up large bags full of herring lees shouting "*Yannsano*! (Yo-ho!)," and throwing them down onto the ground shouting, "*Koryasa*! (there you go!)." This man's *imu* spontaneously occurred whenever someone near him shouted "*Yannsano*!" He would stand up immediately and pick up anything around him, and then throw it onto the ground shouting "*Koryasa*!" (Hokkaidô History Museum 1995: 11)[100]

(b) Ikoinkarkur

The shamanic aspects of midwifery tend to be underestimated by scholars. Although many populations in northern Asia appear to distinguish shamans from midwives today, the distinction is by no means clear-cut with the Ainu, nor does it seem to have been clear in ancient China.[101]

I-ko-inkar-kur means "it-that which-see-person": "***Eta kaiser yaitorenpe eyam pe ikoinkarakur anakne poonpepo ne yakka inaw torano a, pumakorep ne hi ku, nukar pe ne***" ("An *ikoinkarkur* takes great care of her guiding spirits, so people give her an honorarium along with *inaw*, this I saw"; Kayano 1996: 51).[102] It is interesting to note the above description of Ainu midwives in Nibutani, since Aiko does not seem to have ever received a regular honorarium from her clients, either Ainu or Japanese. One would think that a keeper of the Ainu sacred tradition and healing arts would be

respected and honored by the villagers, even though she might be feared for what she was capable of. On the contrary, when I visited her in the spring of 1995, the only villagers who appeared to be taking care of her, besides her own daughters, were the marginalized, most of whom were connected with another, younger Ainu shamaness, Yamamichi Yasuko, the founder of the Yamamichi free school for troubled youth.[103]

Aiko became an ***tkoinkarkur*** by family inheritance, since her mother, Ukochateku, was a respected ***tkoinkarkur*** in Nibutani. When she was a small child, her mother carried Aiko on her back when she went to attend labours. Later, Aiko followed her mother, even when she was told to stay home. Aiko's mother began educating her in her field when she was twelve. At thirteen, she got tuberculosis and was forbidden to play with other children, so she spent her adolescence alone, often in the woods and riverside. She did not have a chance to go to school, so she never learned how to read and write in Japanese.

Much of Aiko's training to be an ***tkoinkarkur*** and healer appears to have been carried out by observation, followed by discussion with her mother. Among the Ainu, a child learned traditions by exposure to them, and by observing and copying his/her adult family members. With a specialized profession like midwifery, one had to apprentice with a master, often one's own mother, as was the case with Aiko. Master Ukochatek made young Aiko observe the process of delivery from a position beside her, though without deliberately exposing the vagina to her. This was complemented by further explanations on their way home. When Ukochatek examined a patient, she made Aiko touch the stomach, so that she would learn how to sense the internal situation through touch, including the infant's gender. Aiko also observed unassisted labour in her

mother's time, since there were still Ainu women who followed traditional birthing practices, pulling ropes tied to the ceiling, *tara*, in a sitting posture.

Aiko first attended a labour by herself at the age of nineteen, when her mother had two calls in one day: one from Koubira, 4 kilometers down the Saru river from Nibutani, another from Penakori, 4 kilometers up the river. Ukochatek told Aiko to go to Penakori all by herself, because it was her fate. When she got to the house where her service was needed, Aiko did not feel at all confident. However, she located herself at the feet of the woman about to give birth, and began ***kamuy-nomi***, the prayer to the ***kamuy*** of labour, ***u-ari-kamuy***. This prayer was taught to her by her mother, but she only repeated it in her mind; later, she prayed in a quiet voice. After the prayer, her mind was settled, and she had faith that she was to deliver the soul of the infant, that the infant would trust Aiko. The new-born baby was a boy, a little premature, from a sixteen year old mother with a slightly underdeveloped womb.[104]

(c) Healing resources and techniques[105]

(i) Regular medicines

There were eleven kinds of regular or standard medicine used by Aiko, who here followed in her mother's tradition. Each of these medicine would be placed in ten hand-woven bags of various sizes called ***sarantp***, kept around a house-protection ***tnaw*** called ***e-punkine-kamuy*** (that-protection-god) which was placed in an alcove. The medicines were: 1) ***toiushipe***, dried earthworms; 2) dried roots of ***korokoni***, butterbur; 3) dried ***kinaratta***, agrimony; 4) dried ***hakobe***, chickweed; 5) dried ***yuktopakina*** (translation

uncertain); 6) dried roots of ***sunp***, iris; 7) dried skin and nuts of ***shikoro***, the Chinese cork tree; 8) dried roots of ***sokoni***, elderberry; 9) roots of dandelion; 10) ***mukekashi***, ***adenophora triphylla***; and 11) blue and white tigereye stones. Earthworms, agrimony, Chinese cork tree, elderberry, dandelion, and ***adenophora triphylla*** are all used widely in Chinese traditional medicine. It appears that the Ainu understanding of their medicinal effects is similar to that of the Chinese, but the way the Ainu use them is often unique.

These ingredients would be boiled in water to make medicinal fluids, and Aiko understood all of them to have an effect on the blood. The preparation and application of these medicines often followed a ritual consisting of ***kamuy-nomi*** and offerings, though the details of these will be omitted here.

Dried earthworms are substitutes for live ones, and both can be used for curing fever. Dried roots of butterburs are another remedy for fever, but they also function to help the body eliminate toxins. They are given after the earthworms, until the urine is clear, sometimes for several days. Elderberry is used for kidney diseases. Agrimony roots can be used either raw or dried, to cure diarrhea and stomach pain, except for cases involving constipation. Dandelion and ***adenophora triphylla*** are prepared together, to be applied to skin diseases, including syphilis. Irises are hung upside down from the wall near the house entrance, to ward off evil, or boiled and administered in small quantities for patients with colds. Aiko explained that iris has a balancing effect on the white and red blood cells. Chickweed is used for children's urination problems caused by cold. The Chinese cork tree is good for eye infections as well as skin damage: it can be used as powder or in fluid form, ingested or applied to the affected area.

There is another important herbal medicine used by Aiko's mother to cure Aiko's tuberculosis, which was not contained in these *saranips*. This was a blend of red pine leaves, chestnut tree branches, and yew.

Finally, blue and white tigereye stones are boiled in a special small metal (possibly gold) pot. After they are removed with *apepasuy*, tongs, the fluid is given to a child as a tonic for recovery and health. The fluid is believed to contain the soul of the water god, *wakkaushi kamuy*.[106]

(ii) Treating female illnesses and disorders

Nagai reports two interesting cases of treating female illnesses and disorder, the first of which involved the use of white birch bark. When a mother could not produce breast milk, a small group of Ainu made up of a few *ekashi*, male village elders, and a midwife (Aiko's mother in his report), went to the mountains and conducted a ceremony to receive the soul of a white birch tree. This began with a prayer, and the tree was given an *inaw* and a sash around its trunk. The *ekashi* danced, with *emushi*, swords, in their hands, as they prayed to the tree. Then the tree bark, inner and outer, was shaved off the tree, and brought to the patient's home, where it was boiled in water and administered to the patient. This fluid is highly effective for balancing the female hormones.

Aiko accompanied her mother to the mountain when she was very young, and she was curious as to what would happen to the tree afterwards. She went back to the mountain to see the tree three years after, and found that it was completely dried up and dead. The tree, about 35 cm in diameter, was only cut two inches deep. Nevertheless, a

tree which is treated this way will always die because it has offered its soul to the humans.

The second reported case of the treatment of female disorder involved carrots and *e-hur-pes-kina*, a hart's tongue. The carrots were burnt in the ashes in the hearth until they become thoroughly black, and then powdered or infused, and given to a patient with menstrual problems and hormone deficiency. Hart's tongues can be infused fresh or dried and used the same way as carrots. These are believed to help with blood circulation, and to "thicken" the blood by increasing the number of red cells.

(iii) Animal hearts and blood

The animals most useful for medicinal purposes are bear and deer. The hearts of these animals are steam-cooked in a closed can, and then ground into black powder. This powder is highly effective for curing intestinal disorders. When Aiko was very young, her mother prescribed fresh chicken blood, to be sucked off the chicken's headless neck. It is believed that a hen is best for men, a cock for women.

(iv) Treatment of skin disorders

Chapping is treated with mugwort powder mixed with saldine oil, which was gathered after the fibers were removed to make cotton. A swelling can be treated with an ointment made from the outer bark of the riverside willow. The ointment is produced by infusing the bark, removing it, and continuing to boil the liquid until the fluid is thick enough.

(v) Heat therapy with burning willow sticks

Rheumatism and neuralgia are treated by heat therapy from burning willow sticks. Willows are a sacred tree for the Hokkaidô Ainu; they make *tnaw* out of them. Aiko's mother used willow branches, about 3 cm in diameter, to conduct the Ainu version of "moxabustion." The bark of the branch must remain, to better preserve its life force, and the top of the branch (not the root) is put into the fire to be burnt. The flaming part is knocked off with the tongs. The remaining part will be steaming, and it is pressed against the affected area through several layers of large leaves. The entire leg could be treated this way from the bottom up, and this procedure might be repeated in the reverse direction after a couple of days. It is essential that the steam coming from the burning tree be transmitted to the affected area, since it is considered to be *nimau*, the living breath of the tree.

(vi) Needles

The Ainu appears to have had a highly developed acupuncture tradition, though much of this had fallen into disuse by Aiko's time.[107] Aiko's older brother, Rikizô, had shown Aiko that certain diseases could be treated with needles that pierced through the wrist, from the inside to the outside, repeatedly. When the needle was through, it was clean and there was no trace of blood. He had also told Aiko that facial neuralgia could be cured by a needle through the jaw area,[108] and that Ainu needles used to be as thin as a hair.[109]

Ainu traditional needle therapy appears to have been highly effective in curing cerebral disorders, including brain tumors and mental retardation. The needles used for treat-

ment "above the neck" are long, and are inserted deeply into the head. They also treated various disorders by applying needles to the cervical and thoracic vertebrae.

It is curious to note that Aiko's brother stated that the needle technique was introduced by an ***ekashi*** from southern Japan. This ***ekashi***, Fuse Juzô, was the father of Kanemono ***ekashi***, who died when Aiko was a small child. He was from Awajishima in Shikoku. Nevertheless, Aiko remembers him as an Ainu from southern Japan.

(vii) *Kaykuma oterke*

Kaykuma is a log, and *o-terke* means "to step on." The Ainu used ***kaikuma*** to massage the backs of the feet, especially the arches. Aiko's mother used two ***kaikuma***, a thick one for adults and a thinner one for children. The ***kaikuma*** are used to treat all sorts of conditions, since the arch of the feet contains the "heart" which can be stimulated to improve the circulation of the blood.

When making a ***kaikuma*** for medical treatment, a live tree is cut and used with its bark on, since the bark is considered to be the tree's dress, and removing it alters its life force. Similarly, an old ***kaikuma*** with its bark peeled off is no longer useful. The Ainu thus utilized not only the physical shape of the ***kaikuma***, but its invisible life force, in their cure. It appears that the ***kaikuma*** technique was unknown in Nibutani before it was introduced by Aiko's mother, who was originally from an Ainu village in Monbetsu, about twenty kilometers from Nibutani.[110]

(viii) Stones and stone figures

It is not clear how Aiko used stones to heal people, or if she knew others who used any stone figures. However, Nagai told me that he once noticed some stones in a river

which appeared special, and brought them back (presumably in or near Nibutani). When he showed them to Aiko, she mentioned that these stones did indeed have medicinal properties, and that Nagai was right to notice them.

Nagai also reports a case when Aiko prayed to a roadside *jtzô*, when she was rushing to a hospital in Tomakomai with two of her children who had high fever and convulsions: "I beg you, please help us!" As commonly found throughout Japan, *jtzô* are the result of syncretism between Buddhism and indigenous beliefs. A *jtzô* is a divine statue with an essentially liminal position, marking boundaries not only between villages, but also between life and death, physical and metaphysical. This case illustrates that Aiko was using the *jtzô* as *materia medica*, a conduit to transmit a human message to the invisible forces: she recalled how she noticed the *jtzô*'s presence on her way, and that the path was chosen for her children (who survived) when she prayed out loud to the statue.

(ix) Transmission of the healing hand

The final part of Aiko's training from her mother was the transmission of the healing hand, *teketnu*. This occurred at the time Ukochatek was nearing her death in 1945, when Aiko was thirty-one years old.

Aiko was already married but still lived close to her mother's home, so she often visited her mother to look after her. One day, she saw her mother's left palm rising and falling like the waves of the sea. Her mother solemnly told Aiko that she must pass on the ancestral *kamuy*, and asked her to call one of their relatives, Sekko *achapo* (Uncle Sekko), an elder who could conduct Ainu rituals in the traditional manner. When Sekko

achapo (Kaizawa Shintarô) arrived, she showed him her swollen palm and said to him, "I am waiting to die. Until this day, I have tried my best as a midwife for Ainu and Japanese, without error, thanks to the ***kamuy*** who protected me. After I die, I want you to pray that my daughter Aiko will succeed to the good ***kamuy*** passed down to us from our ancestors."

Sekko *achapo* then sat by the hearth and began praying to the fire ***kamuy***. Ukochatek made Aiko hold her left hand, and Aiko felt her mother's pulse. Ukochatek was speaking to Aiko in Ainu, telling her that she must follow her mother's way in assisting others so that other people and ***kamuy*** would help her even in the most difficult times, and that she was praying that her guiding spirits and protecting spirits would all be transferred to Aiko. When Ukochatek's prayer was over, her swelling was gone, and Sekko *achapo* stopped praying and came over to them. Ukochatek died in March of the following year, a cold day when long icicles hung down under the eaves.[111]

One of the incidents connected with Aiko's mother's death has become famous. Two hours after Ukochatek's heart and breathing had stopped, when neighbors had already gathered at her house to prepare for the funeral, she called out to them. To the totally shocked crowd, some falling at the door in their haste to exit, Ukochatek said: "Please do not get angry at me. When the ***ekashi*** came in the white horse cart, I realized that I forgot the ***saké*** to bring to heaven. So I came back. What happened to that ***saké***?" As it turned out, the eldest son had sold the ***saké*** to their neighbors. When Aiko promised that she would retrieve it for her, Ukochatek was relieved and thankful. She then closed her eyes, and said good-bye for the last time. This is how Aiko remembered her mother departing to ***kamuy moshir***, the land of spirits (Honda 1993: 73-76).

(d) The shamanic line

Aiko's knowledge of her shamanic line only went back five generations, and she had learned it from her mother and grandmother. She had only one opportunity to hear about her ancestors and traditional ways from her grandmother, when she was twelve, because her grandmother believed that the Ainu way of life was both obsolete and useless. Aiko's mother spoke almost as little about their midwife ancestors, usually insisting that it was not allowed to ask too many questions about the history of midwifery, and that what was important was faith in their tradition.

The first *tkotnkarakur*, called *sinricihi* ("the ancestor") is understood to have been Ainu, not by birth but by adoption. Aiko had the impression that she had grown up in her grandmother's village, Yamamonbetsu *kotan*, but her name had been lost. She is said to have married a Japanese who came to Hokkaidô from southern Japan to trade, and to have had no mouth tattoo. Ainu women in the area who married Japanese were supposed to have been punished severely at that time, by the cutting of their Achilles tendons, but she appears to have escaped this. This may have been because her Japanese husband was in some way exceptional, respected or at least accepted by the Ainu.[112]

The first *tkotnkarakur* was known to have possessed abilities such as *tekeinu*, *tusu*, and *uetnkar*, in addition to being a superb midwife. She may have possessed other skills and abilities, but Aiko does not remember them.

The skills and knowledge of the *tkotnkarakur* were not established by the first *tkotnkarakur*, but given to her by a man, as we shall explain below. Part of the reason the development of the tradition remains so obscure was that for Aiko and her predecessors,

these powers and this information were a sacred gift from the ***kamuy***. Indeed, ultimately all physical and observable things in the phenomenal world, including the earth and humans, had been brought down from the ***kamuy-kanto***, "spirit world."

The second generation ***ikoinkarakur*** was a Japanese woman who was a superb ***ueinkarkur*** and did not need to do ***tusu***. She was good at giving heat therapy, and had a beautiful mouth tattoo (in spite of being "Japanese"). Otherwise, very little is known about her, other than she was said to have been better off financially than the third ***ikoinkarakur***. We do not even know if she was a daughter of the ***shinricihi***, the first in the line.

The third generation ***ikoinkarakur*** was Hainere, Aiko's maternal grandmother, who was known as ***etoifuci***, the one without hair (even though she was not completely bald, according to Aiko). Hainere had six children, among whom Aiko's mother, the second oldest child, was the eldest daughter. She died at the age of ninety, when Aiko was about twelve. She did not have a mouth tattoo, though her youngest daughter, Tsune, who lived next door to her to look after her, had a beautiful one. Hainere inherited ***ikoinkara***, ***tekeinu***, ***tusu***, ***ueinkar***, ***imu***, knowledge of pharmaceuticals and heat therapy, and probably ***uwepotara***.

The fourth ***ikoinkarakur*** was Kaizawa Ukochatek, Aiko's mother, who married Kaizawa Utorentok, the wealthiest and best-respected Ainu man in Nibutani at that time. However, Utorentok died when Aiko was only two months old, while travelling in Honshû with a group of Ainu performers. Aiko's mother died at the age of seventy-seven in 1946. Ukochatek inherited ***ikoinkar***, ***tekeinu***, ***tusu***, ***ueinkar***, ***imu***, ***uwepotara***, and knowledge of pharmaceuticals, physiotherapy, and heat therapy. She did not need to

perform any special prayer for *uetnkar*; she crossed her fingers on her chest, moving her thumb freely with her eyes closed while seeing the invisible. Ukochatek used *uwepotara*, charms, with great effect and more often than Aiko; but she relied less on physiotherapy. Ukochatek once told Aiko that she had an initiation rite for the transmission of *tekeinu*, but nothing specific is known about it.

The last in this line of Ainu midwifery was Aiko herself, the seventh and youngest child of Ukochatek. She was born in Taishô 4 (1915), and at the age of five entered the Nibutani elementary school founded by several Ainu, including her father. However, she only attended school for two months, and her literacy was thus limited to the *hiragana* syllabary. After Utorentok's death, Aiko's family became poor and was shunned by other Ainu, to the extent that Aiko was not allowed to play with other children. Her "playmates" were thus elders living alone near her house. It was a stroke of luck for her in the end, since this enabled her and her alone to inherit the older and more traditional forms of Ainu language, customs, and culture.

When she was twelve, she contracted tuberculosis, and after she recovered, she spent much of her time in the mountain and wilderness. About then, she learned a little about her maternal ancestors and midwifery from her maternal grandmother in Yamamonbetsu *kotan*.

Aiko married a Japanese man in Nibutani at the age of twenty, a year after her entrance into the profession of *ikoinkar*. She received the healing power, *tekeinu*, from her mother at the age of thirty-one, a year before her mother's death. She performed her first *tusu* in the same year, and was given a snake figure created by a Nibutani Ainu, Nitani Kunimatsu. At the age of forty-one, her *uetnkar* began; and at sixty she retired as a

midwife. At the age of sixty-five, she initiated Nagai Hiroshi into the healing profession, giving him *ctkoshtnntnupu tkor,* our secret treasure. Aiko died in October of 1995 at the age of eighty-one, five months after initiating myself into shamanhood.

Nagai's account includes a report of an intriguing experiment to discover more information about Aiko's shamanic antecedents. In this, Aiko agreed to do *tusu* to reveal her ancestors. The session was conducted and recorded by Nagai, with a mutual acquaintance, Oda Yoshiko, as an witness. It seems that this method was chosen because Aiko's *uetnkar* did not allow her to see things concerning her own self. She followed the traditional procedure of offering *saké* contained in *tuki, tuktpasut* over it, and asking the fire *kamuy* and other ancestral *kamuy* to assist the aim of the *tusu*. She then prayed to them in Ainu to let the first generation *tkotnkar* come down.[113]

According to this tusu session, the key *tkotnkar* who introduced important healing techniques and midwifery to the Ainu was a man, 天静一 (Ten Shinichi), who came from a foreign country to the Ainu land. This information and skill was transmitted to Atoisam, an elderly Japanese woman with an Ainu name. During the *tusu*, Aiko went through more than one life, all of which were linked to the founder of *tkotnkar*: a man with a Chinese name called Ten Shinichi, a man/woman who lived in Rakunam in the Philippines six hundred years ago, and a Japanese woman in her early forties who instructed the Ainu *tkotnkar* profession over two hundred years ago. Nagai was able to see only one of these three with his *uetnkar*, the last, a wise-looking Japanese lady in kimono, and this woman was probably Atoisam.[114]

These three personalities all came down from *rtkunkanto*, the upper world, to deliver information about the founder of the *tkotnkar* tradition transmitted to Aiko. In

fact, they were all related through reincarnation, probably the same person in different lifetimes, with different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. The soul, Aiko's *torenpehe* (spirit guide) remained unchanged, and thus it insists that it is the "founder" of *tkoinkar* even though the direct *tkoinkar* predecessor to Aiko might have been the Japanese lady in kimono. All these entities should not be thought of separately as Ainu shaman ancestors, but rather should be seen as connected through the existence of the "higher" world of Ainu cosmology: the shaman ancestors in *kamuy moshtr*, the spiritual world.[115] Although Aiko never spoke explicitly about the issue of reincarnation, personal or collective, she knew that people were connected through their souls; for one thing, she recognized myself as her soul friend at our first encounter, a declaration which shocked one of her daughters who was present.

(9) Ainu shamanism, its practice, and its variations

From the above material, we can extract the following major instances of regional variation in customs and beliefs pertaining to Ainu shamanism.

a) The spirit guide: There is a major difference between Sakhalin and Hokkaidô Ainu with regards to the shaman's spirit guide. In Sakhalin the shaman's spirit helpers are various animals, including birds; in Hokkaidô the snake predominates.

b) The soul: I noted a custom which appears to be specific to the Sakhalin Ainu, of capturing a bird, washing it in medical solution, and placing it into the mouth of the deceased. This may be related to the custom of mummification practiced by the Sakhalin Ainu.

c) The sacred direction: While in SW Hokkaidô the sacred direction is the east, and hence the sacred window of the house faces east, in Akan in NE Hokkaidô the sacred direction is the north and hence the sacred window faces north. Further north of Akan, in the community of Abashiri facing the Okhotsk ocean, the sacred direction is the direction of the mountain; similarly in Sakhalin during the summer, temporary huts are built with their main entrance facing the riverside, and their sacred windows facing the mountains.

d) Burial practices: Historically, there were different burial practices and it is only after the so-called Ainu period that the "head-east" burial position became common. Burial practice before the Ainu period was marked by general divisions between the Okhotsk-culture influenced area (NE Hokkaidô), the Satsumon-influenced SW Hokkaidô and Northern Honshû, and central Hokkaidô, of which the first two bury in the "head-west" position, and the last adopts the "head-east" position.

Some differences in burial practice can be observed more recently, though in general traditional procedures are much the same. While in SW Hokkaidô, the deceased is carried out from the north-east corner of the house through a temporary opening, in NE Hokkaidô in the peninsula of Shiretoko the corpse leaves through the ordinary house entrance, and is buried with its head to the south or the mountain side. Moreover, in the community of Raichishi in Sakhalin, several complete additional elements supplement this general pattern, such as *ru-tomp* "to solidify the passage to the other world," and *yay-e-ptr* "purify by myself."

e) Shamans: Sakhalin Ainu show considerable Siberian influence in their practices, beliefs, costumes, and instruments. Compared to their Hokkaidô counterparts, they tend to be both more showy and more gender-balanced.

f) Sacred verses: The traditional terms used by the Ainu to designate sacred shamanic verses vary greatly according to region. For example, sacred verse in Sakhalin and Northern Hokkaidô is most commonly called *oyna*, in eastern Hokkaidô, *yukar*, and in central and SW Hokkaidô, *kamuy-yukar* or *kamuy-kar*. We also noted that *oyna* is likely to be a loan word from Yakhut.

g) Culture heroes: The names of culture heroes vary according to region. For example, the Samainkur of eastern Hokkaidô becomes the Okikurumi of central Hokkaidô.

These data indicate that customs and beliefs tend to differ according to region, with the regions broadly definable as SW Hokkaidô, NE Hokkaidô and Sakhalin.[116] Moreover, Sakhalin and NE Hokkaidô are closer to each other than either is to SW Hokkaidô, partially due to the resettlement of Sakhalin Ainu to NE Hokkaidô (Haginaka and Udagawa 1996). This broad division coincides with the area of influence for the Okhostk culture (NE Hokkaidô and Sakhalin), as opposed to the area with relatively more Satsumon influence (SWH).

In addition, we have also noted variations between coastal fishing communities and interior hunting communities. Southern Hokkaidô and the coastal Ainu communities maintained strong fishing-related shamanic customs, while in the mountainous interior of Hokkaidô and Sakhalin, the emphasis was on animal sacrifices, such as bear.

In the light of all this, it appears possible that present Ainu cosmology may be the fusion of originally different world views, one Asiatic highland, and the other southern oceanic. As I noted, this "north-south tension" may be most visible in the differing locations of the underworld, one beyond the sea, and the other accessed from a mountain top reached through a cave.

(10) Discussion

Above, we have discussed the characteristics of traditional Ainu shamanism and other related spiritual beliefs and practices, and identified the broad outline of their regional variation, as well as their common and unifying features, including the predominance of female shamans, their functions as trance possession mediums and healers, the importance of shamanic verse and oral history in Ainu shamanism, shamanic dances to ward off evil, holy mountains, and traditional ceremonies. I have also discussed how the acquisition of shamanic skills and abilities is not necessarily limited to individuals mysteriously chosen by spirits, but in reality, is the result of a medical and spiritual education which can begin very early in Ainu life. To become a fully-fledged shaman is ultimately a choice an individual makes, after many trials by experience and guidance from others, rather than an instant designation by a community or a fully hereditary office. I also provided an account of Aoki Aiko of Nibutani, to illustrate the specifics of our general and rather abstract discussion of Ainu shamanism.

As I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, Ainu culture and shamanism have been the subject of salvage ethnography since the nineteenth century, and thus their

scholarly depiction has tended to emphasis the "eternal" and "untainted" tradition, frozen in time. Some, such as Chiri, noted that Ainu shamanism as it came to be known in recent times is the result of severe impoverishment due to cultural assimilation and genocidal experiences during the Edo period. If Chiri's observation is correct, and I believe it is, then we must look at what might have caused Ainu shamanism to decline during the Edo period.

Therefore, before I proceed to the next chapter to compare Ainu shamanism (much of it reconstructed) with Tsugaru shamanism (much of it still living), we should briefly examine the public policies and regulations on the Ainu during the Edo period. To do this, we will divide the history of Ainumoshir, Hokkaidô, during the Edo period into two periods: that of indirect rule by Matsumae ***han*** (up to 1799) and that of direct rule by the Edo ***bakufu*** (1799-1821, 1854-1868). It is important to distinguish the two periods because they are separated by a fundamental differences in the attitudes towards the Ainu: while Matsumae maintained a detached stance to Ainu affairs, the Edo ***bakufu*** was determined to assimilate the Ainu in anticipation of Russian encroachment.

(a) The Matsumae period (up to 1799)

For much of its ruling period, the Matsumae attitude towards the Ainu remained essentially separatist and non-interfering, except for the area in which they resided and where the Japanese population dominated, that is, Southern Hokkaidô. Because Matsumae's interest lay primarily in profits from trade — basically barter trade — with the Ainu, and since the Japanese were a numerical minority, it was "not necessary for the

weak Matsumae clan to attempt to control the powerful Ezo but merely to maintain a peaceful economic relationship" (Takakura 1960: 27). Thus Matsumae imposed regulations on the Japanese rather than on the Ainu, and the clan avoided conflict with the natives by establishing a boundary between the two peoples, and by prohibiting the Japanese from entering Ainu territory. Learning the Japanese language was forbidden to the Ainu, and communication between the two peoples usually required interpreters. The Ainu were to remain as partners in trade, as foreigners who would bring exotic goods treasured in the central market.

However, since those Ainu who lived in southern Hokkaidô intermingled with the "Japanese," they were under constant pressure to adopt Japanese customs, and their freedom was more restricted than the rest of the Ainu. They were the first to become familiar with Buddhist customs and Shintô worship. In addition to their own parish temples near their residences, the Matsumae build various shrines at trade posts known as *unjô-ya*, and some of these enshrined deities were harmonized with Ezo beliefs (Takakura 1960: 75).

Thus the Ainu in most areas of Hokkaidô were able to keep their own customs, language, traditional social organization with elected chiefs and their own judicial system, and were more or less independent of the Matsumae influence, with the exception of the appointment of *otona* and *kozukai* among the chiefs. However, even though Matsumae wished to avoid disrupting affairs in Hokkaidô, continued development of trade fostered a political relationship. As their economic strength grew, so did their influence over the Ainu. The increased dependence on trade by the southern Hokkaidô Ainu, more-

over, resulted in famine and general impoverishment where game became comparatively scarce.

Matsumae's influence gradually spread, and together with this the greed of the Japanese expanded. In the areas they controlled, the Japanese came to exert great power and often became oppressors. Thus, unfair trade practices and Japanese encroachment, not only for trade but also for hunting, caused the War of Shakushain (from Shizunai in south central Hokkaidô) in 1669, which pitted the Japanese against an Ainu alliance that extended as far as Sakhalin and eastern Hokkaidô. After the loss of the war, the Ainu were forced to compensate the Matsumae, and Ainu leaders had to sign a pledge stating that the Ainu and their descendents would obey the Matsumae, treat the Japanese generously, and not revolt again (Takakura 1960: 27-29).

To sum up, during the Matsumae period, even though no decisive cultural action was taken to change the Ainu way of life, which still centered on shamanic beliefs and practices, we can see increased poverty among the Ainu, and political pressure on them. Although we do not know many details of the assimilation of the Ainu at this stage, the Ainu in southern Hokkaidô were either giving up their ethnic identity or becoming acculturated to Japanese practices introduced by the Matsumae and traders from further south, including Buddhism and Shintôism, which after all could both be stretched somewhat to make room for indigenous deities.

(b) Edo bakufu period (1799-1821, 1854-1868)

After the middle of the eighteenth century, wealthy merchants became the *de facto* rulers of some areas of Hokkaidô, as was the case in other areas of Japan including the capital city of Edo. The increased mercantile power made both the Ainu and the Matsumae bureaucrats dependent on the merchants' capital and assets. Ezo trade fell into the hands of these professional traders from Japan, Osaka in particular:

> ....the contract merchants, who were the actual possessors of power, driven by the desire for profit and oblivious to the interest, happiness, or humanity of the Ezo, restricted freedom and established a despotism equivalent to a slave system. And the passivity of the Matsumae was an acknowledgment of this merchant power and attitudes (Takakura 1960: 47)

This economic aggression and cultural disrespect towards the Ainu was the cause of the final armed conflict between the Ainu and Japanese in Hokkaidô, the War of Kunashir-Menashi of 1789. It took place exactly one thousand years after the victory of Atoroi and Emishi of Hitakami in northern Honshû against the Yamato imperial army.

About this time, the Japanese noticed that the Russians were colonizing much of the Kuriles and Sakhalin, and beginning to show an interest in affairs in Hokkaidô. Even though the Russian ambassador Laxman came to Japan in 1792, the ***bakufu*** was preoccupied with their coastal defence arrangements, so their earlier plan to open Ezo for trade was postponed, permanently as it turned out. The ***bakufu*** felt that national defence could not be left to a small clan, like the Matsumae, and that if the central government did not take a hand in Ezo affairs, the Ainu would rebel against the Japanese in col-

laboration with the Russians. The ***bakufu*** cautiously extended its powers in Ezo, and by 1807, all of Ezo came under its direct control.

Once the ***bakufu*** took over running Ezo, its policy and attitudes towards the Ainu were completely different from those of the Matsumae. The ***bakufu*** aim was to make good obedient citizens out of Ainu when possible, and to prevent any "perverted" and foreign customs from being adopted or continued by them. Thus the Ainu were encouraged to speak the language(s) of the ruler, and to become literate. Those Ainu who wished to become "Japanese," by demonstrating acceptable behavior, were given special assistance and privileges that others did not have. In 1799, the Council of State issued instructions to the commissioners for Ezo, which set goals that included (1) gradual assimilation; (2) an improved standard of living; and (3) increased productivity and efforts to work among the Ainu. The officers conducting the trade were reminded to educate the Ezo natives in the superiority of a diet consisting mainly of cereals, so that they would raise crops themselves; and to set up a good model for assimilation by giving special rewards to those Ainu who were hard-working and adopted Japanese customs well (Takakura 1960: 55-56).

Several specific initiatives taken by the ***bakufu*** deserve consideration here: the promotion of the Japanese medical system and judicial system, the promotion of Buddhism, and native moral education. It is important to remember that while the Japanese attempted to gradually change the Ainu way of life, the Japanese themselves were enjoined to remain free of native influence, including the use of the Ainu language. The Ainu were still seen as aliens, who could be "tamed" into an inferior sort of citizen.

The instructions referred to above included medical assistance for the Ainu, whose standard of living had become quite low, suffering as they were from starvation and diseases introduced by the Japanese. These diseases included smallpox and syphilis — the effect of which had been effectively genocidal in some areas. Thus the officials sent to Ezo were to "furnish bedding wherever needed in case of illness and also medicines. Take all necessary measures to keep the death rate down" (Takakura 1960: 56). Doctors were assigned to each trade post to look after both Japanese and Ainu patients — originally there were six doctors, but the number was later increased to twelve. The certificate of character for these doctors, their "Ezo passport," included their Buddhist status, affiliated sect, and parish temple.

Given the small number of doctors supplied to cover such a vast land, it is not likely that their services were of much use to the majority of the Ainu. Yet it is important to note that the ***bakufu*** rulers thought that the ill health of the Ainu was due partly to their lack of medical expertise, an attitude echoed by modern scholars such as Takakura:

> The Ezo had no doctors so to speak, and their medical knowledge was confined to a few medicinal herbs and rudimentary self-aid. Moreover, their herbs and simples were used only through the medium of witchcraft and any seriously ill person had to depend on the ministration of the witch doctors (Takakura 1960: 70).

Operating under this assumption, the ***bakufu*** believed that the ill, crippled, blind, and old without family should all be reported to local administrative offices, so that appropriate aid could be provided by the shogunate (Takakura 1960: 58, 69).

While the use of Japanese medical aid would certainly have been of *some* benefit to the Ainu, we should not overlook its possible negative cultural effect. It would establish powerful competition for the traditional healers, the shamans, and would tend to undermine native beliefs concerning illnesses and cures, especially when these could do little for the new diseases introduced by the settlers. The Ainu who were now being told to believe in the superiority of everything Japanese, encountered for the first time licensed "miracle makers" who were, to some extent, replacing their healers. Given the likelihood that those Ainu who benefited from the medical services were more likely to be chiefs and people of substance, the influence of these leaders (whose traditional role included a shamanic component) might well have further reduced confidence in the indigenous healing tradition, and Ainu culture in general.

Another significant, and detrimental, arrangement imposed on the Ainu by the *bakufu* was the State's judicial system. It was not that the *bakufu* did not know of the Ainu's own judicial system, but rather that they considered the native version utterly primitive, nothing but savagery. The Ainu had several ways of settling disputes or judging a crime: seeking advice from a shaman, *tusukur*; ordeal by hot water; or a *charanke*, a verbal battle. The penalty often took the form of a display of physical endurance while being beaten, known as *tsuchtucht*. The *bakufu* attempted to replace the Ainu's traditional juristic practices with their own — the *tsuchtucht* in particular was banned — and made it a requirement that difficult disputes were to be brought before a magistrate, and more serious ones be transferred to Edo for settlement. Moreover, during the winter when no officials were stationed in the countryside, reports were to be forwarded to *bakufu*-appointed Ainu leaders such as the *otona*. Given that shamans traditionally

played an important role in judicial matters, and the Ainu tests of "truth" had much to do with their shamanic beliefs and practices — if you are innocent, you can endure pain, and the spirits will see that justice is done — the ***bakufu*** attempt to monopolize judical power should be seen as another major factor contributing to the destruction of Ainu cultural and spiritual integrity.

However, perhaps the single most effective means to promote the colonial purpose of the ***bakufu*** was the promotion of Buddhism, and the denial and suppression of Christianity and other religious practices which appeared "perverted" to Japanese eyes. In 1802, the ***bakufu*** built temples all over Hokkaidô, with an assigned mission area for each. This promotion of Buddhism in the land of Ezo was again an attempt to prevent the Ainu from becoming Christianized, a religion abhorred by the Edo rulers, through contact with the Russians, especially in the northeast. The seriousness of this concern can be seen in the first article of the first written law enacted among the Ainu:

> Article one. Followers of perverted religions and those who follow foreigners shall be severely punished. (Takakura 1960: 73)

It is a bit unclear what the phrase "perverted religion" refers to, but it seems to be something other than "foreign" practices such as Christianity. Given the ***bakufu*** promotion of Buddhism and its benevolent attitudes towards the salvation of all beings, it is not surprising that sacrificial rituals such as the ***tomante*** came to be forbidden[117] — the last thing the Japanese Buddhists wanted was the public and ritualized slaughtering and consumption of wild animals such as bears. So I believe it is safe to assume that the term "perverted religion" included Ainu shamanic activities that were viewed as immoral. The same attitude can be seen in the prohibition of ***mekkakiri*** or ***mekkauchi***, "to strike/cut

one's back," a custom whereby the relatives of someone who died accidentally gathered to weep and beat themselves with sticks or the blunt side of a sword in an attempt to purify themselves from evil spirits.

In 1804, the following temple regulations were issued to the Buddhist missionaries in Ezo:

> 1. Services are to be carried out faithfully for the peace and safety of the nation.
>
> 2. The Ezo are to be taught to follow the laws and customs of the Japanese.
>
> 3. Masses for the dead are to be held wherever needed.
>
> 4. Avoid any conduct disgraceful to the nation when foreigners arrive from neighboring countries. (Takakura 1960: 73)

Buddhist priests had no official government support in propagating Buddhism among the Ainu, and their official position was to refrain from interference. But in reality, as Takakura correctly observes, many priests became missionaries and brought Buddhism to Ezo, taking advantage of their air of moral superiority. As was the case in northern Honshû, the subject of the next chapter, Buddhism in Ezo was encouraged as a part of a policy of assimilation and control.

Although the records are rather sparse, the effect of these individual but ardent Buddhists seem to have been felt among the Ainu, and Buddhism gradually spread among them. Some evidence of syncretism is also present: the Ainu in Akkeshi in eastern Hokkaidô visited the Kokutaiji temple (Zen) and knelt before the altar, worshipping in Ainu

style and chanting prayers in Ainu, saying, "Acts of evil shall not be done. Good deeds shall be done" (Kokutai No.1).

(c) The colonial reality of Hokkaidô

Direct ***bakufu*** rule over Ezo ended in 1821, and Matsumae regained nominal power for a short time, until the ***bakufu*** resumed authority over Ezo from 1854 until the end of the Edo period.[118] As we have seen, the land of Ezo had remained detached from Japanese rule until the middle of the seventeenth century. With the increase in mercantile power, the situation changed, and the ***de facto*** rulers, the Japanese merchants, became increasingly dominant in areas where the Ainu maintained contact with them. But the decisive steps taken to "reform" the Ainu came after the Japanese perception of a Russian threat, when Ezo affairs became a matter of national defence. At that time, assimilation was hastened and became a top priority all over Hokkaidô.

During the Edo period, we can see that the Hokkaidô Ainu remained aliens to the rulers, and there was no attempt to declare that the Ainu were Japanese. Instead, they stated that even though they were Ainu, they could become Japanese if they tried hard enough. Thus Hokkaidô, the land of Ezo, remained as a divided colony. There was increased intermixing to be sure, but the division between Japanese and Ainu never completely disappeared — only its perceived borders changed. This divided colonial reality was further solidified by Meiji government policy, which designated the remaining unassimilated Hokkaidô Ainu as Former Indigenous People. Its effects are still strong

in Hokkaidô today, through both the popularly assumed and the officially imposed ethnic cleavage between the Ainu and the "Japanese."

Scholars have given little attention to the effect of these official regulations and assimilation measures taken by the various agents of the ***bakufu***, whether religious, medical, or judicial. Nevertheless, while these did not wipe out the Ainu traditional way of life (nor were they intended to), they misconceived and mistreated the cultural and spiritual foundations of the Ainu, resulting in the impoverishment of their traditional culture. Whether intentional or not, the net result of these various initiatives inflicted gross damage on traditional Ainu spiritual life. By the end of Edo, this life was a shadow of what it had been three centuries before, and nearly all the changes had been imposed on the Ainu against their will.

Endnotes

1 The Ainu terms introduced in this dissertation will be marked with hyphens on their first appearance in the text to indicate their morphological construction. Afterwards they will appear without hyphens. I will follow, as much as possible, the conventions used in Kayano's 1996 Ainu dictionary in transcribing Ainu words and expressions.

2 Ainu spoken in Nibutani, southern Hokkaidô (Kayano 1996)

3 Once, each village had a common *nusa-san*, altar, which later came to be established in each household. On the common altar in Shiraoi in southwestern Hokkaidô, eight *tnaw* were offered to eight deities. Recently, a common altar was reestablished with sixteen *tnaw* dedicated to sixteen deities, incorporating new deities in the new environment. Even though these communal deities vary, the common ones are those pertaining to water, trees, earth, hunting, river waves, the altar, and the village (Fujimura 1982: 56-59).

4 According to Fujimura, Ainu animism is restricted in the sense that not all beings they recognize in the universe are *kamuy*, but only those which they consider more powerful than themselves, though the Ainu recognize spirit in all forms, visible and invisible (Fujimura 1982: 17).

5 The concept *kamuy* is often compared to Japanese *kami*, but the meaning of *kamuy* is closer to "magical" than "holy," while the Japanese term became sanctified in religious contexts and its meaning was more often associated with "wor-

ship." ***Kamuy*** often are powerful destructive forces such as toxins, diseases, and disasters (Chiri 1956: 40, 1973k: 255-256). The terms ***kamuy*** and ***kami*** may have their origin in the Turko-Tartar ***kam*** (Altaic ***kam***, ***gam***, Mongolian ***kami*** etc.), meaning shaman (Eliade 1964: 4).

6 The disguise of a ***kamuy*** is called ***hayuk-pe***, meaning "armor." It is explained that when the animals are in the wilderness, they have houses and take human shapes which are invisible to the humans, but when they come to the village they wear armor. The corpses of dead animals are their armor, and their invisible substance lies between their ears (Chiri 1973l: 360-361).

7 ***Mintuci*** is commonly known in Japanese as ***kappa***, and is said to be derived from the old Japanese word ***mizuchi***. The genuine Ainu word for ***kappa*** is ***sir-sam-ainu*** (mountain-next to-human) (Nefski 1991: 247-248).

8 While I wish to respect Irimoto's conclusions, which if true would enrich our knowledge of the regional diversity of Ainu shamanism, I question the validity of his claim. For one thing, an Ainu is not supposed to disclose his or her spirit guide to others, even to family members (Fujimura 1982: 7). How would we know that the snake is the chief spirit guide of a shaman in this context?

9 Fujimura discusses the original meaning of these ***nipopo***, wooden sacrificial dolls (shown to the left), which are now commercially made and sold in quantity in Ainu souvenir stores. These ***nipopo***, and small straw dolls, were fed three times a day and offered prayers every month, and were hung on a main house pole just

above the height of the child, moving it higher as s/he grows. When its function was fulfilled, it was broken into pieces and sent to the other world with prayers (Fujimura 1982: 40-42).

10 These Ainu sacrificial dolls closely resemble many Jômon figurines found all over the Japanese archepelago (with triangular faces, heart-shaped faces divided vertically, and so on). Later versions, ***hitogata*** ("human shape"), also found throughout the archepelago between the seventh and tenth centuries, maintain similar characteristics.

11 There was a saying in the mediaeval period in Japan that a child aged 7 or under "still belonged to the gods," meaning that they might not survive.

12 In relation to the ***toren-pehe*** which assist humans on various occasions, Fujimura speaks of how Ainu elders rely on birds, crows in particular, to get information about things in general, such as weather, success in hunting, death, visitors, feasts, and so on (Fujimura 1982: 38-39).

13 Sekiba notes that some Ainu shamans, ***tusukur***, identify what/who stole the ill person's soul before s/he conducts a seance (Sekiba 1980: 15).

14 More precisely, the bird, which is the soul of the dead, is captured, washed in medicinal solution, and put into the mouth of the dead (Chiri 1973l: 244). This story, collected in Sakhalin, reminds me of the practice of making mummies, which is also found among the Ainu in Sakhalin.

15 Obayashi points out that the Ainu idea of a suspended heart is analogous to the ancient "Japanese" expression *tamano-o*, "soul-string" (Obayashi 1997a: 178)

16 *Iomante*, "that - let go." The head is dissected the following day in a highly sophisticated operation, the *un-memke* ceremony, which is the final step of the *iomante*.

17 Dogs appear to be an exception to this, as they are in so many other world traditions. Chamberlain, among others, records Ainu folk-tales in which the dogs of the nether world howl at human visitors: "But, though he [the visitor] saw *them* [the people of the underworld], they,— strange to say,— did not seem to see *him*. Indeed he was invisible to all, excepting to the dogs; for dogs see everything, even spirits, and the dogs of Hades barked at him fiercely" (Chamberlain 1888, number 36, "An Inquisitive Man's Experience of Hades").

Obayashi discusses how maternal and paternal Ainu family members held a gathering before the conception of a child to determine which ancestor should return to this world. No regional specification for the data is available (Obayashi 1997a: 179)

18 Hokkaidô History Museum 1995: 3-4. Even so, the report of the Hokkaidô History Museum is not convincing when it argues that a term such as *wey-sune* designates the "bad" spirit of the dead. The text merely quotes a relatively small number of examples from Chikabumi in northern Hokkaidô where a death fire notified a person of impending death, and only presents this aspect, the association of death fire with impending death. Might the bad connotation imputed to *wey-sune* and other

terms derive from the interpretations of the Japanese researcher(s)? (Hokkaidô History Museum 1995: 3).

19 In south-central Japan in antiquity, sick persons blew their breath into dishes to be cured. Engishiki describes the ritual of exorcism practiced by the emperor whereby he blew his breath into a pair of dolls armed with swords, in order to protect himself from danger and evil forces (Kaneoko 1988:183-186).

20 One of the controversies concerning the Ainu concept of the soul is whether or not they distinguished more than one kind of soul, one which leaves the body during sleep, and another which sustains life. In Japanese, the former is similar to the Ainu's *ramat* (the free soul), and the latter is associated with the breath (the body soul). Obayashi, who examines the Ainu term *ramat* based solely on textual study removed from its context, concludes that the Ainu only recognize one soul, the *ramat*. However, for anyone who does not become obsessed with whatever readily available and classifiable term seems closest to one's understanding of soul, but instead studies what the Ainu do or believe they do in a situation such as resurrecting the dead, *hussa*, as depicted in popular songs, it is clear that breath is considered to have life-sustaining power in and of itself, regardless of the *ramat*. In fact, the Ainu understanding of the life force in living creatures is often expressed in terms of steam or "breath" emanating from them (see the later discussion of the Ainu willow stick heat treatment for an example).

Obayashi also states that Batchelor's claim, that the Ainu believe the spine to be the dwelling place of the life, not blood, is unfounded. He continues "if his claim is

proven then we might understand from it that the Ainu once possessed the concept of body-soul or life-soul" (Obayashi 1997: 182, translation mine; Batchelor 1901: 85). Nevertheless, Nagai reports that Aiko emphasized that the seventh cervical vertebra is the dwelling of the human soul (Nagai 1983: 116). Sekiba similarly records that the Ainu traditionally believed the spine to be the dwelling of ***kamuy***, ***ikkew-kamuy-koro*** (spine-deity-dwell), and thus spinal infections were believed to be a curse from evil spirits (Sekiba 1980: 19-20). However I do agree with Obayashi that the Ainu idea of the soul cannot be properly understood without comparing it with those of Siberian peoples, among whom are found both soul "monists" and soul "dualists" (Obayashi 1997: 187-195). To complicate matters further, the Ainu are not entirely consistent in their ideas: we have already mentioned that some believe there are six souls in one body.

21 Fujimura suggests that the Ainu believe the deceased become ***kamuy***, as seen from the way they are addressed in funeral prayers. He indicate that this may be linked to the fact that the majority of Ainu in Hokkaidô have converted to Nichiren Buddhism, whose teachings include the equation of the dead with the concept of ***hotoke***, the realization of Buddha. The Nichiren sect of Buddhism, whose monks are closer to poverty than those of any other Buddhist sect, penetrated the Hokkaidô Ainu in the early twentieth century, converting up to ninety percent of traditional Ainu (Fujimura 1982: 8-19).

22 Sem is derived from se-p, "that which is carried on the back" (Chiri 1973f: 228).

23 Chiri suggests, on the basis of the Ainu terminology for the parts of the house, that the Ainu once lived in pit houses whose surface structure corresponded to the roof structure of the later Ainu house. For example, the beams are called "wood on the floor": those that run east-west are *so-pes-ni*, "the wood that runs from high to low on the floor," and those that run south-north are *so-etomotuye-ni*, "the wood across the floor" (Chiri 1973f: 223-224). In other words, the structure of an older Ainu house matches the typical Jômon "wall-less" thatched roof house found throughout the Japanese archipelago.

24 Compare this sun worship with the ancient services recorded of the Yamato king: "The King of Wa deems heaven to be his elder brother and the sun, his younger. Before break of dawn he attends the Court, and sitting cross-legged, listens to appeals. Just as soon as the sun rises, he ceases these duties, saying that he hands them over to his brother" (*History of the Sui*, translated by Tsunoda 1951: 29).

25 The Ainu in southwestern Hokkaidô buried the dead in a prone position with their heads in the east but facing towards the west. When a dead person wakes up, s/he will thus face the west (Matsui 1993: 65; account from Chitose area in SW Hokkaidô). During the early Satsumon period, however, burial practice differed in some areas, in that the dead were placed in a bent position with their heads to the east (Fujimoto 1964: 195). This change from bent to prone burial position may be the result of Yayoi cultural influence via northern Honshû (Fujimoto 1964 pp. 201-202). It was also the practice of the ancient Pazyryk people to bury the dead with their heads to the east (Polosmak 1994). However, the burial practice before the

"Ainu period" is by no means uniform, as there were "head-west" burial position common in the Okhotsk-culture influenced area (NE Hokkaidô) as well as in SW Hokkaidô and Northern Honshû, while the "head-east" position is evidenced in central Hokkaidô (cf. Fujimoto's map and chart in Fujimoto 1964: 199)

26 Fujimoto states that the visitors pay their respects to the deceased relatives after they speak with the deceased in this manner (Fujimoto 1964: 37).

27 *Shitogi* are common offerings to the dead as well as to deities. *Shito* is a round dumpling made of various vegetables and common grains.

28 This can be compared to Jômon burial practices, since traces of fire are found around some Jômon tomb pits, such as those at the Goten-yama site in Hokkaidô (Fujimoto 1986: 30).

This advice to "never look back" at the dead reminds us of the famous story of Izanagi's return to the land of the dead to see his wife Izanami in the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*.

In Sakhalin, the death of a chief or other great man required a special and different type of mortuary treatment. There is evidence of mummification, continued into quite recent times. The nineteenth-century records describe how Sakhalin Ainu took out all the intestines of a deceased chief and kept the body for a prolonged period of time while washing and drying the emptied stomach daily to prevent it from decaying. The coffin of a chief had a special rooflike structure on its top, and a special location was assigned for it in the cemetery (Ohnuki-Tierney 1974: 68).

This treatment provides evidence of a stratified society, which accords privileges to its most powerful members not available to others.

29 This practice is known as ***kas-oman-de*** (house-it-send-away).The aged person who is expected to die is moved to a newly built death house.The younger dead do not need to follow this practice since they can join their parents' house in the other world.Those who lose their houses by fire during their lifetime are also excused, since they have already sent their houses to the other world (Fujimoto 1964: 46-47). This burning ritual was traditionally conducted at night, since in the other world everything is opposite: the night is day and the day is night (Fujimoto 1986: 30).

30 If the deceased's household implements are burnt this way, they do not need to be buried in the pit (Fujimura 1964: 47).

31 Fujimoto 1964: 44-49; Fujimura 1985: 77-78, 178-186. Fujimoto also discusses another unusual case, that which involves an accidental death where the corpse is not recovered. Here, a straw doll is made and buried in its place. He compares this practice with the earthen figures found in some Jômon pits (Fujimoto 1986: 31).

32 "Hell" here is ***teyne pokuna moshtrt***, the wet and dark underworld where bad souls go.This concept of "hell" may have been influenced by Buddhism, as it coexisted with a general understanding of the underworld.This process of "hellization" of indigenous concepts will be explored in Chapter 4.

33 Chiri reports place names like *ci-rura-tot*, "our moved soil," as well as *tap-kan-i* and *upopo-ushi*, found in the depths of the mountains. These place names indicate there once existed some artificially constructed ceremonial facility such as a stone altar for worship, or a flat ground stage for dancing (Chiri 1973e: 18).

34 The story may indicate how the rising sea level during the early Jômon period forced people to relocate in higher areas. Ropes are commonly used in Shintô to mark a sacred space, and Chiri seems to assume that the Ainu used them in a similar way. Rope in Ainu is *tus* or *tust*, and a burial ground is called *tustr*; *tusu* is trance possession, and *tusup/tusukur* means shaman (Kayano 1996: 328-9). The Ainu played tug of war in ceremonial festivities such as the *tomante*, though many details of these activities have been lost. If they had originally been a sea people, ropes had in the ancient past been necessities as well.

35 Chiri 1973e: 23. Slawik argues that the animal crest passed down along the male descent line, *ttokupa*, was originally the animal which protected a particular *twor* or village, each under the control of such a descent group. This later became a more abstract male clan symbol, as the people lost the relationship with the original territory and migrated to other areas in Hokkaidô (Slawik 1992).

36 In the famous epic poem "Kutune shirka" (Treasure sword), the hero Poyaunpe is helped by a pair of male and female feathered dragons (cf. Kindaichi 1944 and 1967). The pair of snakes also brings to mind the primal Chinese deities Fu Xi and Nü Wa, who are represented as half-human and half-snake or dragon (see Figure 5.1 for an illustration).

37 The sun god is also believed to be the ruler of the upper world (Chiri 1973e: 27).

38 Irimoto attempts to reduce the symbolic function of snakes to that of the deity of the altar, and argues that unlike Japanese myths and beliefs which link dragons and snakes to rivers and lakes, Ainu snakes tend not to be associated with waters, primarily because the former are an agricultural people depending on water management, and the latter are not (Irimoto 1997). However, his argument is groundless because with or without agriculture, snakes are symbols of fertility, creation, transformation, and rebirth. All of these attributes also apply to water itself, as Zhao states:

> Principle of what is formless and potential, basis of every cosmic manifestation, container of all seeds, water symbolizes the primal substance from which all forms come and to which they will return by their own regression or in a cataclysm (Zhao 1988: 142).

The association of snakes with a mystical lake on a sacred mountain is universal among the Ainu, and it should not be dismissed just because it has nothing to do with agriculture.

Here in the main text, snakes appears to be the rulers of the three zones which structure the Ainu universe, upper, middle, and lower, as they are given functions such as thunder god, god of the altar, and tree roots god. Snakes are thus a natural protector for a shaman, male or female, since they inherit the primordial power of cosmic creation and transformation. In addition, the snake is also associated with

rebirth and eternal life in Ainu folklore. In an Ainu story collected in Tokachi in NE Hokkaidô, entitled "Hito o taburakashita hebi" ("A snake which tricked a human"), a man is cursed by a snake and is forced to live one thousand years. Every one hundred years, he became an infant again, losing beard, teeth, and all body hair; and he had to repeat this process ten times (Heigen no techô 1988: 143-144).

39 This holds especially true for women, who were not allowed to go to the mountains in any case.

40 The tree roots are associated with the snake, ***kinasut-kamuy***, meaning "grass roots deity." This use of tree roots as a partner of the fire goddess in Raichishi is significant in the light of Irimoto's analysis of the association between Ainu women and snake, which produces a divine shamaness ***tuskur***; and this parallels the pairing of the fire goddess ***ctkisant-kamuy*** and the sky deity, resulting in the birth of Ainurakkur (human-smell-god), the Ainu culture hero, who is considered half-human, half-god (Irimoto 1997: 37-38).

41 There are cases where the number twelve represents a complete number, such as twelve letters to which a response must be made (Kayano 1977: 217). In some ***kamuy-yukar***, an Ainu hero wears twelve layers of shining clothes. The female Ainu elder Oda Ito from the Chitose area points out that the description resembles the way Japanese noblewomen during the Heian period dressed themselves in twelve layers of silk clothing, ***jûni hitoe*** (Matsui 1993).

42 This particular ***kamuy-yukar*** is interesting in that it may indicate that the origin of Ainu number symbolism was in Siberia. According to Dr. Frolov of the Institute of Ethnology, Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, the Ainu sacred number, six, has its origin in one of the earliest Siberian civilizations, Malta, which later spread to the Amur region, from where it was introduced to the Ainu. He thinks that the number six is actually two threes, associated with ancient moon and sun worship. The spiritual significance of the number six may have originally evolved from a spiral shape, such as an ammonite shell, which signified cosmic creation, which was then connected to the symbolism of the sacred serpent, and then to the number 6 (personal conversation with Dr. Frolov, 1999).

43 In Sakhalin, the cradle, ***shinta***, is replaced by a large basket as the baby grows. (Shikika kyôdo-shi kenkyû-kai 1980: 5). This basket, called ***enjtko*** in Tsugaru, is commonly used in north-central Asia, in places such as Mongolia.

44 The flying horse is a common subject in Siberian myth. It can assist a shaman's cosmic journey in his dream time, or even in real time, as some have claimed (Eliade 1964).

45 One of the most notable cases in which all women become shamans comes from Kudaka Island in Okinawa. Every thirteenth year (i.e. once every twelve years) the native islanders hold a shamanic rite of passage called ***tzathô***, to assign divine rank to all married women. This ritual takes place in the eleventh lunar month, around the time of the full moon, over a total of ten days, five days before and five days after the full moon. The novices, married women between the ages of thirty to

forty-one, are obligated to participate in this ritual, and if any one of them has moved to another place she must return to her native island for the ritual. Once initiated, the women acquire steadily higher ranks as shamanesses by participating in the ritual every twelve years. The rank is defined by seniority and the highest rank, *tamuto*, is only given to those over sixty (Torigoe 1965: 247-274). See also Sakurai's discussion of "household shamanism" in Hachijô island in Tokyo and the Nishibisaku region in Okayama prefecture, where housewives in general are expected to perform some degree of trance possession and act as ceremonial masters for the family (Sakurai 1988:23-25).

46 "Many women in the sacred oral tradition are described as experts on shamanism, and all Ainu women were shamans" (Kindaichi 1943: 204).

47 The commonest way of expressing such disapproval by traditional shamans participating in the Moscow conference in 1999 was by phrases such as "they don't know when to stop." In other words, they lack a sense of practicality, and in the worst cases they might almost be called "binge shamans" or "shamanism addicts" (an alarming number of them do depend on the support of drugs to reach their "highs"). One characteristic symptom of this malady is the loss of a sense of humor.

48 There are also some academic neo-shamans who declare that they are the true messiah. See for example, the following passage by an analytical psychologist:

> [The old shamans] were very effective as long as the influence operated within the aboriginal environment — [but] this was no longer the case — as in North America — In the triumph of the focused mind that produced powerful machines, shamanism all but died. But now, interest in and practice of a new shamanism, born out of the ashes of the old, reasserts itself. (Sander 1997: 10)

49 Sekiba notes that those *tusukur* traditionally attributed the cause of illness or misfortune to ancestral sins, curses by evil spirit, or punishment by deities; and various insects which dwell in one's intestines may also cause illness (Sekiba 1980: 8).

50 Sekiba notes that the Ainu recognized foreign shamans who cured illness through divine assistance and divination, called *beshûri* or *beshuri-utari*. These are Japanese in origin, and Sekiba considers them to be some sort of priest. It is thus logical to suspect the existence of esoteric Buddhists, such as *yamabushi*, among the Ainu during the Edo period (Sekiba 1980: 6).

51 Sekiba notes that the village chief, *otona*, attends the ill person and tries to cure him/her by praying for his or her recovery to the fire goddess (Sekiba 1980: 5).

52 This pairing of male and female shamans at ceremonials and seances reminds us of ancient or even contemporary imperial or Shintô-related sacred rituals. The centrality of the female as a theocratic ruler can be traced to Himiko of the prehistoric Yamatai nation of southern Japan, whose brother functioned as the state's secretary.

53 Chiri discusses how the Ainu traditionally conducted divination using such materials as needles, swords, bows, ashes, water, and animal and fish bones. Niok is a type of divination which is like the flipping of a coin, using an animal or fish bone instead. The Ainu also divined by looking at the shape of the water, after praying to the deity of the spring.

Chiri also talks about how the Sakhalin Ainu in Shiranushi practiced divination for fishing at the beginning of the fishing season, by inviting a shaman to perform. In a dark room, the shaman's drum would move around by itself and answer questions about the season's catch, by beating twice for yes, and once for no. There is also *t-fumi-nu* ("it-sound-hear"), among the Ainu at the northern tip of Hokkaidô, a kind of shamanic possession where a shaman "becomes" a mountain or the sea, to find lost persons (Chiri 1973e: 24-25).

54 Ordeal by hot water is called *satmon*, and ordeal by drinking a large pot full of water is *kamo-kamo* (Chiri 1973e: 24). The former was also commonly practiced by the peoples of Wa, *Kukatachi*; it is also found in various other parts of the world, including southern Korea and the Philippines.

55 It is unfortunate that many excellent Japanese scholars still face limitations due to linguistic incapacity and lack of an interdisciplinary framework. Kaiho, for example, in her important work on gender issues in Ainu history (Kaiho 1992), discusses religious and ritual interaction between the Ainu and Japanese (Matsumae-han) without reviewing the literature on shamanism or consulting the Ainu about issues of spirituality. Thus, she fails to understand why "the Ainu word *satmon*

(ordeal by boiling water), a term which reminds one of the Japanese term *saimon* （祭文）, is in circulation (among the Ainu)." The Japanese term *saimon* refers to sacred verses offered to the Shintô altar in a ceremony, and it is also the name for the pilgrims who chant popularized versions of such verses (Kôjien 1955: 937). Did it never occur to Kaiho that the term *saimon* may be a loan word for both the Ainu and the Japanese?

56 The otter is another common spirit guide for a shaman (cf. Chiri 1973e)

57 Among all these Ainu terms referring to shaman or shamanic activity, I only know two cases which may be "loan" words: *imu* and *oyna*. *Imu* is also the Giliyak word for the "trance" state, according to Chiri, and *oyna* is clearly the Yakut *oyuna*, meaning shaman (Chiri 1952, Eliade 1964: 4). The former is in wide circulation among the Ainu, but the latter is limited to Sakhalin and Northern Hokkaidô Ainu. In addition to these, Aeoyna-kamuy is probably derived from the Yakut *ay oyuna*, "white shaman." According to Czaplicka, the Yakut divide shamans into two types, the class of *ajy ojuna* (*ai oyuna*), who sacrifice to the gods, and the class of *abassy oyuna* (*oyuna*), who have relations with "evil spirits" (Czaplicka 1914: 247ff.). Harva observes, however, that the *ajy ojuna* is not necessarily a shaman but can also be a sacrificing priest (Harva 1938: 483). This evidence connecting the Ainu culture hero Aeoyna-kamuy, or Okikurumi, to the Eurasian continent is of the utmost interest, since he is a shaman from a higher world, himself a foreigner, who introduced new technology and moral ideas to the Ainu.

Eliade also discusses how the sound *ajy(ai)* relates to a wide variety of deities connected with the first shaman, who is associated with an eagle: "The celestial Supreme God of the Finns, Ukko, is also named AiJa (Lapp Aijo, Aije), a name that Sternberg connects with Ajy (Ai). Like the Yakut Ajy, the Finnish Aija is the ancestor of shamans. The Yakut calls the "white" shaman Ajy Ojuna (Ai Oyuna), which, according to Sternberg, is very close to the Finish Aija Ukko. We should recall the motif of the eagle and the Cosmic Tree (Yggdrasil) in Germanic mythology; Odin is sometimes called 'Eagle'" (Eliade 1964: 71).

58 See Chiri for a discussion of Ainu farming magic (Chiri 1973h).

59 The owl is a *kotan-kor-kamuy* (village god).

60 Dogs were commonly sacrificed in Sakhalin in case of serious illness, or the establishment of a new house (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973b: 16-17).

61 There involves the ritual slaying and consuming of a wild bear or a bear cub which had been raised by the villagers. The full term is *kimun kamuy iomante* in which *kimun* means "to dwell in mountain," *i* designates "it" and *oman-te*, "sending." (Kayano 1985:98). Thus, the bear's soul is returned to where it belongs.

Although *iomante* is probably one of the most prominent aspects of Ainu cult to outsiders, its interpretation varies considerably. Many accounts of the meaning of the *iomante* share a tendency towards a unifunctional interpretation. *Iomante* is generally viewed as a religious event; however, Batchelor (1901) sees it as an irrational practice of sacrifice in which the victim itself is a part of feast of friendship

and kinship, while Inukai and Natori (1970:552) emphasize the solemnness of the event. Ohnuki-Tierney (1981: 85), on the other hand, looking at the circulation of goods and services in *tomante*, understands it as primarily politically and economically motivated. More recent native accounts defends its multi-purpose, institutional aspects (Kayano 1985). Finally, it is still widely held, especially among local government workers, that *tomante* is an "uncivilized" and inhuman activity (Kawamura 1985: 6).

62 One of the secrets involving the shaman's use of animal sacrifice lies in the manipulation of the transformative energy emanating from the sacrificed animal just after it is slain, at the moment of its physical death. A Siberian shaman, for example, is trained to catch the life force at the very moment of death, and transfer it onto some *materia medica* such as a drum, which he beats obsessively to express the vibration of such energy. A Buriat shaman told me that without a sacrifice, the seance is not the same at all (Tanaka, fieldwork in Moscow, 1999).

63 Chiri also discusses other cases of dramatic enactment of a similar nature. He quotes an account of another wind sacrifice practiced by southern Hokkaidô Ainu, which appears in Tsugaru Kibun written in 1758. When the blizzard prevented the Ainu from fishing in the sea, forty to fifty Ainu, divided into two groups, were employed to perform a whipping battle. When trying to calm the eastern wind, the groups represented the eastern and western winds, and the western wind was of course victorious. Similarly, the groups might represent the northern and southern winds, depending on the direction of the relief sought. If no wind was desired,

but instead clear sky, the villagers gathered in one place and prayed to the sky. Interestingly, the report add that the author's acquaintance (obviously from Tsugaru) went to southern Hokkaidô which had been suffering from blizzards, and practiced this ritual after it was suggested by the local people there. He was able to come home across the Tsugaru Strait afterwards (Chiri 1973e: 6-7).

64 In Japanese, it is called ***mattake*** (dance mushroom), in Sakhalin Ainu ***iso-karus***, and in Hokkaidô Ainu, ***yuk-karus***. The latter two both mean "bear mushroom" (Chiri 1973e: 5).

65 My father remembers that these mushrooms from the mountains behind Kiraichi was so huge that my grandmother did not even consider those sold in the market to be "edible" according to her standards.

66 In Kushiro in eastern Hokkaidô, Ainu men and women dressed up in full ceremonial garments and danced around the mushroom when harvesting it: men in ***jin-baori*** (a suit of armor used in the feudal ages of Japan), women in ***atusht***. They took their clothes off, saying "let's exchange, let's exchange!" and bowed to the mushroom as they harvested it (Chiri 1973e: 5).

To give one other example, when the Ainu encountered two trees twisted and growing together in the mountain, men and women would embrace each other trying to imitate the shape of the trees, and circle around them six times before they cut them down.

67 This dog tray is made of a large log, cut into half and dug out in the shape of a canoe. It is about one foot wide, and eight and a half feet long (Chiri 1973e: 6).

68 This is also a common belief among Japanese. Some commercial maternal products thus have dog-related names.

69 In Raichishi in Sakhalin, an *tnaw* called *si-e-niste-x* (I-by it-become strong-thing = a charm against evils) is placed not only inside the hearth but also at the road entrance in case of widespread disease. These border guards are also equipped with a straw sword and a bow (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973a: 12).

70 The link between disease and boundaries is also found for the ancient period in southern central Japan. It appears that charms against the diseases such as *ema* (picture horses), spell boards, and dolls were placed at the gates (Kaneko 1997: 83-86).

71 Ainu exorcisms often involved making special *tnaw*, and offering prayer and food to the evil *kamuy*: "Various diseases from time to time attack the human body. Such, for example, are ague and fever, heavy colds, stomach-ache, and picking at the lungs (consumption). Now when these complaints arise, the full-grown men should meet together and go to the villages up and down the rivers, and take from each hut a small quantity of millet, fish, tobacco, skunk cabbage, and cow turnip. When these have been taken, they should all be brought to an appointed place, where the men should also collect and pray. After prayer the men should carry them to the seashore, then make *tnao* fetishes, and reverently place them by their

side." (Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folklore*: 291, quoted in Chiri 1973l: 385). Such prayer, moreover, expresses how they and their village are compliant with order and hence should be avoided. The Ainu also begin calling young children "shit covered ones" when they are in danger of catching smallpox, to ward off demons. Poison fish with thorns, rabbits, and lamprey eels are among the creatures believed to have the power to repel the smallpox (Chiri 1973l: 378-384).

72 The Ainu believe that food-sharing is an essential moral requirement. This applies also to food-sharing between humans and ***kamuy***. Every time one consumes food, it is believed that s/he is sharing it with ***kamuy***. Thus eating is not a mere act of consuming an edible product but is an act of the internalization of the sacred and powerful values of nature. Eating can thus be seen as an act of creating a metonymic link between humans and divine nature (cf. Nogami 1992).

73 In some areas the terms are interchangeable. In Akan in eastern Hokkaidô, ***yukar*** means ***kamuy yukar*** (Chiri 1973a: 161).

74 The Ainu culture heroes Samainkur (Eastern Hokkaidô), Okikurumi (South central Hokkaidô), and Ainurakkur are different realizations of *oyna-kamuy* (Chiri 1973a: 155).

75 Chiri stresses the continuity of Ainu civilization from Jômon to the present day via Satsumon: that the basic structure of ***kamuy yukar*** and *oyna* provided the essential form for yet another major Ainu poetry genre, ***yukar***, epic poetry. Most ***yukar*** are long epic verses about wars which took place between the Ainu in Hokkaidô

and overseas northern aboriginal peoples called ***rep-un-kur*** (sea-there-people). The ***repunkur*** include peoples in the Amur river region, Sakhalin and the Kurils, the people who are considered by many to have brought Okhotsk culture to northeastern Hokkaidô during the Satsumon period. The war, depicted in the ***yukar*** "Kutune Shirka," is said to have been caused by the Ainu "stealing" their enemy's woman, and the young warrior hero, Poyaunpe, is always resurrected by a shamaness amongst his enemies (cf. Chiri 1973a:1 58-9, Kindaichi 1944).

76 In the Kitami area, ***chikap-oyna*** means the cry of a bird (Chiri 1973a: 161).

77 Carmen Blacker's well-known work, *The Catalpa Bow*, discusses various traditions of female shamans in other parts of the Japanese archepelago, including some which might be best considered neo-shamans (Blacker 1982).

78 The full diffusion of shamanic practice, so that every person in effect has their own channel to the divine, is obviously contrary to the principle of hierarchic order, and the prospect of such diffusion has frightened more than one state that aspired to monolithic power. The following passage seems to indicate such a nervousness on the part of someone writing from the viewpoint of the Chinese state at the time this statement was produced:

> Anciently, men and spirits did not intermingle. At that time there were certain persons who were so perspicacious, single-minded, and reverential that their understanding enabled them to make meaningful collation of what lies above and below, and their insight to illuminate what

> is distant and profound. Therefore the spirits would descend into them. The possessors of such powers were, if men, called *hsi* (shamans), and if women, *wu* (shamanesses). It is they who supervised the positions of the spirits at the ceremonies, sacrificed to them, and otherwise handled religious matters. The spirits sent down blessings on the people, and accepted from them their offerings. There were no natural calamities....In the degenerate time of Shao-hao [traditionally deemed to have been in the twenty-six century BCE], however, the Nine Li threw virtue into disorder. Men and spirits became intermingled, with each household indiscriminately performing for itself the religious observances which had hitherto been conducted by the shamans. As a consequence, men lost their reverence for the spirits, the spirits violated the rules of men, and natural calamities arose. Hence the successor of Shao-hao, Chuan-hsü, charged Ch'ung, Governor of the South, to handle the affairs of Heaven in order to determine the proper places of the spirits, and Li, Governor of Fire, to handle the affairs of Earth in order to determine the proper places of men. And such is what is meant by "cutting the communication between Heaven and earth." (Bodde 1981: 66-67).

However questionable this might be as history, the text reveals some interesting points. First, as obvious from the text, the Chinese state authorities saw shamanism practiced by everyone as a source of chaos and disorder. Hence, shamans are instituted to *control* the shamanic power, to institutionalize it as a matter of fact.

Second, the fact that the professional shamans were authorized means that even the state authorities did not deny the power of the spirits.

79 The terms designating ancestral rites and memorial services to ancestors vary greatly depending on region, and even individually. However, if we look at the kind of *tnaw* prepared and offered to the ancestors at a regular, communal ancestral ceremony, there are two patterns noticeable, in accord with the two broad regions in Hokkaidô: SW Hokkaidô, and NE Hokkaidô. In SW Hokkaidô, the same type of *tnaw* is offered to both maternal and paternal ancestors, while in NE Hokkaidô *tnaw* differ according to paternal and maternal ancestors (Hokkaidô History Museum 1995: 24).

Spring and fall, of course, are the seasons bracketing the "female" season of summer, when the weather is at its warmest and most nurturing, and gathering activities are at their peak.

80 Often the host of such rites and event have no blood relation with those offering prayers to their ancestors today.

81 Obayashi claims that Ainu ancestral rites are primarily conducted in the western part of Hokkaidô due to the influence of Buddhism, introduced to the Ainu in the fifteenth century (Obayashi 1997: 170). However, in Sakhalin not only humans but bears were given commemoration ceremonies called *stnurappa* (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973a: 10-11).

Obayashi's discussion suggests some intriguing questions. If ancestral worship was imported via Buddhism, which Buddhism was it, and from where? Via the south from Japan or via the north from Siberia (Lamaism), or both? Furthermore, how does this Buddhism account for the centrality of women in this ancestral ritual, at least in some Ainu communities? I will return to this question in the next chapter, when discussing the influence of Buddhism on Tsugaru shamanism.

82 The *tap-kar* (to make a "tat" sound= sound of footsteps) is a dance appropriate for a drinking feast, and it is initiated by male elders, *ekashi*, at the peak of the feast. They rise, and put out their hands, slightly cupped, with arms raised. They solemnly walk several steps diagonally as they raise and lower their arms, and retreat to their original position. A sung prayer and chanting can accompany the dance. This action closely resembles the *onkami*, gesture of greeting, in central and NE Hokkaidô, where both male and female danced in pairs in this manner. Chiri argues that the *tap-kar* (*taxkara* in Sakhalin) was originally a jump dance to ward off demons in case of impending danger or accident, and the original usage of the word *tapkar* is preserved among the Ainu in Bihoro, NE Hokkaidô. A spontaneous song can accompany such a *tapkar*, called a *tapkar-sinotcha* (Chiri 1973g: 242, 1973m: 38-55).

83 Sakhalin Ainu drums are often oval, like those commonly found in Siberia.

84 Most Ainu use bamboo *mukkuri*, but in Sakhalin, metal *mukkuri* known as *kani-mukkuri* are also widely used (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973a: 18). Some local Tsugaru people say that *kani-mukkuri* were also found in Tsugaru in the past.

85 In Shirahama in Sakhalin, a shaman would wear a shaved wood headdress with a long piece of shaved wood at its back, and his/her wrists would be tied with shaved wood (Hokkaidô History Museum 1973b: 46).

86 Cf. for instance the "Epic of Kotan Utunnai" in Phillipi 1982: 388, "Beyond that, / she was apparently a wizardess also, for / the facial features of wizardry, / the appearance of a shamaness / could be seen clearly / on her counternance."

This description of the Ainu shamaness also evokes the customs of the ancient Pazyryk peoples.The two thousand-year old body of a Pazyryk shamaness found in the Altai region near the border with China had an elaborate headdress which took up one-third of the casket: it was made of molded felt on a wooden frame and decorated with eight gold-covered carved cats (Polosmak 1994). The Pazyryks are horsemen who lived on the steppes and the mountains of the Altai region in the sixth through the second centuries BCE.

87 To quote the late Warring States Chinese compilation, the *Institutes of Zhou* 周官, on the *fangxiang* 方相 'exorcist': "In his official function, he wears [over his head] a bearskin having four eyes of gold, and is clad in a black upper garment and a red lower garment. Grasping his lance and brandishing his shield, he leads the many officers to perform the seasonal Exorcism (*No*), searching through houses and driving out pestilences" (Bodde: 78). Derk Bodde, who provides the translation given above in his *Festivals in Classical China*, notes the possible connection between the bear, Siberian tribes, and the Ainu.

88 However, Sekiba notes that he has heard of Ainu shamans using mind-altering chemical substances (Sekiba 1980: 14). We have a report in Ohnuki-Tierney (1974) of a shamanic ritual among the Sakhalin Ainu which involves the drinking of several bowls of seawater in which Yesso spruce and *nuhca* (a plant belonging to the genus Ledumi, containing small amounts of paracresol), as well as a piece of kelp, have been soaked (Ohnuki-Tierney 1974: 110). At the very least, one would expect a drastic disturbance of the shaman's electrolyte balance from consuming these amounts of salt.

89 A story of a shaman-chief's *tnaw* is quoted in Chiri: When smallpox was killing many Ainu during the Edo period, a large group of Ainu from eastern Hokkaidô came to Hakodate to trade, and on their way back they visited the Shiraoi area in sixty boats. They had a large feast with the local Ainu there, and the village chief, ***kamuy ekashi***, provided plates and cups for them. After the visitors left, the smallpox began spreading in Shiraoi. As it turned out, one of the visitors had been infected with smallpox in Hakodate, and the easterners wanted to get rid of the smallpox deity in Shiraoi by giving it to the people there. Thus, they had secretly contaminated the dishes when they returned them to the ***kamuy ekashi***. When the ***kamuy ekashi*** learned about this, he was already infected and dying. However, he made an *tnaw* with six shavings, held it in his hand, and chanted a spell as his death wish. The *tnaw* flew through the air towards the east, speaking the language of litigation, *charanke*. When it finally reached the boats travelling across the sea, they were all swallowed by a tidal wave (Chiri 1973l: 357-358).

90 In an *oyna* called "Tree god and *inaw*," a hero retrieves male and female *inaw* stolen by bad deities, and these *inaw* are said to have been granted to humans to give them shamanic power. The hero is directed to ask several trees, including the willow, to help him, and each of these trees is addressed in heaven by names of both male and female tree deities (Nefski 1991: 167-178).

91 The following paragraphs draw chiefly from Nagai Hiroshi's work, *Ainu osanbâchan no upashikuma* (*An Ainu Midwife's Words of Wisdom*).

92 Since Aiko was illiterate, Nagai tries to present Aiko's own words and testimony in this book, as he believes she is the actual main "author" of the book.

93 According to Nagai, the "lonlonlon" refrains in this *tusu-shinotca* in this context is the chorus of some Philippine mountain tribes which Aiko delivered without understanding what it was. The conversation between Nagai and Aiko in trance-state had been a sacred site in the northern Philippines before this part of the *tusu* (Nagai 1988: 250).

94 Although Aiko is from Nibutani in southern central Hokkaidô, I collected testimony from eastern Hokkaidô Ainu on the same custom of offering raw eggs.

95 There is also another Ainu curse, *icashikar(a)*, meaning to kill someone by casting a bad curse (Sekiba 1980: 24). Apparently, this term was still in use in some areas of Tsugaru during my grandmother Kane's early life, since it is one of the Ainu words that my father can remember having heard from my grandmother. It is not to be found in Ainu language text books or dictionaries. It has virtually become a

taboo word among the Ainu, since those who used *tcashtkar* was put on trial, through *satmon* (ordeal by hot water) or *charanke* (litigation), and once found guilty, severely punished. One part of my Ainu family legacy thus pertains to the use of such curses, and how if you ever use them you get punished by your own curse in the end. Indeed, my grandmother did not seem to be very proud of this part of her heritage, according to my father.

96 Irimoto 1997 pp. 33-36, see Irimoto 1997 for an excellent review of the history of *tmu* research.

97 We should also note the similarity between *tmu* and an Ainu word *tmi* (*t-mi*), dress, or to put on a dress, and *tmut* (*t-mut*) necklace, or to put around. In both cases, one puts something on oneself to wear, signalling transformation.

98 Irimoto 1997: 34-35, quoting Uchimura 1938 and Nagai 1983.

99 Ohnuki-Tierney 1974: 112.

100 Any culture or any group sharing a set of common values and beliefs can and will manifest fear and surprise at an object or behavior which is a culturally defined "trigger" for such behavior. Thus, my teen-age sons, for example, habitually utter "Oh shit!" or "Kiss my ass!" when they encounter any request or comment from me. It makes one wonder if these researchers who studied Ainu ever considered what would happen if the shoe were on the other foot, and the Ainu were studying them.

101 Shamans were often involved in promoting and assisting childbirth, as was the case in ancient China:

> The offering of prayers and sacrifices to the spirits for children was a prevalent custom that extends back perhaps as far as the dawn of Chinese history, since sterility in Chinese society was a great disaster not only for the women but also for the whole family. Many ancient records show that one of the shamans' functions in pre-Han and Han times was to pray for reproduction and fertility....What we know with certainty is that the shamans in North China sometimes were summoned on the occasion of childbirth to act as midwife or to give specific suggestions to overcome a difficult labour. In South China, we know that a certain shaman was invited to see a newborn baby who was born in a very abnormal situation, and that this shaman carried out a rite of purification or exorcism for the baby and its family (Lin 1994: 206-207).

102 Pilsudki never encountered a shaman who was also at the same time a midwife in Sakhalin, since he concluded that if there was a "misfortune" such as a funeral, or an impure event such labour, a shaman would not help the people in need (Pilsudki 1961: 187).

103 Yasuko is not known as a midwife; however, she is an Ainu language educator, a practitioner of traditional healing arts, and a powerful defender of Ainu culture and the environment in Nibutani, one of the organizers of the campaign against the

Nibutani Dam project. I had been told by some influential Ainu men in Nibutani not to visit Yasuko's house or to become acquainted with her group; if I did, they said, I would get into trouble. These men considered Yasuko to be a "witch," who organized a strange cult and was unfairly popular with Japanese and foreigners for providing free accommodation for an unlimited time.

104 The following is Aiko's *kamuynomi* to *uarikamuy*, the god of labour, quoted in Nagai:

> ***uarikamuy nepirara kukiwak ekisirikasomone sinrik orowano ramatt orano uarikamuy upusoroho anwakusu unukukorowa unuupusorok upusorohok omarewa kupusorohokomarewa uarikamuy kutorawakek kukosinrik sinrik'orowano serumakka enserumakausiyakun pirikano uarikamuy pirikaisoitakku kukorowa kekiyakun kanipatek kekisirikasomone sinriku orowano iresukamuy kamuyutara pirikano entekisama epunkineyakun unooka pirikano kuchasinurewa pirikanoisoitakku kukiyakun sinrikuorowa Ainukarayakun tewanopo pirikaisoitak kukinankorona.***
>
> (translation)
>
> I did not disrespect *uarikamuy*. What my mother embraced in her chest, the soul of *uarikamuy* given to us from our ancestors, I brought with me holding in my chest. I am not alone. I came with the honorable fire god and other gods, so if they watch me and help me, I shall be able to fulfill my duty.

(Nagai 1983: 70-71; transliteration mine; words separated following Nagai's description.)

105 Sekiba notes that the Ainu recognized a traditional "doctor," *potara-guru* or *e-potara-guru*, who functioned as a healer-nurse, and provided necessary care for ill persons. (*Potara* means "to care.") Such persons possessed a traditional knowledge of herbal medicine and massage and touch therapy. According to Sekiba, the healer was usually impossible to distinguish from an ordinary Ainu, and anyone who was experienced seems to have taken this role (Sekiba 1980: 5).

106 *Ikema*, *cyuanchum caudatum*, is also a common medical herb among the Ainu (Sekiba 1980: 11).

107 Fujimura also notes the Ainu familiarity with acupuncture points. They had a treatment whereby an acupuncture point is slightly cut and the old blood removed. Apparently the same method was used by the Japanese during the Edo period before the introduction of Chinese needle therapy (Fujimura 1985: 94-95). As we will see in the next chapter, some shamans in Tsugaru also used similar treatment until the establishment of the modern license system for chiropractors and acupuncturists.

108 Nagai thinks that the needle applied to the jaws is the origin of the Ainu women's mouth tattoo, *paktsaru-shtnue* (Nagai 1983: 155). Fujimura discusses how the mouth tattoo can serve as a barometer of one's health, since its color changes

depending on blood circulation (Fujimura 1985: 121). The patterns of the mouth tattoo also varied by region (Hokkaidô History Museum 1994).

109 These traditional needles may have been made of tree fiber (Nagai 1983: 155). If they were metal, they would serve as another demonstration of how advanced the metalworking techniques of the Ainu were.

110 Her mother's family was from a village called Yamamonbetsu *kotan*, the modern Kuratomi in Monbetsu town, Saru region (Nagai 1983: 158).

111 Neither the Hokkaidô History Museum researchers nor Pilsudski had any opportunity to encounter Ainu shamans who succeeded ancestral shaman spirits in this manner, and thus they both concluded that Ainu spirit guides were never inherited by descendants, in contrast to what is true of other ethnic groups in northeast Asia (Pilsudki 1961: 185-186, Hokkaidô History Museum 1975: 13). The inheritance of ancestral spirits and shaman spirit guides is common among the indigenous peoples in Siberia, for example. It usually follows blood relationships, but not always.

112 Another possibility is that the severity of the punishments, or the conditions under which they were administered, have been exaggerated or misunderstood by the Japanese sources, which of course assumed the Ainu to be savages.

113 Aiko did not care whether prayer was conducted in Ainu or Japanese, since prayer transmits a message from one's mind to the *kamuy*, and was not simply a form in and of itself. Thus, Aiko was critical of other Ainu who conducted prayers in Ainu

in public, reading a script from the *pasuy* (prayer stick) without understanding the meaning (Nagai 1983: 233).

114 This Japanese lady identified herself as having had a husband whose name was Shitoshi, who could not make it to Yamanbetsu *kotan* with her due to banditry. She insisted that she was born overseas, not within (the present boundaries of) Japan (Nagai 1983: 240-241).

115 Conversation with Nagai, May 1999.

116 For a discussion of differences in Sakhalin Ainu and Hokkaidô Ainu customs, see Ohnuki-Tierney 1974.

117 It was, however, impossible to stop the Ainu from conducting the bear ceremony because it functions as sympathetic magic, so the actual effect of this ban may have been slight (Takakura 1960: 77, footnote 56).

118 In 1821, the entire territory of Ezo was returned to the Matsumae clan, since the *bakufu* gained more control of the northern border that way. It was, moreover, more economical for the *bakufu* to let the Matsumae control Ezo. The Matsumae restored its separation policy. In 1856, Ezo was returned to *bakufu* control, since they began seeing its significance in an international context (Perry had come to Urawa in 1853). The *bakufu* thus instituted an assimilation policy, and promoted the Japanese language among the Ainu (Toyoda 1968).

CHAPTER FOUR

HELL'S HEAVEN: SHAMANISM, THE TSUGARU SCHOOL

> "In the east, are there wilful ghosts? If there are, come and gather at the *kuchiyose* tonight, be our guests, let humans come and go, come if you are invited, leave if you are not, let's get together and tell stories."
>
> From the *itako saimon* "Jigoku sagashi" ("Hell Search")[1]

In Chapter Three, I examined Ainu shamanism as a complex institution, in its past and its present. I looked at the essence of the shamanic world view of the Ainu, and some of its regional variations, as well as the salient characteristics of Ainu shamanic practice, including a case study of a contemporary shamaness, the late Aoki Aiko from Nibutani. Finally, I discussed the regional variations in these practices, and briefly examined the policies and attitudes of the Matsumae *han* towards the Ainu, with particular attention to the implications these had for the Ainu's shamanic and medical heritage.

Through this study, we were able to conclude that some of the characteristics of recent Ainu shamanism, such as gender bias and the pervading negative attitude towards shamans and shamanic practice in general, are likely to have been the results of colonial state policies and the attitudes of the colonists towards the Ainu. The implication is that what we have come to know as the Ainu heritage today — much of it in any case based on post-Meiji salvage ethnography — is the result of complex imperial interactions, the

combined effect of the powerful settlers who imposed their own beliefs and customs on the local indigenous peoples, and the state's various interventions during the Edo period. Thus we cannot blindly assume that what passes as "modern" Ainu shamanism presents or preserves the core of traditional shamanic values and practices, particularly as concerns the interaction of gender and shamanism.

In this chapter, we return to Tsugaru and examine its shamanic world view and the essential aspects of its shamanic practices, so that we can understand better what may have been lost from the Hokkaidô Ainu tradition, and what the Tsugaru tradition may have preserved. In striking contrast to indigenous shamanism in Hokkaidô, Tsugaru shamanism is very much alive, public, and specialized. While it shows considerable influence from organized religions such as Buddhism, and has undoubtedly been moulded by its existence within a highly developed nation-state society, it has retained many of the key elements of earlier traditions rooted in the hunting and gathering way of life. Hence Tsugaru presents a rich mixture of indigenous and non-indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices, surviving in a whole range of forms.

Indeed, Tsugaru is a treasure house of living shamanic customs and events. If we were to characterize it in a single word, that word might well be "magico-religious" (Wakamori:1970). Dark and demonic images are habitually foisted on the region by the tongues and pens of outsiders, partly because of its traditional poverty, partly because of its harsh winters, and certainly not least because of the indigenous blind female shamans, the *ttako*, who speak the words of the dead in the eternal lake of blood on "Hell Mountain" in the world to come. Strong stuff, and hardly cheerful! In fact, the most notorious of the Hell Mountains, Mount Osore 恐山 ("Mount Fear") is a medieval Buddhist

appropriation of an indigenous sacred site, which thus became the home of a syncretic cult involving *itako*, in which capacity it continues to this day.

For its part, much of the early academic perception of the *itako* has been negative, judging them according to a nationalistic framework which sees them as a degenerate survival of ancient "Japanese" female shamans. Hori, for example, declares that the *itako* of today are not shamanic persons: "their practice betrays that they perpetuate, without inspiration or supernatural gift, practices which go back to antiquity" (Hori 1971, quoted Blacker 1982: 162). Blacker wholeheartedly concurs: "What passes for a trance among them is seen on shrewd inspection to be mere imitation," and "*itako* are 'passive mediums' and not ascetic," which means that "the decline of the truly shamanic medium in the north came about when the profession became the monopoly of the blind" (Blacker 1982:140-162). Even an overt sympathizer with the *itako* such as Sakurai cannot step out from under the nationalistic umbrella: his way of validating the importance of the *itako* is to stress how crucial they are for understanding shamanism in Japan, and the formation of the "Japanese" people.

Commercial tourism has also contributed to creating and maintaining a dark, fearful image of Tsugaru and its shamans, commodifying their images as symbols of the exotic and primitive. For many one-time visitors from outside, a Tsugaru sacred site is a short vacation from ordinary reality, the satisfaction of a largely idle curiosity, like dropping in to the haunted house at a fun fair. But for those who live there, the shamans and shamanism of Tsugaru are a source of neither pride nor shame, but simply a part of life. Shamanism in Tsugaru is a living tradition which owes its continuity not to conscious restoration but ironically, at least partly to the fact that for many decades Tsugaru people could not

afford any of the alternatives: they were stuck with their local products, sink or swim. In the face of Meiji government attempts to stamp out shamanism, many *itako* went "underground," and both they and their customers were ready and willing to resume business when the ban was lifted. Shamanism is as much a part of Tsugaru life as the air or water: to the residents, it is amazing that some people still find it amazing that shamans are thriving in Tsugaru.[2]

This determined continuity is worth a discussion in itself, since it has been basic to the survival of Tsugaru shamanism. Thus, before discussing the tradition proper, I would like to discuss it and its contradictions and tensions, using the local *neputa* festival as my primary example. This will help us understand both the general cultural and identity dilemma of the Tsugaru people, and how they have managed to survive it.

The commercial sector in Tsugaru is fond of comparing the *neputa* festival to Rio's carnival: it is a dance and drinking craze which goes on over several nights in the early part of August. Over the whole of Tsugaru, each city, town, and village has its own *neputa*, the centerpiece being a parade of large brightly-lit floats (see left, from Nakasato in 1999) with images often adopted either from Chinese popular literature or classical Japanese history. All of the images are martial: hairy warriors with elaborate swords, surrounded by spiral motifs of clouds and dragons, accompanied by beautiful women and dark-skinned Islamic traders. During the *neputa*, Tsugaru takes

Figure 4.1: *Neputa* float, Nakasato, summer 1999

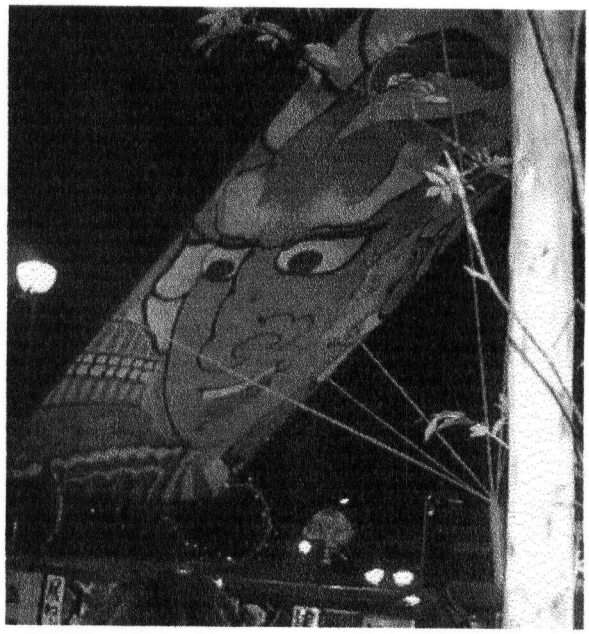


Figure 4.2: *Neputa* float, Nakasato, summer 1999

an alcohol-fuelled flight away from the mundane: bureaucrats, corporate businessmen, and white-collar professionals join peasants, loggers, fishermen, and everyone else in putting on flowery straw hats or head bands, colorfully layered costumes, and bells around their waist and in their hands, to dance frantically, bounding around, jumping in every direction. The streets are clogged by the spectators, some of them also wielding bells; and the sounds are all-pervasive, in particular the traditional chant of "rasse-ra, rasse-ra, rasse, rasse, rasse-ra." Tradition in Tsugaru is not merely oral, it is rhythmic; and more than rhythmic, it is musical. Street corners become free service stations for *saké*: the dancers drink, and sprinkle *saké* over themselves and others throughout the night. Every year, a few people die of heart attacks this way, but this has never been considered sufficient grounds for the festival to go dry, since alcohol has always been considered sacred.

The *neputa* festival is popularly said to be a celebration of the conquests of Sakanoueno Tamuramaro, the Generalissimo for the Pacification of the North. He played a primary role in bringing Atoroi to Kyôto, where the latter was executed in 802 CE. There is no record of any visit by him to Tsugaru, or even of a Yamato design to conquer Tsugaru at that time; but Tamuramaro as a glorified conqueror is a common motif found in many myths and legends in Tsugaru. Tamuramaro's name and fame, it appears, have

been used by the Japanese authorities to legitimize their rule in Tsugaru.[3] It has been only very recently that local people have taken the initiative in questioning this fallacy. Today, one even sees the name "Aterui" on *neputa* figures, tagged with some such inspiring phrase as "hero of the north."

The glorification of Tamuramaro is linked to the political attempts by the Japanese state to suppress indigenous customs.[4] During the early years of Meiji, there were attempts to forbid the *neputa* as a savage "primitive" custom. In 1873, Hishida Shigeyoshi, who was sent from the capital to be governor of the newly established Aomori prefecture, which integrated and replaced Tsugaru and Nanbu *han*, considered the *neputa* an ancient Ezo custom, "a despicable legacy of wild savagery" (Shindô 1970: 412). The popular protest against his proscription was so strong that in 1882, the order was lifted and the *neputa* became legal again, with some restrictions. The *neputa* as a "celebration" of Tamuramaro's conquest has served the interest of both sides, both the central authorities and the people of Tsugaru, though as in many other cases of divergent interpretations of a single event, the cooperation has been unconscious rather than deliberately arranged.

The disagreement on the nature of the *neputa* may remind us of other native-metis tensions, "purist" verses popularist approaches to traditional events. Nevertheless, from the point of view of "orthodox" Ainu, this "disguise" has been no more than a fig leaf at best, and more than a little irritating. In Ainu there is an expression, "*neputa-ka-kaputa*," which means "What is that? What is that?" The etymology of *neputa* as an Ainu word referring to eccentricity has long been known to local historians in Aomori (cf. Satô in 1931: 149). In fact, the *neputa* is an indigenous war-dance: when Ainu warriors con-

fronted attackers from the south, they came down from their forts on the hills, in full regalia, chanting and dancing, trying to ward off evil. This shamanic performance is the legacy of the final Ainu battles for independence, and its original nature can still be seen in contemporary forms, highly commercialized and modified (interview with Ogawa Seikichi, education officer, Hokkaidô Ainu Association, 1999). To "orthodox" Ainu eyes, the *neputa* has thus become an entirely "eccentric" spectacle, another exploitation of their traditions, and another distortion of history. Their brothers and sisters in Tsugaru owe them an explanation of why its Ainu origins have been concealed.

The *neputa* today is a fusion of decorative festive traditions from different areas of Japan, including Kyôto, and on the surface it has become a species of midsummer madness, just another *matsuri*, an occasion to set aside worries and enjoy life. There are "politically correct" attempts that claim to reclaim its indigenous roots, but these look back to the trade festivities of Jômon time, entirely bypassing the Ainu past. A small minority of local scholars in Aomori are trying to restore Ainu customs and establish Ainu studies in Aomori, but the great majority remain indifferent to this side of their cultural roots, partly due to a lack of public education on indigenous history, and partly from a fear of once more becoming marginalized and discriminated against. They have known for centuries that a connection with the Ainu means trouble, and certainly many do not wish to open up old wounds again; but for others, the wounds are still too fresh to be forgotten, much less to be celebrated.[5] The reintroduction of Ainu content into the *neputa*, which grew from Ainu roots all but severed now, depends on making such a reintroduction attractive to the majority; and this in turn means unfolding for that majority an entirely forgotten segment of their cultural foundation: their own Ainu past.

To outsiders, the discussion of Ainu heritage in Tsugaru may appear confusing at this point, because of the multitude of intermediary forms, disguises, and masks, all of which are typically presented as "Japanese" folk custom. Tsugaru exists within a monolithic mainstream cultural context that rigidly demands you be either "Japanese" or Ainu, but never both. The great secret of the region, nevertheless, has always been that it is neither, and both; related, but distinct.[6] Moreover, the problem of clearly conceptualizing the Ainu cultural complex is due to the heretofore universal perception that Hokkaidô Ainu culture sets the sole and universal standard, in spite of the damage done to it in the past, and the obsessive archaism of its revivalists, who would canonize a tradition removed from history, frozen in the timeless sterility of a museum display case. From this perspective, Hokkaidô Ainu can at best see Tsugaru as a deviant and degenerate indigenous group.

The irony about all this struggle over identity is that in Tsugaru, many of the ancient customs and beliefs which have supposedly been discontinued among the Hokkaidô Ainu for centuries find counterparts that are still very much alive. This is particularly the case with regard to shamanism and related activities. Female shamans dominate the shamanic scene, and no one would stop them from praying to, or quarrelling with, their deities. The chief transmitters of the shamanic profession are women, and the transmission itself tends to be private, household and domestic, rather than temple-centered. In some cases, such as the Mt. Iwaki pilgrimage and *matagi* bear ceremonialism, the similarity to the Hokkaidô Ainu is easy to see, but in others, such as the ancestral services, a less evident commonality underlies divergent surface manifestations: the shamanic heritage in Tsugaru has gone through its own transformations during Edo, due to the promotion of

syncretic Buddhism by Tsugaru ***han***, and attempts to regulate and standardize indigenous shamans, the *ttako* in particular.

As we have already mentioned, Tsugaru ***han*** attitudes towards their indigenous population differed from those of the Matsumae ***han,*** in that from the beginning of ***han*** rule in Tsugaru the great majority of indigenous people were considered to be within their sphere of responsibility. Rather than treating them as exotic others, the Tsugaru ***han*** assumed that they were insiders, at the very bottom of the ladder, to be sure, but insiders nevertheless. Thus, their emphasis was pragmatic rather than ideological: they needed to govern and regulate the indigenous people to conform to the socio-economic norms of the centralized feudal system, within which Tsugaru ***han*** itself stood at the bottom of the hierarchy. Hence, rather than completely suppressing indigenous customs and beliefs, they tried to regulate and standardize them so that they might be of use in creating a unified social structure. Syncretic Buddhism was strategically promoted by the Tsugaru ***han*** for the purpose of assimilating indigenous people.

However, there are also important customs and beliefs pertaining to the shamanism found in Tsugaru which are conspicuously absent from Ainu practice. Curiously, some of these have very close parallels in the indigenous hunter-gatherer cultures of the circumpolar region, Siberia and beyond: the twin salmon myth and the salmon festival, for one. There are still others which are linked to agriculture, rice farming in particular, which most likely show the influence of the "Japanese" to their south; but even some of these agriculture-related shamanic practices reveal links to the earlier beliefs and practices of hunting and gathering people, such as *oshira* worship.

What follows below is a sketch of Tsugaru spiritual life, centered on the intimate relation among the dead, the deities, the spirit beings, and the living. In examining these, I will be using the same criteria as Chapter Three, to allow easier comparison with the Ainu. I will also provide a brief account of the annual shamanic festival at the Kawakura Jizô temple in northern Tsugaru, one of the two meccas of shamanism in northern Honshû, and a place regularly visited by my grandmother from Kiraichi. In the final part of this chapter, I will summarize the results of my comparison, and discuss how best we might understand the relationship between the indigenous shamanism in Hokkaidô and that in Tsugaru. Many keys to reviving living Ainu culture as a whole could be found in Tsugaru if only the people could realize that they too share in the Ainu heritage.

(1) The shamanic cosmology and worldview of the Tsugaru people

(a) The three cosmic zones and the world pillar

> "Humans intimately felt the *kami* in great nature, finding the roots of life there, and so we can recognize spirit in the sound of wind, and converse with all living things. The soul leaves the body and wanders in the land of the *kami* far away, and the *kami* come down to this world and speaks to us intimately. Here we have a unitary worldview where humans may become *kami* and spirit beings."

As Shibata Shigeo, a native Tsugaru historian, says above in his discussion of the relationship between human beings, nature, and *kami* in Tsugaru, the Tsugaru cosmos is essentially threefold: upper, middle, and lower. However, the concept of "the underworld"

appears to be complex and pluralistic in nature in Tsugaru, just as it was with the Ainu in Hokkaidô.

Tsugaru people tend to say that when people die, they go to the mountain, to the holy world of ***kami***, deities: "***Shineba oyamasa egu***" ("When I die, I go to *oyama*, the mountain.") Although in some cultures the destination for the dead is a dark underworld where the dead face punishment, in Tsugaru "Hades" may be as holy a place as Heaven, and the dead are never forgotten completely. A strong traditional consensus remains that this "Hades" is on top of their holy mountains where ancestral souls and high deities gather (Hasegawa Y., 1996). So when you die in Tsugaru, you go "up" to join the ancestors and tutelary deities; you go home to be reunited with your kin. The term *yama*, mountain, is often all that is needed to convey the meaning of "home of the dead."

It is remarkable that in spite of the varied mediaeval Buddhist attempts to popularize the existence of a horrible Hell, where "eternal punishment" awaited the sinful and disobedient, they could not take the idea of *oyama* away from the Tsugaru people. The best they could do is to introduce Buddhist terms such as ***jigoku*** (underworld/hell), or ***meido***, the dark underworld for wandering souls, to co-exist with traditional beliefs. For example, the mass graves for the anonymous dead from the famines of the late Edo period, found at the borders of the village, are called ***igokuana*** (underworld or hell holes). As we will see below, the combination of the ideas of holy mountain and dark "underworld" yielded a unique context for shamanic activities concerning Mt. Osore and Mt. Akakura. These mountains are where the souls of the dead are believed to gather, and thus the living are invited there to converse with them and to give offerings to comfort them.

Buddhist influence is strongly felt in shamanic beliefs and cosmology in Tsugaru. Nevertheless, in the hands of the shamans and their followers, Buddhism acquired a unique flavour: it should thus be considered Tsugaru Buddhism, distinct from the orthodox Buddhism propagated by the central state. As we will see in the later discussion of shamanic verse, even the concept of Hell and Heaven, ***gokuraku***, underwent unique modifications to suit the beliefs and needs of the Tsugaru people.

Yet just as was the case with the Ainu, who call their traditional burial pits "earth boats," in Tsugaru as well there appears to be an idea of the "underworld" as the other world beyond the sea. A number of sending ceremonies end up by dispatching the dolls, objects, fire, or lights, which represent the spirits, down to the river or the sea. The same applies to numerous "exorcisms" (some of which are also called sending ceremonies) using figurines of various sorts. Moreover, many folklore tales tell of the underwater mansion of the dragons, ***ryûgin***, whose inhabitants desire to possess human virgins. In some stories, the dead still live under the water.[4] A contradiction? Not entirely, since the undersea world is connected to the sky through the tidal waves and thunder commanded by the dragons.[5]

In Tsugaru, the world axis also manifests itself through a mythical cosmic tree. In a folk tale from Shariki village, a man climbs a large tree in his garden and ends up in the upper world (*tenjô*, "above the sky") where he joins a feast with the thunder god in a beautiful mansion, and learns to make rain and thunder, until he eventually falls down from the upper world by accident and lands on a mulberry tree. This tale explains why a mulberry branch should be put on the ground to ward off thunder (Kitazawa 1995: 77-79). To place tree branches at the house entrance to ward off thunder was a common

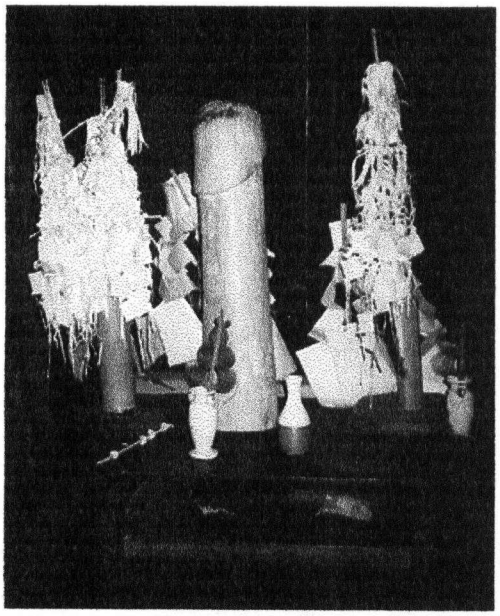


Figure 4.3: Paper shavings. Note phallic symbolism: stone versions are common in Jômon sites.

practice in Tsugaru, as was regarding the main house pole as the dwelling of the soul of the house.

Miniature cosmic trees, shaved wood, have now largely been replaced by paper versions, commonly offered to deities at a house altar, or to a holy tree, or held in the hands on occasion.[9] The picture at the left was taken at the Lake Ogawara Folk Culture Museum in Eastern Aomori prefecture, showing a traditional house altar and various home-made paper-trees, as were commonly found in village households before the Second World War.

In addition to house altars, the traditional hunters, *matagi*, brought wood-and-paper figures with them when they entered the mountains, called *matagi-bata*, *matagi* flags. These "flags" resemble most other paper trees except that the paper is folded and cut, and then stuck to the wood. In northern Honshû and even in mountainous areas in central Honshû, sacred shaved wood pieces were often called *inaw* just as they are in Ainu, and a whole variety of them are still made and used to this day.

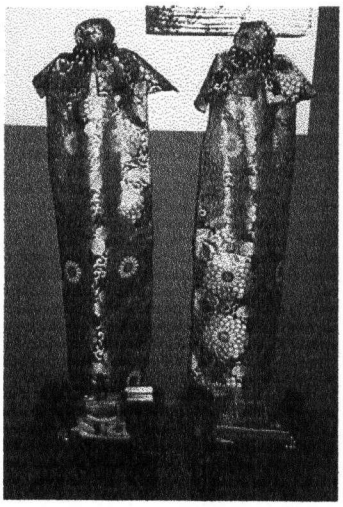


Figure 4.4: Modern *oshira*

Another unique custom concerning the miniature tree is the shaman's use of *oshira*, house protection deities. *Oshira* are usually a pair of pieces of wood of various

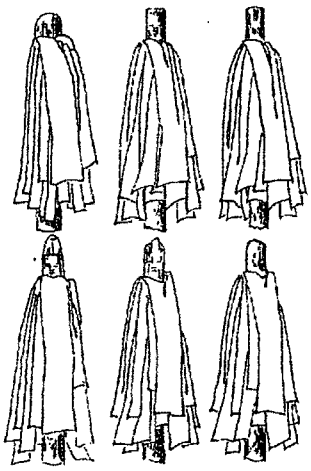


Figure 4.5:
Traditional *oshira*

size, clothed in colorful garments. In Tsugaru the wood of the mulberry tree is used to make *oshira*, and each pair represents male and female, a male horse and a girl (see the illustrations to the left). Every year, villagers invite blind female shamans, *itako*, to entertain the *oshira* in their homes. The shaman takes the *oshira* in her hands, and moves them around in the air while she chants *oshira-satmon*, sacred *oshira* verses. This may be rooted in the more ancient northern Honshû custom known as *nishiki-gi* ("colorful tree"), which some consider to have been misidentified as a "suitor's signal" of the "Japanese" in mediaeval times (Fujiwara1998: 545-547). *Oshira* are also worshipped in those parts of southern Hokkaidô ruled by the Matsumae clan (Kida 1928b). Traditional Ainu shamans in Sakhalin and some areas of Hokkaidô commonly held cosmic trees, *inaw*, in their hands when they shamanized, and in Tsugaru *oshira* have taken the place of these.

(b) Animism

Tsugaru beliefs are animistic, just as are those of the Ainu to their north: every living entity, animals, wind, stars, and even human creations has a spirit or soul just as humans do, and thus humans are by their nature equal kin to every other life in the universe. Everything has a reason for existence, even "evil" things. Both the Ainu and Tsugaru people live in a universe made up of not only material objects but also of emotional and spiritual counterparts to these, which are understood in mythological and metaphorical terms. Thus marriage with animals and mythological creatures is a common theme of

folklore, or sacred verses by shamans, though the precise members of each individual partnership often differ from those found in Hokkaidô Ainu belief, reflecting differing regional and historical circumstances. Marriages with horses, for example, are a common theme in Tsugaru folklore, but are almost unknown among the Ainu.

Agricultural deities, and divine beings drawn from Shintô and Buddhism, play a more prominent role in Tsugaru than among the Ainu to the north. Tsugaru also has a number of tales that assume a "moral-duty" relationship between humans and nature, manifested in numerous "animal-repaying-its-duty-to-humans" stories. These most likely show the influence of Confucian ideology from the "Japanese" during the Edo period, since the traditional Ainu see the human-nature relationship as equal and reciprocal, an attitude whose traces can still be discerned in Tsugaru as well.

In essence, the animistic beliefs of the Tsugaru people grew out of their intimacy with the wilderness and nature, and a lifestyle deeply attuned to the natural cycle. Thus, for example, not only domesticated animals such as dogs and cats, but wild ones such as foxes were addressed by personal names until relatively recently, and villagers claimed to be easily able to recognize certain wise fox "elders" who had learned to imitate human behavior (Naoe 1970: 258). When a large tuna fish was caught, it was traditional to raise an altar at the shore; prayer and *saké* would be offered to the fish, and its heart eaten raw by the person who caught it (Guantei 1994: 34-36). Not only animals and natural forces were believed to have the same substance as humans and hence to be deserving of the same respect: on New Year's Day, the additional year of life was celebrated for everything, not only human beings but also ships, houses, water containers, cups, and everything else.[10]

Tsugaru people consider that which is beyond ordinary human power to be a ***kami***, deity. Dead humans, on the other hand, are ***hotoke*** (literally, "Buddha"), and only those among them who are truly great deserve the title of ***kami***. But often the deities are simply called by their names, with an honorific attached, their divine status implicit, intimate, and pragmatic, such as *o-Inari-san* for the fox deity; *o-Iwaki-sama* for the holy mountain, Mt. Iwaki; *Suiko-sama* for the river deity; and *Ryûgin-sama* for the snake or dragon deity. In other words, ***kami*** in Tsugaru correspond to ***kamuy*** among the Ainu, except when the word is used to designate the hiearchical deities of organized religions. ***Kami*** are not fixed, abstract entities off in some distant world, but are real residents of this world who are more powerful than ordinary humans, and humans and ***kami*** must work together to cultivate their relationship for mutual benefit. The indigenous ***kami*** of Tsugaru are entities that a human can smell, touch, and relate to, just as they would with another human. Thus Ikegami is correct to state that the ***kami*** in Tsugaru shamanism suffer as much as humans do; and it is the responsibility of human beings to understand the suffering of the ***kami***, and even save them by saving themselves. Shamans mediate between the world of ***kami*** and that of ordinary humans so that the two parties can work together (Ikegami1987: 109-113).[11]

The ***kami***, or indigenous deities of Tsugaru, are not always perfect. When the deities make mistakes or behaves badly, humans often get angry and act against them. Thus, to ward off evil deities such as those of the blizzard, a sickle is raised at the edge of a roof (Wakamori 1970: 4).[12] Smallpox was considered a ***kami***, and straw dolls were raised or thrown out at the village border, or sent off into the river to ward off the disease, which had a special day devoted to its worship (Moriyama 1970: 252; cf. the straw dolls from

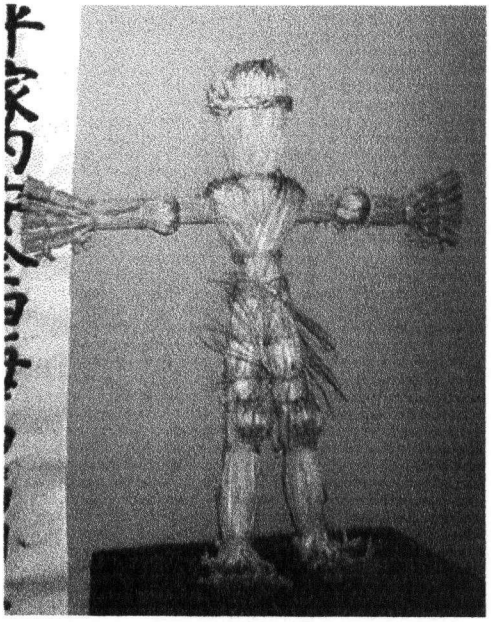


Figure 4.6: Straw plague doll (modern reconstruction)

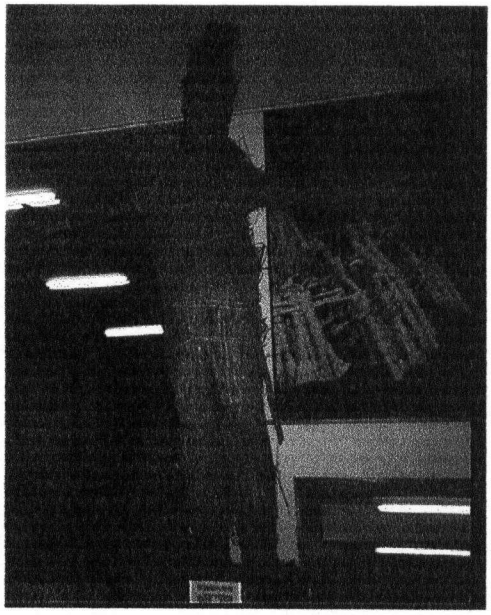


Figure 4.7: Large straw doll (modern). Note sword on right hand side.

the Ogawara-ko folk culture museum in western Aomori, compared with the Ainu *imoshka-muy*).

It is thus hardly surprising that the distinction between humans and ***kami*** often blurs. ***Kami*** becomes human and humans become ***kami*** not only through the seance of a shaman but through various traditional dances and music, by means of which the deities emerge and express their power. One of the most notable of this kind may be the dance which accompanies the ***mushi-okuri***, insect-sending ceremony, held to ensure a good rice harvest. In the traditional ***mushi-okuri***, done soon after the rice planting is over in June, a huge straw insect, considered a snake or dragon, is carried around the village, entertained, and eventually thrown away at the edge of the village. The dancers dance frantically, or jump, or imitate wild horses, with festive music performed on drums, flutes and cymbals (Shindô 1970: 397).[13]

Tsugaru animal and nature deities tend to exhibit several layers of "deification" as a result of religious syncretism. That is, the indigenous deities came to be re-deified and sanctioned through a syncretizing process involving organized religions and their temples in modern times, and thus a complex worship combining the older and newer beliefs and practices was formed. The two most notable cases of this process are *inari*, fox worship, and *suiko*, river god worship.

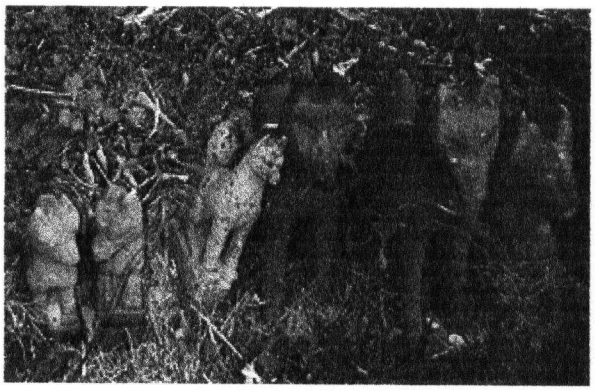


Figure 4.8: Riverside *inari* figures near Takayama Inari.

Inari worship as a popular religion is centered around the Fushimi *Inari* shrine of Kyôto, and in this context the *inari* is an agricultural deity. *Inari* shrines are one of the most common religious structures in Tsugaru, along with Kumano and Hachiman shrines. Indeed, many lords of Tsugaru *han* were ardent supporters of *inari* shrines in Hirosaki, their capital city. However, Naoe points out that in Tsugaru, including Hirosaki, what mattered was the fox itself, not the shrines or their prestige. Unlike *inari* worship in other parts of Japan, which is an extension of a Kyoto-based establishment, the shrines and *inari* worship in Tsugaru are a redefinition and transformation of indigenous fox beliefs as a result of fusion with the more centralized *inari* worship. Thus, a

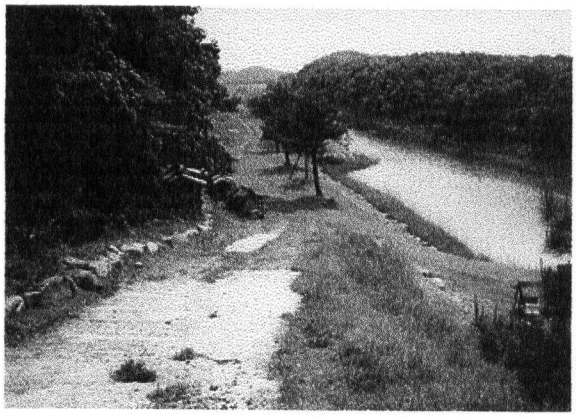


Figure 4.9: A distant view of the *inari* figures, showing their relative isolation from the main temple.

major establishment such as the Takayama *Inari* Shrine in the village of Shariki in northwestern Tsugaru was at first known as Sangorô-sama, the name of a deified fox who lived in the area, and performed many miracles.[14] Stone fox statues donated by the worshippers are lined up all the way to the river as in the picture above (Figure 4.9), and smaller ceramic and wood foxes are kept inside the shrines. Fishermen are said to depend on signals from the foxes, such as the sound of crying, to avoid accidents and determine the best time for fishing. The strength of fox worship in Tsugaru among the fishing communities can be compared to a similar tendency among the southwestern Hokkaidô Ainu who regard the fox as the protector of fishing, and use its skull for divination (Sarashina et. al. 1976: 297-301).[15] To this day, the visitors to the *inari* shrines in Tsugaru look for signs from the fox deity: if their offerings, rice cakes, are partly or entirely gone by next morning, it is thought they have been eaten by the fox, and a complex, detailed divination is provided (Naoe 1970).[16]

Sutko is a widespread animistic faith unique to Tsugaru, based on indigenous beliefs about *kappa*, or *menduchi*, creatures of the water. The present form of worship is a relatively recent phenomenon, which developed hand in hand with the relative frequency of water-related accidents as a result of the expansion of canals for agricultural purposes during the Edo period, centered around the Iwaki river in south-central Tsugaru.

In Tsugaru, when a child drowns, it is said that s/he has been kidnapped by a *kappa* or invited by *mizugami-sama*, the water deity. The appearance of *menduchi* or *kappa* varies regionally, but the most common conception has them with a red skin, and a beak-like mouth, about the size of a child. It likes cucumbers and eggplant. When someone dies because of the trick of a *kappa*, his or her anus will be wide open, because a

Figure 4.10: Riverside *suiko* images

kappa is believed to steal the intestines.

Kappa are believed to live in the water, and to be the helpers of ***Mizu-gami-sama***, or ***suiko***. *Kappa* are, however, depicted as tricksters in various folktales. They often lose fights with strong men and beg for forgiveness in exchange for something valuable, such as chiropractic knowledge. Some Tsugaru people believe that when a ***kappa*** plans to drown a child, a sign will be sent. Should such a sign come, they consult a shaman, ***kamisama***, and obtain advice or an "exorcism" to prevent the accident. For example, a child may prefer to remain by the water all the time, or it has a fearful dream, or a mysterious sound of water may bother family members. A ***kamisama's*** response typically includes offering of cucumbers and other food to the water (they will be literally set down on the water).

Today, small ***Suiko*** shrines (as in the photo) are found near the water throughout Tsugaru, many more of them in the lowlands than in the mountainous areas. Nevertheless, the concept of ***Suiko*** was an invention of the early Meiji period, initiated by a Nichiren-sect Buddhist priest in the town of Kizukuri, who attempted to ward off ***kappa*** by holding Buddhist ceremonies for them. This invention appears to have been promoted widely by ***kamisama***, who had already dealt with the ***kappa*** or ***menduchi***, and

who were the direct source of spiritual guidance for most Tsugaru people. Kawakami discusses the integration of snake worship with *Sutko* worship by ***kamisama***, and the association of the purifying power of water (as in aspersion) with *Sutko*, as factors that enabled ***kamisama*** to accept the new forms and explanations for the aboriginal beliefs concerning ***menduchi*** (Kawakami 1970).[17]

(c) Spirit guides and divine protection

In Chapter Three we discussed the Ainu belief in spirit guides for both individuals and groups. There are literally no studies of spirit guides in Tsugaru, and the concept is difficult to extend to what seem to be similar phenomena there. This is partly because the concept of ***toren-pehe*** is specific to the Ainu, and even though it is commonly translated into Japanese as ***tsuki-gami***, the latter concept may well be much narrower than the former. In Tsugaru, divine protection is perceived as available in many ways for both individuals and groups, but these are not always referred to as ***tsuki-gami***. In some context their ideas about divine protection seem similar or identical to those of the Ainu, but in other contexts they differ. This having been said, I will attempt a brief discussion of the common beliefs in Tsugaru about invisible but real forces that stay with people to protect and help them.

To begin with, the distinction between innate divine protection and acquired divine protection is also found in Tsugaru. There are ***tsuki-gami*** for both ordinary people and shamans; the former can be innate but the latter cannot be. A few ***kamisama***, and one shrine caretaker, told me that a person usually has three ***tsuki-gami***, and there is no

restriction on gender. My impression, and I think this is common sense, is that even though one may have innate guiding spirits, they are of little use if one is ignorant of them and has no respect for them. Sometimes Tsugaru shamans remind people which souls or spirits are protecting them or attached to them, but it is up to the people themselves to interact with them and build up a beneficial relationship.

Shamans in Tsugaru, both *ttako* and *kamisama*, have their own *tsuki-gami* which allow them to shamanize, but unlike the Ainu cases reported by Fujimura, their *tsuki-gami* are not considered innate. Shamans in Tsugaru acquire their shamanic ability and their own divine support: no shaman is born with it. As we shall see later, nurture is far more important for Tsugaru shamans than nature or blood, and the acquisition of *tsuki-gami* often takes the form of either implicit, or ritualized and explicit, marriage with the shaman's *tsuki-gami*.

An interesting parallel to the Ainu belief that one's spirit guide dwells in the hollow of the nape can be observed in the village of Inagaki in central Tsugaru. When a child is born, his/her hair at the hollow of the nape is kept uncut, so that when a child is in danger of drowning (that is, when it has been tricked by *menduchi*), deities can pull it by the hair and thus save the child's life (Kawakami 1970: 270).

The acquired spirit guide or divine protection for individuals comes in several varieties. In Tsugaru, temporary divine assistance is available through both natural and artificial objects, and when one's goal is achieved, they are offered a token of appreciation such as food and *saké*. This is one reason for the large number of *migawari-jizô*, sacrificial statues, in Tsugaru. Natural stones, too, can offer help to those who need to recover their health, or who want a child.

Divine protection can be granted to an individual after helping an animal or a spirit being, and this is a common motif in Tsugaru folklore, along with stories of the attentions of harmful spirits such as those of foxes, which can attach themselves to human beings. However, in Tsugaru, it is often up to an individual to benefit from having a *tsuki-gami*, since even a "good" god is not perfect and can bring misfortune if s/he feels mistreated. Nothing is an absolute "given" between humans and deities.

Kin groups can also be under different sorts of divine protection, sometimes innate and sometimes acquired. However, before examining the spirit guides of groups, we need to discuss some problems with the idea of ancestors in Tsugaru.

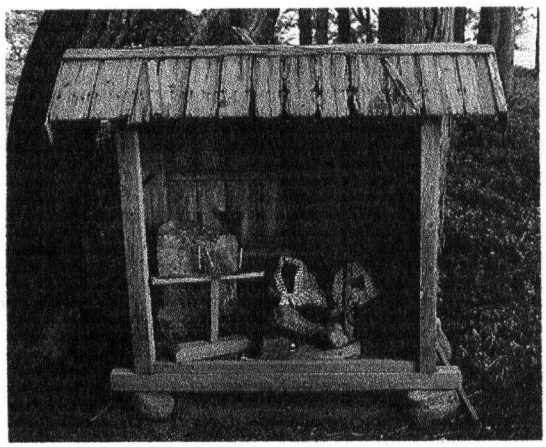
It is difficult to determine the categorical relationship among family (*te*), lineage (*kakei*), patrilineal descent group (*uji*) and ancestors (*senzo*) in Tsugaru, due partly to the influence of modern ideology which has focused on the *te* as the primary unit and primogeniture as the sole means of ensuring family continuity. After the Meiji Restoration, the doctrine of family, *te*, was promoted by the state. Combined with traditional ancestral worship, it was propagated as an essential national ethic, a vehicle of unification. Under these circumstance, an idealized *te*-based ancestral worship concealed a *de facto* process of family disintegration, and suppressed the diverse ideas about ancestors and ancestral worship current among the common people (Ikegami 198;148-151, Kômoto 1986).

Another factor is the tendency among Tsugaru people to identify themselves with the specific environment they live in, and define ancestral links according to their organic relationship to their environment, not necessarily by "blood." "Blood," or ethnicity, is thus often reduced to one's ability to speak Tsugaru or the possession of an ances-

tor born in Tsugaru; but between the two, the former gives one much better grounds for being considered a native of Tsugaru.

Ikegami discusses the importance of the spirits of deceased ancestors in solving day-to-day problems in Tsugaru, a process often mediated by shamans, and how the majority of Tsugaru people still believe these beings to have at least some governing force on living people (Ikegami 1987). Not only the spirits of the deceased ancestors but the deities revered by them can be inherited without the knowledge of the inheritor, and these deities may bring misfortune to a family if mistreated. It is difficult to trace animal ancestry with kin groups in Tsugaru, but apart from the poorly developed argument that family crests in Japan evolved from regional, ancient animal-ancestor beliefs, Tsugaru *matagi* preserve an origin tale tracing their ancestry back to a marriage between a dragon princess and the mountain god.[18]

Villagers and families can acquire divine protection in Tsugaru, just as they can among the Ainu. A permanent deity, the tutelary deity of the village, usually protects the community as a whole: it is often enshrined at the village shrine, which is usually in Shintô style, but the exact deities which are supposed to be enshrined there are seldom clearly known to the villagers. A shrine may officially be dedicated to *inari*, or other popular Shintô gods, but in practice, personal and family deities are brought to the shrine and placed along many other deities which have accumulated over the years. Some families and individuals have visions and messages from divine beings, and they enshrine the object they perceived or was given to them. In my fieldwork, I discovered a small shrine made by an individual in the Kumano shrine in Kiraichi, which enshrines what appears to be a deity with a tiger head and a twisted snake-like body, with unmis-



takable phallic overtones. There are several altars of this kind in the Kumano shrine, which brings family altars and private deities into the public arena.

Natural stones and *jizô* statues also fall into the category of divine village protectors, in my opinion, as they are often clustered at the village borders. There are also numerous natural objects in the wilderness that can protect the villagers and their resources, such as holy trees or holy stones in the mountains. On a mountainside near Kiraichi, for example, is an eight hundred year-old cedar tree with twelve trunks. The tree is known as *Jûnihon yasu*, "twelve fish spear," and it is believed the trunks maintain themselves exactly at twelve: if a new one grows out, an old one is said to die and fall off. Since the number twelve is the sacred number associated with the mountain god in Tsugaru, a ceremony is offered to the tree annually by the villagers at the beginning of the winter, on the twelfth day of December (12/12), the day of the mountain god.

Figure 4.11: Private shrine and carved image at Kumano shrine, Kiraichi

Inherited ideas about divine assistance sought and granted in emergencies involving the entire village are reflected in various ceremonies to ward off bad spirits and diseases widely observed in Tsugaru, including the insect-sending ceremony. Finally, as for the

aging of spirit beings, Tsugaru traditional ideas hold that not only one's ***tsukigami*** but the spirit of anything and everything else can be honored for its increasing age, just as humans are, not proceeding to decrepitude but to full maturity. Even a mundane object such as a pair of chopsticks can be blessed with a new year in its life, at the beginning of every year.

(d) Souls

Given the lack of serious research on the belief in the soul among Tsugaru people, my discussion on this topic is considerably weakened by the lack of collective input. I hope I may be forgiven for beginning by stating my own understanding, based on my family's behavior and statements.

When I was a young child my father used to tell me how souls leave the body and travel outside during unconsciousness. A person who is sick for a long time and who wants to leave his or her bed can visit the outside world, without actually getting up physically. He said that this was called ***dakkon-byô***, soul-leaving disease, a condition which can happen to anyone. Where he got this story is not certain. Perhaps he had been reading books on mysticism; but my grandparents on his side spoke of soul visits all the time, so I would not be surprised if he grew up with a belief in the soul's capability for independent activity. My grandparents and some of my aunts spoke of the soul of a person, especially just before his/her death, as able to manifest itself in an animal or human form, in another place, to visit someone.

Souls of the deceased are often treated as physical beings. They are indeed clearly visible to some people: my grandmother from Kiraichi had a reputation for her spontaneous conversations with the "invisible" visitors, which often occurred at the time of their deaths. For her, a visiting soul could be as real as a living human being. Once, my father saw her reacting to a "visitor" at the entrance door: she opened the door as she greeted the visitor, but nobody was there. My father knew immediately that either someone she knew was sick, or he or she had died.

Moreover, dreams are expressed in terms of visiting a place, meeting people, seeing things, as if they were a trip in the real, physical world. They constitute part of reality for me and my Tsugaru relations. Long before the establishment of the field of near-death study, the Ainu and Tsugaru people, like other indigenous groups, knew about the life "beyond" and "in-between": they interpreted dreams and took them quite seriously before there were any psychoanalysts.

The hunters and fishers of Tsugaru and Shimokita share a belief that the soul's main dwelling is in the heart. Thus, when a large fish is caught, its heart is always eaten by the person who caught it, who is also the master of the sacrificial ceremony.[19] The bear sacrifice was common among the *matagi* until a couple of decades ago, and though the details differed somewhat from the corresponding service among the Ainu (especially the Buddhist influence on the latter) their respect for the departing bear's soul was the same. The *matagi* bear ceremony often included a dance where a hunter wore a bear skin with its head attached (cf. Chiri's discussion of similar practices in the past among the Ainu in Chapter Three, "The shamanic foundation of Ainu life").[20]

Traditional thinking in Tsugaru (which is very much alive today) takes it for granted that the soul of the dead goes to the other world to join the dead, just as is the case with the Ainu, and that these souls continue to do things much the same way as when they were alive, such as catching colds and needing certain foods. They can be summoned by *itako* to engage in conversation with the living. They are most commonly referred to as *hotoke* ("Buddhas") and less frequently as *monjya* (ghosts), but as we will see, they are ill-suited to either the Buddhist Hell or its Paradise.

The boundary between this world and Hades, moreover, is quite fuzzy in Tsugaru: the dead are never far away and unapproachable, and they are often within and amongst us, regardless of time and place. The numerous *igoku-ana* ("Hell holes"; see Figure 4.12 at lower left) found at village boundaries in Tsugaru deserve attention in this respect. These are where hundreds of famine victims are buried, and the villagers have never been interested in relocating these sites. The idea of "Hell" is of course a later Buddhist introduction, and the so-called *igoku-ana* are likely to be named based on earlier beliefs about access to the other world, across a boundary not too far away from the village.

Figure 4.12: Mass grave for famine victims in the village of Kase, Tsugaru

There is also a strong tendency to consider that the dead are born again among his/her descendants in Tsugaru. Thus it was common in the recent past to give a newborn child the

name of his/her grandparent or great-grandparent of the same gender (Chiba 1970: 23). A similar belief is observed among the Ainu, but it seems more prominent in Tsugaru.[21]

Like the Ainu, Tsugaru people sometimes distinguish reincarnating souls from non-reincarnating souls: the non-reincarnating soul's designation is *sethôjôdo*, Western Pure Land, a Buddhist term for a place very close to Nirvana. Although more thorough study is needed, I have observed that certain deified figures are placed facing east, the spiritual direction.[22] I will return to the topic of directional awareness briefly in the section on "East and west."

There are still other souls which do not ascend but wander about in the world of the living, often described by contemporary Japanese terms such as *ukabarenai / jôbutushinai hotoke* ("non-ascending/non-departing dead") or *monjya* ("ghost"). However, in Tsugaru, the distinction between the departed soul and non-departed soul tends to be fuzzy.

Given that even the gods themselves are not perfect and can lose their emotional balance, the deceased in general, wherever they are supposed to be, can affect the living negatively (or positively). Thus, life in Tsugaru is a constant interaction with the deceased, recent or distant in time. The dead can cross the border with relative ease, to engage in conversation or interaction with the living: in this sense, the dead also belong to this world. Even the harmful dead are not expelled permanently — they can be managed, but not banished. In this sense, even though Tsugaru people use Japanese terminology, the non-ascending souls are neither "good" nor "bad" in essence, and therefore nothing to be afraid of — they are simply spirits or souls, they are here for their own reasons. Tsugaru people maintain a more open attitude towards this part of their indigenous

spiritual heritage than the Ainu in Hokkaidô, who are often forbidden to speak in public of matters concerning souls.

The idea of a soul attaching itself to the back of a living human being is not limited to the Ainu either; a common Japanese expression for that is ***haigo-rei***, the spirit behind you, which is distinguished from ***shugo-rei***, the spirit guide or guardian spirit.

Some scholars state that the ancient "Japanese" believed in the soul's plurality, distinguishing the ***jiyû-kon***, free soul, and the ***shintai-kon***, body-soul. According to Obayashi, the former was called ***kage***, the shadow, and the latter was associated intimately with the breath (Obayashi 1993). He and others who have worked in Nibutani claim that the contemporary Ainu know no similar distinction, and thus they conclude that Ainu beliefs about souls are radically different from those of the "Japanese" (Munro 1962: 8, Batchelor 1908: 241).

In my view, it is highly problematic first to compare ancient practices found in some part or another of the Japanese archipelago (and call it "Japanese") with contemporary, twentieth century Ainu beliefs of a particular region, Nibutani, and then to take this comparison as definitive data on the differences in the concept of the soul between the Ainu and the "Japanese." Moreover, the study of the Ainu concept of soul seem to have been established by western scholars who approached the people and their beliefs using very outdated methods, collecting explicit "terms" and statements, rather than basing their research on what people actually do. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, some Ainu do seem to connect the concept and phenomenon of breathing and steam with life force, and actively use this understanding to treat illness.

Coming back to Tsugaru, I would like to quote the statement made by a ***kamisama*** during my field work. She said that while traditions have their own explanations, the reality is that we live with basic scientific knowledge today and she is happy with it. Physical death (i.e. loss of soul from body in traditional understanding) means the stopping of heart, breathing, and brain waves; beyond that the number of souls only matters if the client believes in the plurality of souls according to his/her religion. Shamans in Tsugaru are not preachers; they have a remarkable openness and acceptance of religious diversity, in much the same manner as an analyst or a counselor.

Beyond this, I have little confidence that the question of how many souls one has will be any more use to shamans and their followers in Tsugaru (or among the contemporary Ainu and their shamans) than that concerning the number of initiations one must have to be a shaman. The primary difficulty is that, unlike the Ainu, whose cultural revival tends to be based on pristine "past" images presented to them by outside experts, Tsugaru culture and shamanism is a living organism, and thus modification, innovation, and diversity is taken for granted. Apart from the belief in the existence of the soul and reincarnation, there is no absolute necessity for one arrangement or another. Shamans are not obsessed with counting souls; they do not regulate inconsistencies but live with them.

(e) An anthropomorphic understanding of the environment

The anthropomorphic understanding of nature is an important aspect of the everyday life of people in Tsugaru. An anthropomorphic conception of nature is prevalent,

and the distinction between humans and natural creatures is often blurred, just as is that between humans and ***kamt***. We can cite, for instance, the custom of calling wild animals by human name and status, such as "elder such and such" fox, as already discussed.

Even the gender of inanimate natural objects is often specified. The deity of Mt. Iwaki, or those of mountains in general (with some exceptions), is female, and thus the ***matagi*** observe practices designed to please the goddess, and avoid arousing her jealousy, just as with the Ainu. These practices include the sexual arousal of a young male by mature males in the mountain, or abstaining from sexual intercourse before hunting.[23] Fire and sun are both female, as can be seen by the given names of Shintô goddesses such as Amaterasuno mikoto for the sun goddess, and Mizuhameno mikoto and Haniyasuhimeno mikoto for the fire goddesses of Mt. Iwaki. Snow is also female, as specified in the popular folk tale about the snow woman, ***yuki-onna***.

Another important component of the anthropomorphic world view in Tsugaru concerns salmon. Salmon has been an important food and resource for Tsugaru people, and they used to conduct an annual salmon festival at the end of the season in December, unlike the Ainu, who prefer to do it at the beginning of the season. The salmon kings that come up the river are twins called Oosuke and Kosuke, "big one" and "little one," and they are believed to be brothers.[24] It is said that Oosuke represents the head, Kosuke the tail. When the twin salmon come up the river in the moonlight, no one is supposed to see them, or hear them talk. Villagers gather for a big feast and entertainment, so as to make sure no one hears the salmon's voice. They also give offerings and prayers to the river and various spirits.

The practice of personification extends to man-made object such as houses, which are considered female, as with the Ainu. When a new house is raised, a framework raising ceremony is conducted. For this ceremony, the ridge of the roof is decorated with female hair ornaments, combs, a sash, a mirror, and colorful cloth. The main house pole is considered the dwelling of its soul, and the carpenter ritually strikes it with mallets three times, to put "soul" into it (Nakahara 1970: 270).[25]

(f) East and west: the directions of significance

Beliefs in the east as the spiritual source of life, and west as the designation or destination for the dead, underlies the philosophy of many indigenous cultures, including the Ainu, as well as organized religions such as Buddhism, where the Western Pure Land designates a place for departed souls.

Although Tsugaru data on this issue is very limited, a brief examination is possible drawing examples from Sannai Maruyama and the Kawakura Jizô temple.

The directions east and west play a key role in understanding the cosmology of the people who created and lived in the ancient community at Sannai. The main entrance to the ceremonial centre of the community is in the east. The main road, 420 meters long and slightly winding, begins at the eastern end of the hill at the water side, and lead to the west, to the six-poled ceremonial construction and various large "storage" houses which have entrances on the east.[26] Both sides of this road are lined with tombs, over a hundred in all, with stones placed in circles around them or marked with large rectangular stones on top. Inside each tomb the corpses are placed in slightly bent ("reclining

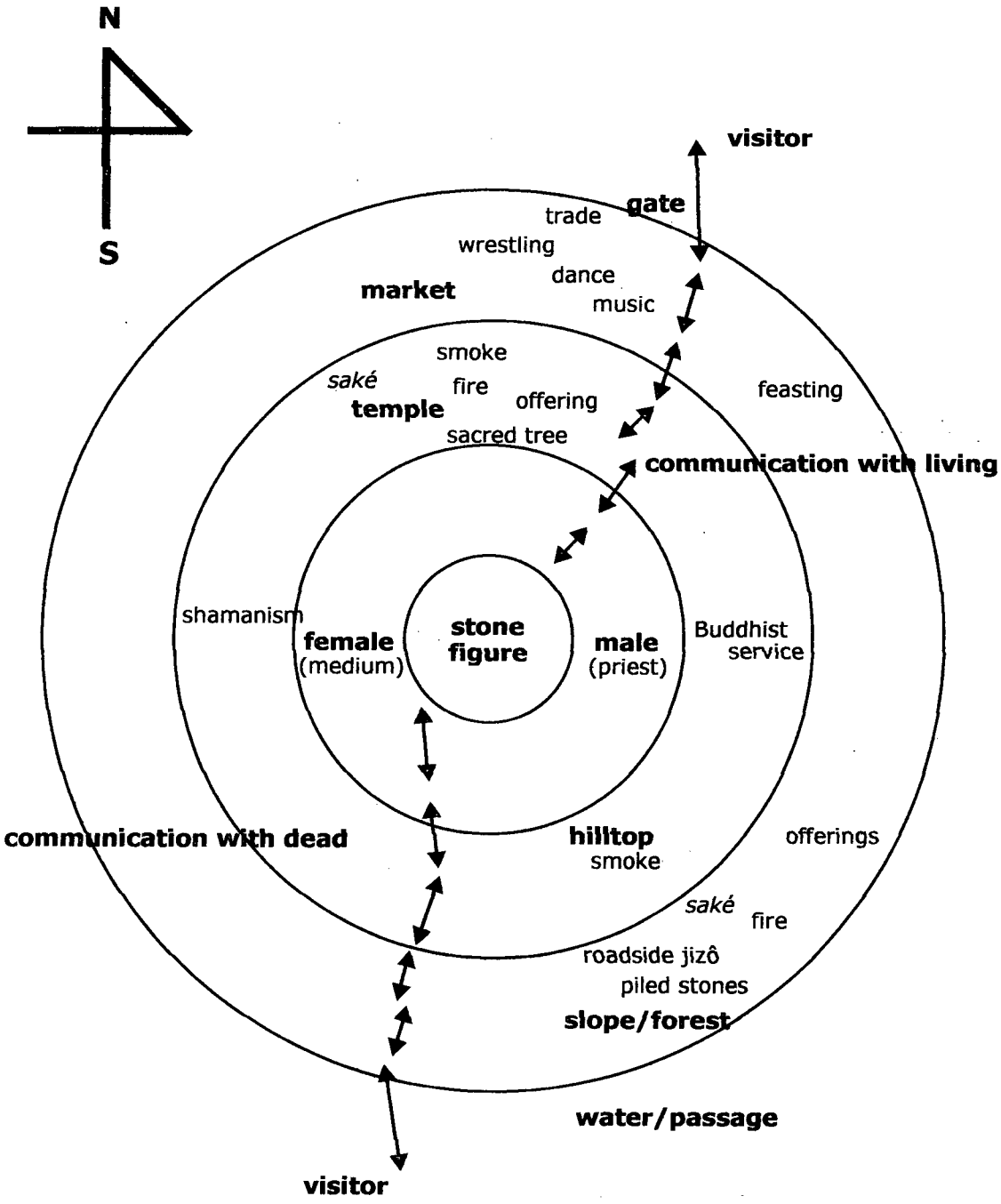
chair") positions, legs towards the road, as if to welcome the visitors.[27] There is another, shorter path extending from the centre, to the southwest. This road is also lined with larger tombs, with stones placed in circles around them, on an artificial slope.

The east-west axis also dictates the alignment of the communal buildings at the centre: the six-poled monument, the "storage" houses, and the "big house." The ceremonial poles extends east-west, three poles in two parallel lines. To the east is Azuma-dake (Mt. East), a mountain famous for its beautiful sunrise; and to its west is Mt. Iwaki, the home for the departed soul. On a clear day, if one could climb to the top of the monument, one could see the sun rising from one mountain and setting at the other. On the summer solstice, the sun rises between the two lines of poles; and on the winter solstice, the sun sets between the two lines of poles, casting long shadows and orange light over the main road to the east.

The same directional awareness is evident at a contemporary site of shamanism, Kawakura Jizô-son in northern Tsugaru. Kawakura is considered a mecca for *itako* shamanism in Aomori, along with Mt. Osore in the Shimokita peninsula. It is located on an indigenous trade road, ***Shimonokiri-michi***, which connected Tosa to its south on land during the heyday of the Andô, and which may have extended as far as today's Aomori city, over the mountains.[28] The temple is built in Buddhist style, but it has no formal religious affiliation. Today, the entrances to the temple from outside are at the north and the south; however, the entrance to the *jizô* temple is from the east, and as far as we know it has always been there. The shamans who communicate with the dead, on the other hand, gather in the west, at the back of the temple, and this seems to have become a fixed rule (see the diagram on the following page).

Figure 4.13

Spatial Pattern at Kawakura According to Basic Elements



Basic Elements:

life and death
male and female
Temple organization and natural environment

(g) Beliefs about death

(i) Funeral practices

A distinct characteristic of the beliefs of Tsugaru people is their coexistence with the dead, to the extent that the management of the relationship with the dead is a matter of general concern. This is not limited to deceased humans, but often includes animals and other creatures. Thus various sending ceremonies are observed, and these include "exorcism" of curses from dead animals such as dogs, cats, and snakes.[29] Upon killing animals such as bear, deer and even fish, and before consumption of their meat, prayers and elaborate rituals are traditionally offered to them. The extermination of insects in the rice fields, too, is accompanied with prayers for the dead insects.[30]

Funeral and burial practices in Tsugaru retain a distinctly indigenous flavour in spite of Buddhist influence, including some definite similarities to those of the Ainu to their north. The following is an account of funeral and burial practices in Iwasaki village in southwestern Tsugaru, set down in the summer of 1967, which I believe generally reflects Tsugaru practice.[30] During my field work in 1998-9, I was able to confirm that at least the practice of *yashikidori* (securing the house for the dead) was still commonly practiced in many villages in Tsugaru, including Kiraichi.

The funeral is done after cremation, a practice which became common when a crematorium was opened in 1963. The funeral is called *no-okuri* ("field sending") or *dami* ("cremation"), probably a legacy of older practice of cremation in the fields when contagious illnesses had caused death.

There should be two messengers to let others know of the funeral, including the temple priest. When the priest arrives, he reads a *sutra*. Men attending the funeral cover the back part of their collars with a white cotton cloth called *trokake*. Women put white cloth over their heads, shoulders, and waist. Dumplings and rice are offered to the Buddhist altar.[31] When the reading of the *sutra* begins, two chopsticks are stuck into the rice, which are removed as soon as the *sutra* is finished.

During the funeral, and after it, visitors arrive and express their condolences to the family of the deceased, and pay their respects to the deceased him/herself. In Tsugaru to this day, it is nothing unusual for visitors to speak directly to the deceased, who is present as a photograph on the altar, sobbing and expressing their personal sorrow with a melodious flow of words reminiscent of the way an *itako* delivers her messages.

After this the burial procedure begins. The coffin is taken out through the common entrance area. During the funeral procession to the burial ground, women chant short *sutras* quietly, carrying the offerings of *shitogi* in their hands. The tone and sound of the *sutras*, Satô observed, reminded him of crying women, which may have been the accompaniment for a Tsugaru funeral before the use of the *sutra* was introduced (Satô 1970: 231). Paper confetti is sprinkled from a basket during the procession.

Up to this point, we have a relatively standard Buddhist funeral. But once the procession gets to the burial ground, differences begin to become apparent. The funeral group circles around three times before the coffin is placed in front of the tomb, and then they burn incense for the repose of the departed soul. The hole, which has been dug by selected villagers, is covered with a mat (which used to be made of mugwort) to ward off evil, into which the coffin is lowered with a rope. The funeral master and the rela-

tives of the deceased throw soil over it, and when this is done, flowers are placed and the mat is arranged around it. In Iwasaki village the mat is soon removed, and the tomb is decorated with flowers, real and artificial. However, this covering with the mat evokes the Ainu burial customs discussed earlier: making the pit a miniature replica of the Ainu house.

In some communities such as Nakamura village in Ajiga-sawa in western Tsugaru, wooden frames are constructed on top of the earthen tomb, and a straw mat is placed over and around it. This is called *noma*, and it is kept up for thirty-five days. This *noma* is likely to be a legacy from an ancient practice found throughout the Japanese archipelago known as *moya*, the mourning house, where the corpse was temporarily placed, or which could be built near the tomb for the deceased's family to live for a time. According to Satô, the shape of the *noma* also resembles the *igaki*, the sacred fence found in traditional Shintô, or the *ookami-hajiki*, the so-called "animal protection" constructed over a tomb. The use of the mat in the Iwasaki village burial rite seems to be a reduced version of the above practices. We might also note the discussion by Fujimoto, a proponent of Satsumon-Ainu direct cultural continuity, on the possible link between the four "house" poles" found in various tomb pits from Satsumon and late Jômon periods in Hokkaidô and modern Ainu burial practices (Fujimoto 1964:190-196).

Following this, a very interesting ritual takes place, called *yashikidori* ("house securing"). Its objective is to secure the house or house site for the deceased. When we remember that the Ainu traditionally burnt the deceased's house in order to secure his/her house in the other world, the underlining rational for *yashikidori* in Tsugaru is clear. It relies on the belief that the deceased starts living in the other world very soon, and

thus needs a house, among other things. Hence, the bigger the marked and secured space is, the larger the deceased's house will be in the other world.

Yashtkidori begins with sticking four wooden sticks, cut from *uchugi* trees, in the ground at the four corners of the tomb.[32] These are believed to be walking sticks for the dead, which he or she will need to get to the other world (cf. Ainu beliefs about the wooden tomb marker). Round rice cakes, *shttogi*, are impaled on these sticks, and then rice grains, chopped-up vegetables, and cracked rice crackers are offered.[33] The participants stand around the sticks, grasp a *shttogi*, then pull it, throwing the pieces backwards over their heads in different directions. In Nakasato town in northern Tsugaru, three *uchugi* trees are crossed and placed at the centre of the four-cornered house area, and a broken-bottomed water container is set down there (cf. the Ainu custom of throwing the water container and making sure the bottom is broken). In Nakasato, instead of pulling the rice cake off, the participants eat it without using their hands: it is believed that those who eat the funeral rice cake this way will have strong teeth.

In the village of Kiraichi and the town of Kanagi, this ceremony is conducted at the designated crematorium, supervised by its staff. The custom seems to be in no danger of dying out, since the crematory staff have been taking responsibility for educating both their successors and the villagers.

After the funeral and burial, fire is kept around the tomb at night for sixteen nights. In some villages, only family members can maintain such a fire. Visitors visit the tomb for one week, with candles and incense, to keep a light burning there: this is called *hakamimai*, a sympathy visit. One can observe here a belief that the deceased is in the dark, and needs light to be able to get to the other world successfully (Satô 1970: 229-234).

However, if the deceased had died a tragic accidental death or an unnatural death, especially as a young child, the above procedures were changed. Striking similarities to the way the Ainu deal with deaths of this sort, and the tenacity of pre-Buddhist beliefs, are both apparent here. In the villages of Kanita, Kodomari, and Ainai in northern Tsugaru, when a pregnant mother died, her stomach was cut open, the fetus removed, and the two buried separately.[34] When a child under seven died, Buddhist services were not held. Tabooed object at Buddhist funerals, such as fish heads, were placed inside the coffin as well as snacks, plates, and a bowl of milk. In some areas, before the practice of cremation began, the child's corpse was buried at the *jizô* statues at the entrance to the village.[35] However, there was still no Buddhist service: it was believed this would cause the next child to die young. If a service was desired, an elderly woman was called in to chant *sutras*. Finally, if a child was miscarried or born dead, s/he was simply buried without any funeral service, often close to the mother's residence (Chiba 1970: 23).

(ii) Conversations with the dead

Everywhere in Tsugaru, at the corners of common burial grounds, or at small shrines attached to temples, stone statues, *jizô*, are gathered. Not only burial grounds but any places commemorating death, personal or collective, is marked with the *jizô*, dressed in colorful hand-made costumes, with the personal belongings of deceased children and adults. Often, stones are piled up in a pyramid shape near such places. These are all conduits between this world and the world of the dead for Tsugaru people. The numerous *igokuana* ("hell holes"), where tens of thousands of victims of late Edo famines were buried, remain as open sites, quiet but as public as the atomic bomb dome.

Life in Tsugaru does not end with one's death, for the dead never go away. Death may be the most powerful reality which holds Tsugaru people together, for death symbolizes continuity. In Tsugaru, even reproachful ghosts are not completely rejected, for there is always a reason they are still hanging around. Living humans cannot exterminate these reproachful spirits, but only manage them, and occasionally, make a deal for mutual benefit. Death is so familiar and intimate in Tsugaru, individual, communal, and beyond; intimate to the extent that one cannot walk through even a single village in Tsugaru without passing colorful *jizô* with white faces and red lips, sidewalk offerings to stones, and "hell holes." It is hardly an exaggeration to state that Tsugaru is like a huge burial ground with living people in temporary residence here and there, waiting to "join the majority."

It is not only shamans and trained priests who deal with spirits and souls. Ordinary people, mostly women, must manage the relationship with them as a result of sheer necessity: to this day, the average life span in Tsugaru is one of the lowest in Japan, and the poverty has never gone away. Amongst these women, some decide to dedicate the bulk of their free time to others by openly taking up the shamanic vocation, but others do it intermittently, if and when people come seeking their services.

These differences, the line between "amateur" and "professional," we might say, are not of great importance to the local population. They understand that just because one day a shaman has some power does not mean she will always have it, or that she will use it for good rather than from a malicious motive. Tsugaru people support a shaman in a very pragmatic way: they look only to whether or not her advice works. Thus, a shaman

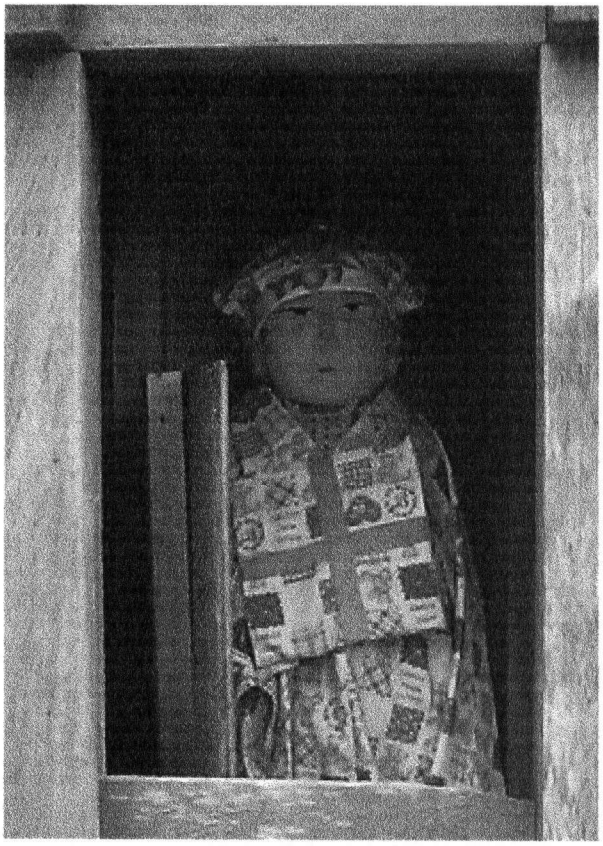


Figure 4.14: *Jizô* statue with cross bib

is, in the ultimate sense, disposable, because s/he is only human; the power for which the shaman has been a conduit is not.

Whether assisted by a shaman or not, a woman's duty to take care of the dead is a routine, even mundane, business.[36] Conversations with the dead — dead children, dead husbands, dead ancestors — are not really a "service" or "ceremonial" but are a matter of necessity. Tsugaru people could not afford to "revive" or "invent" this tradition for the sake of tradition — instead, most of them could not afford to give it up since the alternatives, whether doctors, priests, or psychiatrists, were too expensive and too alien.

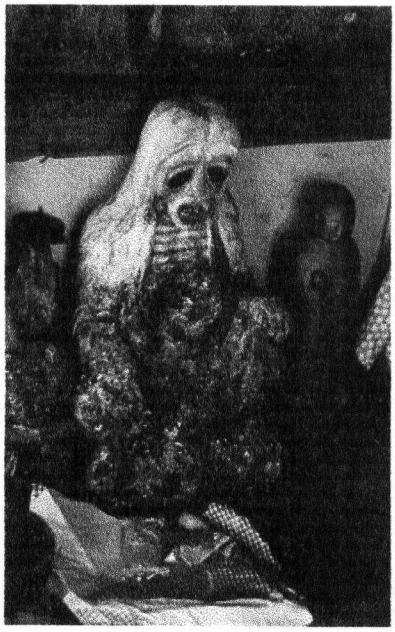


Figure 4.15: Statue of Emma *baba* as a starving woman, Kiraichi

And so conversations with the departed continue, at home, in the field, by the roadside, at burial grounds, at *jizô* shrines, in the mountains, everywhere. They are not meant as a spectacle for curious eyes seeking colorful displays: they are a survival strategy (Satô 1970: 240). Women's role in maintaining a

balanced relationship with the dead is at the core of the shamanic heritage of Tsugaru: without it, the professional shamans could not prosper. The housewives and elderly women make up the core of the client network for the ***itako*** and ***kamisama***, whose most important work still remains with the ***kamado***, the domestic household where community activities more often than not still both begin and end.

(b) Holy mountains: Mount Iwaki, Mount Akakura and Mt. Osore

One of the most striking similarities people in Tsugaru have with the Ainu in Hokkaidô and elsewhere is their fundamental belief in holy mountains as dwellings of high gods and ancestral souls. It is believed in Tsugaru that when one dies, one's soul returns to the mountain; and unlike Hokkaidô Ainu mountain ceremonies, which have died out or been scaled back drastically, an elaborate ritual structure has been preserved to this day in Tsugaru. This worship is best exemplified by the beliefs and practices concerning Mount Iwaki, locally called, with reverence and intimacy, *o-iwaki-sama*, "great-Iwaki-(honorific)," which represents the "official" side of mountain worship, as well as Mount Akakura on its southeastern slope, which can stand for the less commercialized but equally significant "non-official" component, the diverse shamanic cults to which it is a home.

As Miyata and others have pointed out, Mount Iwaki worship is founded almost exclusively on local Tsugaru people's attitudes towards the mountain, rather than being modified and mediated by organized religion or religious authorities who reside on the mountain, as is commonly the case with sacred mountains in Japan south of Tsugaru

(Miyata 1970, Yanagawa 1958). This does not mean, however, that organized religion and religious authorities have had no part in Mount Iwaki worship. Syncretic Buddhists associated with the Shingon sect Hyakuzawa temple in Iwaki town on the approaches to Mount Iwaki were active in the past, as were Tsugaru *yamabushi* in general, performing shamanic prayers for the mountain. Religious ascetics, *shugen*, seem also to have played a role at Mount Akakura (Miyata 1970: 278, 282). But these organized outside forces were never powerful enough to entirely absorb and incorporate the native cults.

The area of Mount Iwaki worship clearly coincides with the jurisdiction of Tsugaru *han* during the Edo period. According to *Tsugaru Ittôshi*, the founder of the Tsugaru *han*, Tsugaru Tamenobu, founded a syncretic temple called Atago Daigongen at the top of Mount Asase in what is today's Iwaki town. The temple accommodated Shingon Buddhism and various folk ascetics, and one of the descendent of these ascetics is said to have moved to Hyakuzawa, earning the support of Tsugaru *han* and establishing the temple as the highest ranked Shingon establishment in Tsugaru.

The present-day Iwaki Jinja, Mount Iwaki shrine, the most prominent religious establishment in the area, located at the mouth of the Hyakuzawa entrance to Mount Iwaki, grew out of Orii-gû, a syncretic place of worship combining Buddhism and traditional Shintô, accommodated at Hyakuzawa temple. The lord of Tsugaru *han* commissioned Hyakuzawa temple priests to ascend the mountain on his behalf, to offer prayers for its protection, and at the same time promote the native practice of pilgrimage in a regulated manner, including strict restrictions on its time and the obligation to visit the temple (Miyazaki: 199-200, Miyata: 284-286) As a result, the Mount Iwaki pilgrimage became widely practiced all across Tsugaru, with more or less the same characteristics.

The Tsugaru ***han*** promotion of pilgrimage to Mount Iwaki was exceptional, given its more common practice of suppressing indigenous customs and enforcing sumptuary regulations on commoners. One common explanation for its promotion is the heavy dependence of Tsugaru ***han*** on mountain work and rice farmers (as mentioned in Chapter Two), both groups that needed some sort of entertainment. Nevertheless, an examination of the pilgrimage even in its regulated form reveals aspects which are beyond the influence of religious establishments and rice agriculture. Even though the present forms of worship have been influenced by political decisions and organized religion, it is difficult to see how the tradition could have been "invented" from scratch. For one thing, Mount Iwaki is not an easy mountain to climb (cf. the postscript) and thus the pilgrimage is risky. To "invent" such a dangerous tradition and cause it to become popular all across Tsugaru would have been impossible without a prior indigenous foundation.

The things which are said to have characterized the traditional mountain worship of the Hokkaidô Ainu in the past, such as the experience of a shamanic state of consciousness, or "madness," during the ritualized visit by the pilgrims, the association of mountain tops and hillside with ceremonial places for the worship of ancestors, and the idea of a mythical lake at the mountain top, are all echoed in Tsugaru mountain "cults." The following paragraphs summarize common aspects of traditional Mount Iwaki pilgrimages as it was still practiced in the sixties, but most of the details remain true to this day.

(i) Collective purification

The mountain pilgrimage is called *yamakage* in Tsugaru, and it takes place between the twenty-fifth of the seventh lunar month and the fifteenth of the eighth month. One week before the pilgrimage starts, the villagers begin purifying themselves. Traditionally,

the males took temporary residence in the village tutelary shrine and purified themselves in the nearby river, by washing in cold water, or they built a hut called *susubai* or *suppe* near a river. Women were not allowed to have any direct contact with them until relatively recently: women were forbidden to climb Mt. Iwaki in 1810 (Wakamori 1970:14-15).

During the purification, men make the sacred sticks, *gohei*, of which there are several different kinds. An individual's *gohei* is up to twenty-four inches long, and the color may be red, white, silver or gold: first-timers use red, and the most experienced pilgrims, gold. Huge wooden sacred figures resembling *inaw*, to be carried in the hands, are also made (see Figure 4.16 to the left). These are called *nosa*, and they are several meters in length. They attach long wood shavings from cedar trees to bamboo stems, and also make a gigantic, colorful flag, often inscribed with the words "Iwakisan daigongen" ("Incarnation of the high deity of Mt. Iwaki"). They practice the pilgrimage music, with drums, flutes, and metallic cymbals called *tenburigane*.

Figure 4.16: Carrying *nosa* up the mountain

(ii) The pilgrimage route

The band, ***shagiri***, leads the whole pilgrimage, which begins by walking around the village, visiting every sacred site and shrine there. The ascent of Mt. Iwaki begins on the first day of the eighth lunar calender month, called ***tsuitachi-yama*** ("first day mountain").[37]

The main entrance to the pilgrimage route is at Hyakuzawa, the location of the Mt. Iwaki Shintô shrine, surrounded by tourist establishments.[38] The pilgrims first change from their shoes into straw sandals, and then begin walking, through the Sakuraga-oka shrine where a fortification deity is enshrined, to Ubaishi ("old woman stone").[39] Between the two is an open grass field where many natural stones are enshrined: Tatami-ishi ("tatami stone"), Tora-ishi ("tiger stone"), Funa-ishi ("ship stone"), Byôbu-ishi ("folding screen stone") and so on. Ubaishi is festooned with Shintô style sacred straws, and at this point the pilgrims offer hemp yarn from around their ***gohei*** and ***tasuki***, the sash used for holding up their sleeves. Ubaishi is considered to mark the ritual boundary between the mundane world and the divine realm.

Beyond Ubaishi, over a hill, the pilgrim reaches Yakidomari ("burning stop"), which is named from the fact that when dry grass is burnt on the mountain slope, the fire tends to go no further than here. The pilgrims pray to the mountain deity, recognizing that they have entered the domain of the gods, only two kilometers away from the mountain top. After this, the group reaches a valley called Ousawa, and then crosses steep hills named Fudo-zaka and Kenan-zaka, the latter also known as ***bôzu korogashi*** ("monk stumbling"), after an oral tradition about an ascetic who got as far as here but could not go any further without divine assistance. The pilgrims then proceed to another large

stone, Yamagami-ishi ("mountain god stone"), and then travel through steep, rocky hills called Kengamine, to a pond known as Tanemaki-nawashiro ("bed for rice seedlings").

(iii) Divination

Tanemaki-nawashiro is a small pond about 1000 square meters in area, but it is a significant place on the pilgrimage: divination is performed there. The pilgrims bring with them rice grains and pennies. They wrap these in a sheet of paper, and throw then into the water. If the paper sinks, the pilgrim's wish will come true; if it does not sink easily or simply floats, then the wish will not come true. In the past, rice, especially the first harvest of the season, was more commonly used, showing the ritual's association with the peasantry during Edo.[40]

After the divination, the pilgrims head towards the mountain top, through more holy sites such as Kaza-ana ("wind-cave"), Onkura-ishi ("treasury stone"), and Torino-umi ("birds' sea") (Miyata 1970: 280). The trip at this point has become no less than rock climbing, with everyone roped together in a straight line along the slope. The pilgrims always follow the traditional route: they neither wish to take an easier path nor change the tradition for the sake of safety.

(iv) *Onmuro*, the mountaintop altar and an unrestrained festivity

The altar at the top of Mount Iwaki is called *onmuro*, and inside it is a small wood and stone statue, believed to be the manifestation of the deity of Mount Iwaki. During the Edo period, there used to be three bronze Buddha statues and one stone statue, with a ball-like round black stone placed in front of them (Sugae 1933). When the pilgrims get to the mountain top, they begin performing "wild" festival music, with drums and flutes,

like a jam session. They beat the altar using sacred sticks with cut paper *gohei*, and lift up the stone deity and rub it against their bodies,[41] saying to each other "Ohatsu ima kita" ("Ohatsu has now arrived"). Ohatsu can be the name of a woman, and it is commonly believed that it is the name of the goddess of Mount Iwaki; but it also puns with ***hatsu***, "first time."[42]

This altar is replaced once every three years, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of the lunar calender. A divination is performed then by throwing the old altar into the valley and interpreting the results as signalling the good or bad fortune of future events, including the success of agriculture (Miyata 1970: 280-281). However, in a sense, the altar is secondary. It is still a common belief in Tsugaru that the mountain itself is their sacred home, and its rocky top is the house of the deities, or their natural cathedral. In this sense, the man-made altar is only a symbolic presence, which would have no meaning out of its natural context.

(v) Descent

The chief necessity for the descent is a sacred pine branch, which each pilgrim takes home from the mountain and places at his house entrance as a charm against thunder (cf. the Sakhalin Ainu use of pine branches for purification after a funeral). Rice growers also buy amulets from the local shrine as souvenirs, and place them where the water is let into their rice field.

When the pilgrims approach the bottom of the mountain, they start performing festival music, put on masks (which they have bought at the shrine) and/or festive dress, and began dancing and chanting madly, with the sacred pine branches in their hands:

"Yoiyama kaketa, battara, battara!" ("good mountain pilgrimage, battara, battara!"). It is said that these incantatory verses were created by a priest of the Hyakuzawa temple during the Edo period, but Miyata points out that this mad dance is essentially an expression of the joy of descent, from the heavenly world back to the earthly world (Miyata 1970: 281). This dance also prevents evil spirits from entering the human world.

After returning to the village, the pilgrims traditionally visit the tutelary deities of the village to offer prayer, *obusuna-gami*, then march around the village, and finally take their straw sandals off. Afterwards all the pilgrims gather at the village shrine, hold another drinking feast, and divide the sacred pine branches and offerings.[43]

(vi) Initiation

The first pilgrimage to Mount Iwaki leaves a permanent and vivid memory for the pilgrims, and for many young people, the experience serves as a powerful formative experience of their Tsugaru identity. Thus in Tsugaru, people often encourage the very young to join the pilgrimage, in some cases, carrying them on their backs. This custom of "initiation" of the very young, may go back to ancient times, as it is mentioned in folktales.

There are some indications that the Mount Iwaki pilgrimage is intended to be an "initiatory quest," for instance, the common saying, "No real man never did a Mount Iwaki pilgrimage." All the same, it differs from the more organized "initiation" rites for the young which characterize other holy mountains in Japan south of Tsugaru, in that its purpose includes an element of initiation, but is by no means limited to this. Mount Iwaki is the holy mountain for everyone who lives in Tsugaru, equated with the tutelary

deity of Tsugaru. Thus, to climb it means to become one with the most powerful protective deity, and to come personally under the care of that deity thereafter. In this sense, it can mark the passage to adulthood (Miyata 1970: 281-282).

(vii) A miniature Mt. Iwaki and an ancient burial site

Not all Tsugaru communities participate in the Mt. Iwaki pilgrimage. On the same day, many villagers in northern Tsugaru visit nearby hills and mountains, which tend to enshrine Mt. Iwaki. These mountains and hills often have names that end with the suffix *-mori*, or simply *Moya-yama* (*Moya* mountain), and they usually stand out from the scenery and can serve as landmarks.[44] The establishment of this cult seems to be relatively recent, and it probably went hand in hand with the regulated promotion of the Mt. Iwaki pilgrimage in the Edo period. Indeed, in most cases the worship of these lesser peaks follows the general pattern of the Mt. Iwaki pilgrimage. In some cases, replicas of Ubaishi and the divination pond have been created as well.

This type of secondary mountain cult is also found in the Edo period in other parts of Japan, such as that concerning the artificial Mt. Fuji in the town of Edo. To some superficial extent, this imitative aspect applies to Tsugaru, except that there is considerable evidence to indicate the existence of earlier types of mountain worship, decentralized and much less standardized. First, these *-mori* and *-moya* mountains are found mainly in mountainous areas, not in newly developed rice farming villages. Second, some of these hills and mountains are objects of the villagers' own cults, and sites of ancient burial and/or ceremonial grounds. Third, in some cases, clear territorial boundaries are maintained between villages, delineating which can worship which mountains or hills. Fourth, there are oral traditions about the origin of Mt. Iwaki which indicate its

"instant" expansion: either a small hill of Iwaki became a huge mountain overnight as a result of a volcanic eruption, or the mountain was created overnight by all the gods of Tsugaru, who each brought some of their own soil.

Thus, Miyata argues that modern Mt. Iwaki worship results from a politico-religious initiative by Tsugaru ***han*** towards the centralization and standardization of pre-existing, community-based, pre-single crop rice agriculture indigenous mountain cults (Miyata 1970: 291-295). If Miyata's observation is correct, the description given above of these territorially based local cults seems to have much in common with Chiri's description of ancient Ainu ceremonial hills/mountains, whose territorial range was based on kin groups sharing a hunting ground.

(vii) Mount Akakura

The religious settlement at Mt. Iwaki did not, however, start at Hyakuzawa. That at Tokoshinai on Mt. Iwaki's northern slope is earlier, established in the eleventh century by ***shugen***, syncretic ascetics who combined indigenous mountain worship with newly introduced esoteric Kamakura Buddhism (Miyata 1970). The range of steep hills and slopes covering the southeastern area of Mt. Iwaki from Tokoshinai is called Akakura, and it was known as a place inhibited by *ont*, demons.

The western distinction between demon and deity is irrelevant here, for even fearsome demons are called ***kami***: "In the direction of Akakura, I see a place known as Oniba (written 鬼場), and on a very quiet night I see the offerings of lanterns" (Sugae n.d quoted in Miyata 1970: 283 — there is a village called Onisawa in Akakura, which enshrines *ont* as their tutelary deities). The link between *ont* and metallurgy is indicated

Figure 4.17: Red-bronze statue of a mountain god, made and kept by a *matagi* family in Aomori

by the large plow treasured at the Tokoshinai shrine, which is said to be used by ***oni***, and its origin tale about a swordsmith called Onigami dayû (Demon-god-man/priest), whose sword was said to have been enshrined there originally.[45] As the picture to the left makes clear, the demons were not necessarily monsters, but might often have been mountain dwellers who were seen as belonging to another world, or at least another culture.[46] Miyata also observes some possible links between the ***shugen*** and the ***oni*** (Miyata 1970: 282-283).[47]

Due to the difficult terrain and other obstacles, the more Buddhist-influenced ascetics eventually ceased climbing Mt. Iwaki from Tokoshinai, and they relocated their home base in Hyakuzawa. The activities of these early ascetics are difficult to trace, as a large group of ***shugen*** emerged who were organized under the Daihô-ha Daikôji temple in Hirosaki, the castle town of Tsugaru ***han***. They are known as Tsugaru ***shugen***, and as we will see later, they had a key role in extending esoteric knowledge among the shamans and healers in Tsugaru (Miyata 1970: 283-285). Unfortunately, they came under attack from the Meiji government, after which ***shugen*** officially disappeared.[48] Nevertheless, Akakura remains a holy mountain for the female shamans known as ***kamisama*** or ***gomiso*** today. Along the streams found among the steep slopes of

Akakura, dozens of small shrines and prayer stones are found, and in the summer, female pilgrims challenge the more difficult route to Mt. Iwaki through Akakura.

The female shamans at Akakura enshrine and worship snakes, which are known as *ryûgin*, dragon gods. Akakura has an interesting comparison here between this practice and Irimoto's discussion of the snake as the spirit guide for Hokkaidô Ainu shamans and Chiri's observations about the ancient Ainu association of winged snakes and the holy lake at the mountain top. Indigenous snake worship is still relatively common even among ordinary people. For example, I observed a small altar with "ryûjin" in snake-skin calligraphy, and offerings of raw eggs and *saké*, at the entrance to a public hot spring.[49] The association of snake worship and hot springs is of particular interest, as it indicates a possible linkage between the idea of winged snakes and volcanic activities.

(viii) Fear Mountain

Mt. Osore is located at the centre of the Shimokita peninsula in northeastern Aomori. The mountain does not lie within the present-day boundaries of Tsugaru, but due to its geographical proximity and historical connections, people often include it. Since this is the case, I would like to review the beliefs and cults surrounding Mt. Osore, "Fear" Mountain.[50]

Mt. Osore is not a high mountain, but it is one of the two meccas for shamanism in Northern Honshû, the other being Kawakura, which will be discussed later.[51] Mt. Osore is most famous for the horrible Hell site at its top, and the associated image of wandering ghosts. The temple at its top states that a *jizô* shrine was said to have been established on top of the mountain, remote from any human settlement, as early as 862 CE. The

founder of this shrine is said to have been Jikaku-daishi, a Tendai Buddhist, Tendai being a syncretic and esoteric sect of Buddhism which has maintained a close relationship with Mt. Iwaki. However, it is not likely that the historical Jikaku-daishi was ever anywhere near Mt. Osore (Mitazaki 1970:18, 48, 92-93).

Figure 4.18: Mount Osore, view over the cliffs to the sea

A more realistic estimate is that the first Buddhist establishment on Mt. Osore dates to no earlier than the sixteenth century. Today, it is the site of an annual gathering of shamans in the month of July, when thousands of tourists and local pilgrims gather to employ the services of *itako*, including ***kuchiyose***, the delivery of messages from the dead. Many of them stay in an inn attached to the main temple, equipped with hot springs, and visit the full model of "Hell," complete with a sulphur-smelling Blood Lake, a stone-piled Sai-no-kawara where the souls of children are supposed to suffer eternally, and a sulphur-tainted rocky surface with an exotic-looking cauldron lake, Lake Usori. The propagation of the idea of Hell through detailed images and narratives was a common strategy in the medieval popularization of Buddhism in Japan, often carried out by secular monks and travelling singers.[52] Mt. Osore presents an

extreme example of such an attempt, and ironically its popularity as a tourist spot is due precisely to the exploitation of this dark, haunted image.

However "permanent" and "real" they may appear in a tourist guide book, these flourishes are all impositions of Buddhist ideas, much of which were put into place as late as the Edo period. Before the promotion of Tendai Buddhism in the area, Miyazaki observes, Mt. Osore attracted religious ascetics whose cult was rooted in "primitive" mountain worship (Miyazaki 1970: 92). The site at the mountain top, even without its Buddhist theme park, is more than qualified as holy ground, not Hell but a land beyond the human world. Although we do not know the exact process of the "Hellification" of Mt. Osore, one Ainu informant from Nibutani told me that it had been the site of a massacre of the indigenous population, some of whom threw themselves over the cliffs into the sea, chanting their cries for justice.

Whatever the official image may have become, Buddhism never succeeded in exterminating the indigenous tradition, even if we make the uncharitable assumption that that was its intention: it came back in the form of a shamanic cult, now taken over almost wholly by women. The blood pond, supposedly red with the sins of women, reflects the agony of childbirth and child loss — according to Sasamori, something no Buddha can save women from.[53] During the shamanic gathering, the whole site is filled with offerings, flowers, food, ***saké***, candles, incense, and straw sandals, and visitors begin feasting here and there in "Hell." If reunion with the beloved dead is only possible in Hell, then who would not wish to be there? It is not a fearful place after all, or anything exotic: those who come to Mt. Osore may simply be seeking something familiar which they can no longer locate.[54]

(1) Fire worship[55]

Respect and reverence for the divine aspects of fire is an essential aspect of traditional Tsugaru culture. In Tsugaru, fire is the symbol of family integration, household, and even social life. It is considered a vital life force, both destructive and productive, and to this day, numerous rituals and taboos concerning fire govern the everyday lives of Tsugaru people. Things which are considered "impure" may not be burned, and it is taboo to step across a hearth or a fire, because fire is a divine being. Prayer is addressed to fire deity, as well as offerings. Some shamanesses conduct a sacred ritual of the oven, involving the cooking of a large quantity of rice in a huge pot over the fire.

Traditionally, the household fire was changed for a new one at New Year's Eve so as to avoid unnecessary disasters due to "impurity." Alternately, the hearth might be sprinkled with salt to ward off evil spirits. When a fire is built, it is believed to bring good spirits and ancestral souls, and to protect individuals and families from evil spirits. The kitchen is thus considered a sacred domain, the dwelling of the oven/fire deity, and thus a paper or straw shaving is often offered near the oven even to this day.

As already mentioned, it is the woman's duty to maintain the fire in her household. The metaphor for social integrity has always been the ***kamado***, which is synonymous with a house unit, a family, and in some cases, an entire village. Hence when a family branches off, it is called ***kamado-wake***, dividing the fire. The women of the new household become the managers of family and community relations through observing various rules regarding fire, and organizing and participating in community activities, not least of which are shamanic gatherings. It is important to note that, in spite of the common belief that a shamanic event always requires the presence of a specialized, full-time,

"professional" shaman, in some small villages in Tsugaru (and Aomori) women still do important shamanic "seances" such as *oshira-asobase*, entertaining the household deities, without a specialist shaman.

Oshira-asobase is commonly known as a special practice of blind shamans, *itako*, in northern Honshû. However, in many villages in the Shimokita peninsula and Tsugaru, it is done by ordinary villagers, led exclusively by women. This may be the result of a difficulty in accessing *itako* in some villages, but in others, people did not originally depend on *Itako* at all; and the villagers there insist that doing it themselves is the genuine way. In the village of Shimooguradaira in Shimokita, eighteen *kamado* (households) organize and participate in an annual *oshira-asobase*. Traditionally, a pair of *oshira* is maintained by one household, and the elderly woman of the house look after them, offering food and *saké*. The grandmother is also the ceremonial master and the host, and she has to educate her daughter-in-law about how to deal with the *oshira*, including the services for the community.

On the sixteenth of January, villagers with children come to the house of the *oshira* (which is granted no special name or status) to borrow the deities, one by one. The *oshira* are carried on the back of a child, and brought home, where a temporary altar for them is set up. Rice cakes, noodles, and fruits are offered to the *oshira*, and everyone in the family offers prayers and talks to them. After this, the *oshira* are used to cure sickness by rubbing them against affected body parts. The old cloth is carefully removed from the *oshira*, and a new one is fitted. The old cloth is shredded into small pieces, and used as a charm. This tradition was regularly practiced until no more than sixteen years ago (Saitô 1999).

The origin of fire worship in Tsugaru may go back to ancient times when Mt. Iwaki was settled by migrants from the Asian mainland, in the Jômon period: people who practiced slash and burn agriculture on the slopes, and brought the knowledge of metallurgy.[56] The fire goddesses of Mt. Iwaki, an active volcano until 1863, came to be worshipped under the Japanese names Mizuhame no mikoto and Haniyasu no mikoto on the Hyakuzawa pilgrimage route. Further study is needed to find out when and why such names were given to the fire goddesses of a mountain whose name is reputed to be the same as the words for "sacred mountain" in the Ainu language (Shibata1995).

(j) The number six

The number six appears in the history of Tsugaru and northern Japan as a subdivision of governing units: the six regional units of the Andô in Tsugaru, or the six traditional divisions in Oushû, today's northern Honshû.[57] As already mentioned, the number six is also found in the monument made of six large chestnut poles in Sannai Maruyama.[58]

Rather than six, it is the number twelve that more frequently and clearly finds expression in sacred contexts: twelve mountain deities, twelve river deities, the twelve-branched holy tree, and so on. Chiba states that the concept of twelve deities is due to Buddhist influence, a direct adoption from Yakushi, the Physician of Souls, who has twelve helping deities (1970b: 175-180). But in my view, it is premature to attribute the special position of the number twelve to Yakushi, although in some cases there might well be an influence. For example, in Nakasato town in northern Tsugaru, twelve round

rice cakes are prepared for the New Year's Day's First Water ceremony, but there will be thirteen for the year with an intercalary month. Similarly, at the Setsubun ceremony at the close of the winter, twelve or thirteen soy beans are offered to the house altar depending on the year, and burnt in the hearth for divination. As a final example, on the fifteenth day of the first month of the lunar calender, some Tsugaru people make six small rice balls called ***mitama-meshi*** ("soul food"), and offer them to the Buddhist altar.[59] The number of rice balls varies, though: it can be six, nine, or twelve, depending on the village and the household. These cases suggest the possibility of pre-Buddhist calendrical influence on number twelve symbolism in Tsugaru, which might have also influenced the Ainu's idea of twelve, "a pair of sixes" (Moriyama 1970: 244-252).

However, in Tsugaru, one can find every possible number worked hard for its mystical meaning: two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, and twelve all manifest themselves in some way. It appears as if Tsugaru people need all the luck they could get from symbolic numbers, and from other things, for that matter. I will discuss some of these points later in the section entitled "The shamanic foundation of Tsugaru life."

(k) The home in the sky

We discussed in Chapter Three how the Ainu world can be characterized by cosmic awareness. In Tsugaru, too, we have not only mythological explanations, but real historical places that people associate with their memories of their link to the sky people and to the sky world.

One of the most esoteric aspects of the spiritual heritage in Tsugaru is that concerning a direct link to the sky world, and encounters with the people from the sky, often known as ***tenjin***, sky people.

Both Mt. Akakura and Mt. Iwaki are well known for sightings of flying objects at night. There are numerous oral traditions relating to ***hikarimono***, shining objects moving across the sky, documented throughout the Edo period. Sometimes, people encountered shining objects in the mountains. Ikegami points out that the majority of these shining objects documented in the castle city report that they flew to the west, in the direction of Mt. Iwaki. Moreover, the mountains, Mt. Akakura in particular, are notorious as the haunts of other-worldly beings known as ***oohito***, "big persons," a separate category of being from ***oni***, demons. The ***oohito*** are depicted as benevolent beings, often helping villagers lost in the mountains (Ikegami 1987: 38-42).

The reason Mt. Iwaki and Mt. Akakura attracted shamans and pilgrims alike seems to have some link with the presence of both these shining objects and ***oohito***. During my visit to Tsugaru in 1995, I witnessed a scroll passed down through several generations of ***kamisama*** in Akakura, depicting the direct link between ***tenjin***, sky people, and the holiness of the mountains, which went back to the beginning of the world. I was told by the caretaker that the scroll was written by the founding ***kamisama*** of the temple in the nineteenth century, who had a revelation. It indicated that the sky people once descended freely to Mt. Akakura, which attracted gods from all directions, and indicated that Mt. Akakura was once literally connected to the sky world, inhabited by other people, divinities.[60]

(2) Terms and definition of shaman; and kinds, ability and functions of shamans, in both theory and practice

Above, we have covered the essential aspects of the shamanic cosmology and world view of the people of Tsugaru. Now we turn to the Tsugaru shamans and their practices, to compare them with their Ainu counterparts, and where appropriate, with other shamans.

In Tsugaru, we have two major kinds of specialized, professional shamans, *ttako* and *kamisama*, both of which are female. Both of them shamanize for individuals and communities, and heal sick people, for a living; but their roles, functions and abilities are clearly demarcated in theory, and usually distinct in practice. They are both trance-possession type shamans, somewhat similar to the Ainu *tusukur*. One fundamental difference between them and Ainu shamans is that these specialized shamans in Tsugaru call their sacred profession *shôbai*, "a commercial act," and expect something in return. They are more individualized and integrated into contemporary social norms and the cash economy.[61]

But these are not the only shamans in Tsugaru. Compared with the Ainu, where the general concept of "shaman" is covered by only a few general, overall terms but a rich variety of more specialized vocabulary, Tsugaru presents a broad range of such conceptualisations. On the one hand, we have clear categories for specialized shamans such as *ttako* or *kamisama* and their numerous subvarieties, and on the other, there are individuals who perform traditional spiritual services voluntarily. In reality, the decision to become professional may not be an easy one to make for many. The existence of permanent, paid shamans in Tsugaru, moreover, is a relatively recent phenomenon, and the

present public form and function of both ***kamisama*** and ***itako*** are the result of Tsugaru ***han*** efforts to regulate and standardize indigenous shamans during the Edo period.

Finally, in contrast to the Ainu, midwives in Tsugaru today have no relation to shamanism or shamans. However, in the past, midwives may have been considered spiritual experts, or at the very least, midwifery was handled by ***itako*** or other spiritual workers.

In the following paragraphs, I will briefly examine the diverse forms and functions of shamans in Tsugaru, with my discussion divided into three major parts: ***itako***, ***kamisama***, and others. But before this, it seems best to provide some context by means of a brief discussion of the efforts of Tsugaru ***han*** to regulate and standardize indigenous shamans, and the succeeding Meiji government's attempts to suppress religious heterodoxy.

(a) Taming the shaman in Tsugaru

How did shamans in Tsugaru evolve into the various forms we know today? Where did they come from, and when?

Shamanism in Tsugaru must date back far before the time of the region's loss of autonomy to the Japanese state just before the Edo period, as there already were at least some male syncretic ascetics, ***shugen***, who lived in the mountains of Tsugaru, helping in the gradual extension of esoteric Buddhism in the area. But to assume that these ***shugen*** were the only early shamans in the area, and to view other shamans in today's Tsugaru as subvarieties or degenerations of ***shugen*** is to deny the Tsugaru people any right to an indigenous culture and history. We know that the Ainu inhabited the central region of Tsugaru until the end of the sixteenth century, and they were indigenous to the area, not

there by accident or as a temporary refuge. To assume that any aspect of Tsugaru civilization began with the arrival of the Edo state is to do no more than repeat the same mistake the "Japanese" made in the nineteenth century when they called Ainumoshir (present day Hokkaidô) ***mushu no chi*** 無主の地 , a masterless land, a land without a "real" history. Indeed, this view still seem to dominate the modern Japanese conception of Tsugaru.

Wakamori observes that the various types of shaman in today's Tsugaru are the results of the reproduction of pre-existing shamanic practices under a distinct set of social and historical circumstances during the Edo period, and the subsequent modernization of the region (Wakamori 1970: 5). Some of these professions, ***itako*** for example, may be rooted in the earliest shamanism in the region. Others, such as ***shugen***, are at least originally foreign to the region, but there must have been some level of communication between them and indigenous shamans, or even the merger of more than one kind of tradition in a single person. Otherwise, how could these foreigners and their alien religions gain the support of the local people? I will not be pursing the evolution and adaptation of ***shugen*** in Tsugaru here, but it would make a fruitful topic for further study.

To understand the nature of indigenous shamans before Edo, we must examine the Tsugaru ***han*** policy towards them during Edo. Unfortunately, we do not have many documents on this topic, but based on what is available, Sakurai has summarized the evolving relationships among the Tsugaru ***han***, local shamans, and Buddhism during the Edo period. In essence, this policy was to control and standardize the practices of indigenous shamans, ***itako*** in particular.

The Tsugaru ***han*** entrusted the Hôon temple of the Tendai sect in the castle city of Hirosaki with the responsibility to register and control blind monks and shamans. Hôonji in turn issued licenses to them (which the *itako* called *omamori*, protection charms), and made them assemble at the temple once a year, to teach them *sutras* and give them shamanic training. The temple punished those who did not wish to be controlled in this way, branding them illegal practitioners. This is the origin of the later connection between *itako* and temple routines, the structure of the *itako*'s seance, which utilizes Buddhist sutras, and perhaps even their acceptance of the Buddhist interpretation of "Hell" sites such as Mt. Osore for the purpose of their shamanic services.

The *itako* thus became a bridge between ordinary Tsugaru people and the Tsugaru ***han***, through the vehicle of Buddhism. The power and influence of the Hôon temple lasted well into the Meiji period, though it is an empty cliche today (Sakurai 1970: 306-7, cf. *Tsugaru-han nisshi*, *Tsugaru kyûkidenrui*, *Jyônai kinban nikki*, *Goyôkaku*).

Other shamans, such as ***kamisama***, also seem to follow the same pattern of centralization around Hirosaki, close to their sacred mountain Akakura. Southern Tsugaru thus became the home base for the shamans, both *itako* and others, who could obtain an orthodox education and recognized status there, and then move out into newly developed villages in response to local demand. The new villages were most densely concentrated in south-central Tsugaru along the Iwaki river, which remains the main rice-growing area today.

We can thus say that the clear distinction between *itako* and ***kamisama*** which exists today was artificially created during the Edo period. While there may have been different genres of shamans ancestral to *itako* and ***kamisama*** respectively, like those of

divine poet and healer, for example (or the Ainu *tusu* vs. *ikoinkar*), the boundary between these earlier groups appears to have been much looser than that between *itako* and *kamisama*. This is evidenced by the fact that in the more "marginal" communities in Tsugaru, where the weight of outside politics has not been felt so heavily, the distinction between *itako* and *kamisama* is increasingly confused, and the villagers show no interest in distinguishing the two (Sakurai 1970: 307).

The emergence of permanent, salaried professional shamans can be seen as a new phenomenon in Tsugaru, created by the professionalization and legalization of shamans during the Edo period. As mentioned, in small, remote villages in Aomori we can see that the seance is done without a professional shaman, and the villagers claim that this is the older form before it became customary to involve *itako*. The precursors of *itako* and *kamisama*, then, are likely to have been village and family-rooted, rather than temple-centred. This brings us one more step closer to something like the ancient Ainu shamans Chiri described.

Finally, I would like to sketch public policy towards shamans after the Meiji restoration. Shamans, *itako* in particular, were subject to discrimination and persecution, partly by educators and partly by public servants. The Meiji government established Shintô as its state religion, and tried to suppress other religions and shamanic activities. This was felt even in as "remote" a region as Tsugaru though it was not as fatal to its female shamans as it was to the more prominent male groups such as *shugen*. Nevertheless, *itako* were denounced in public as enemies of education and enlightenment, and their shamanic ability was considered nothing but superstition, an impediment to the advance-

ment of "civilization." Thus their rank in society gradually decayed, and some even disguised themselves as *kamisama* to escape persecution (Sakurai 1970: 302).

(b) Blind shaman poets: itako

Itako belong to one of the two basic types of traditional shaman common in Northern Honshû, a variety usually considered to have both originated in Tsugaru, and reached its highest development there. They are trained under a senior *itako*, and master the *sutras* by heart.

Scholars have suggested various etymologies for the term "*itako*": the Japanese word *itaku*, "to entrust a person with the task of the god"; *ichiko* or *ichikko*, "consecrate to the gods"; *ita*, a clapper board made of cedar wood used to invoke a deity; the Tsugaru vernacular word *edakko*, the name of the wooden box containing sacred charms and holy figures, which an *itako* carries on her back; and the Ainu word *itak*, to speak, as in *kamuy itak*, "to speak the words of a deity" (Sakurai 1970: 299, Sasamori 1997: 47). Still others have gone even further afield to suggest a link with central Asia, such as may be attested by the Mongol words *idogan*, *udogan*, and *ichigan*, all meaning "shaman." (Narumi 1964; see also Eliade 1964: 4).

The primary characteristic of an *itako* shaman, which separates her from other varieties, is her specialization: transmitting the words of the dead in a state of trance. This is called *kuchiyose*, and *itako* gather at certain temple and shrine events to perform *kuchiyose* for the visitors, in addition to doing it at home or even visiting their clients. Although these events are official temple/shrine activities separate from shamanic prac-

tice, people talk informally of them as *itako* gatherings, because the *itako* are the main attraction. However, *itako* do also deliver message from the deities and other beings, divine, exorcise, purify, and — an important function in the past — cure illnesses for those in need.

The *itako* heal the sick, mental or physical, by the chanting of *sutras* and the handling of *materia medica* such as *oshira* and rosaries. Sometimes the cause of illness is interpreted as being due to an evil spirit of a human being, an animal, a bird, a tree, a stone, or indeed anything in the world, dead or alive — though unlike *kamisama*, it is rare for *itako* to attribute illness to *hotoke*, the spirits of the dead, or *ikiryô*, the spirits of living people. The *itako* and her clients often interpret the causes of current misfortunes, tracing them back to ancestral misconduct which have not been atoned for, such as a murder, the destruction of a holy object, and so on. The *itako* is responsible for the final diagnosis of the cause, and prescribing compensatory measures, if such are necessary. These may include regular service to ancestors through prayers and offerings, remorse expressed to a dead animal, or the dedication of *jizô* figures to a temple in commemoration of the dead (Sasamori 1997: 47-49).

Mental illnesses are usually attributed to possession by an abnormal spirit, most commonly a fox spirit. This is also observed among the Ainu, as we saw in Aoki Aiko's account, but the difference is that *itako* turn to a temple or shrine to accommodate the fox spirit which is to be forced out of the person's body. The influence of a hierarchical socio-religious structure manifests itself curiously here: an *itako* may ask the priest of a shrine to give the fox a "higher rank," and if the fox agrees, the patient will be cured (Sasamori 1997: 49).[62]

The healing power of *itako* lies partly in the deep cultural faith in the spirit of language, known as *kotodama* in Japanese and *itak kashkamuy* in Ainu. Thus, the chanting of a *sutra* in and of itself is believed to have supernatural effects. Many magical words have been transmitted through oral tradition — those used by *itako* include words which protect a person from fox tricks, heal wounds, draw a thorn out of the throat, and heal a snake bite. Not only spoken words, but also written characters are believed to have magical power. Sasamori reports a case where an *itako* told the owner of a newly built house to write a magical word on a plate and bury it under the floor where the head of the family would sit (Sasamori 1970: 48).

There are a number of *sutras* specifically used by *itako* for the purpose of preventing or curing illness. Sasamori lists eight: *Ubusuna-sama*, *Kami-sandan*, *Ningen-kyô*, *Sanjûsan-kannon*, *Kuni-gake*, *Sango-date*, *Netsu-samashi-kyô*, and *Oshira-kyô*. The *Kannon-kyô* and *Shingyô sutras* are chanted before other *sutras* to cure illness, and are also common *sutras* among Buddhists. Most of these *itako sutras* are used not only for healing but also for purification and praying for the fulfillment of other wishes; but the *Netsu-samashi-kyô* and *Oshira-kyô* are used only for healing (Sasamori 1997: 48). An *itako*'s primary function is thus to manipulate sacred and magical words for the purpose of healing people or preventing their misfortunes. These *sutras*, moreover, include so-called *saimon*, sacred epic poems, which developed from the popular oral tradition rather than Buddhism. I will return to this topic below, in the section on "Shamanic verses transmitted by women."

(c) Divine healers: kamisama

The other major class of spiritual practitioner in Tsugaru are the *gomiso* or *kamisama*. At the southern end of the Japanese archipelago, one can find a similar pairing of complimentary functions in Okinawa, where *noro* and *yuta* are rough counterparts to *itako* and *kamisama* (cf. Heshiki 1990).

Kamisama is an umbrella term for those shamans who are not *itako: gomiso, arimasa, noriki, ogamiya*, or *yori*. The major areas of practice and function which differentiate *kamisama* and *itako* are:

(1) *Kamisama* are not blind.

(2) *Kamisama* are self-declared and trained, but *itako* are apprenticed.

(3) *Itako* go through an official initiation, but *kamisama* do not.

(4) *Itako* specialize in *hotoke-oroshi* (literally, "bringing the dead down," spirit possession of the dead) but *kamisama* usually prefer not to perform this.[63]

(5) *Itako* are registered with special temples which manage them, but *kamisama* are more independent. Consequently, an *itako*'s business relies on the license issued by a temple, but a *kamisama*'s "legitimacy" is created by the approval of ordinary people.

(6) *Itako* have to observe regulations for doing possessions but *kamisama* are relatively free of such rules.

(7) *Kamisama*'s seances and services are pragmatic and relatively mundane, and do not include the performance of elaborate *sutras* or epic poetry.

(8) *Itako* are unionized but ***kamisama*** are not.

(9) The *tako*'s possessions (bringing down the dead) follow rules and taboos, but ***kamisama*** tend to do this (bringing down ***kami***) based on demand.

(Eda 1970, Sakurai 1970)

Like *itako*, ***kamisama*** do divination and possessions, and offer prayers and exorcisms for people who come to them. Most ***kamisama*** also worship *oshira*, but only a few do seances with them. Each ***kamisama*** believes in different deities, since each is protected by different spirit guides, or ***tsukigami*** "attached gods." When conducting a seance, they call on various deities for help, instead of chanting a *sutra*. Most of the time the seance is conducted at a ***kamisama***'s house but occasionally they cater their services, such as when doing purification ceremonies.

A ***kamisama***'s clients often depend on her to solve urgent problems or to give advice on impending emergencies. In other words, the client's need for a ***kamisama*** tends to be more pressing, and she must respond to a greater variety of requests than does an *itako*. These includes physical treatment for illnesses.

Another important ways in which a ***kamisama*** differs from an *itako* is that she does not necessarily experience "ecstasy" (complete loss of self awareness in deep trance) to become a shaman, or during her seance. One ***kamisama*** I came to be acquainted with spoke of losing consciousness once during her career as a rather negative experience, since if she was not able to remember what went on during her seance, then she would be less well prepared the next time she met the same client. Most ***kamisama*** are at least in partial control of the situation during the seance, though some of them may say that

they remember nothing afterwards. For some, including myself, it is more like concentration rather than losing control; to some extent one needs to shut oneself out from the immediate surrounding environment so as to focus on something "internal." Nevertheless, one can still walk, breath, see the world, and speak quite normally.

In the past when medical practitioners did not require degrees and licenses, ***kamisama*** treated sick people on a broad scale. Their treatments were chiefly massage therapy and moxabustion, combined with prescriptions for herbal medicine and dietary advice. Their conception of illness was based on their understanding of the "flow" of bodily fluid and the impure elements that caused diseases. Thus, removing "old blood" was a major area of treatment, as it was with the Hokkaidô Ainu. Today, touch therapy, massage, and herbaology are still relatively common practices, but moxabustion requires a license (Eda 1970)

Today, with the sharp decrease in the number of blind women, ***itako*** are in decline and ***kamisama*** are taking over their roles and functions. Even at temple festivals, ***kamisama*** and ***itako*** sit next to each other, and they both do spirit possession. The boundary between the two is becoming increasingly unclear.

We should also note that both ***itako*** and ***kamisama*** have had some influence on the public decision-making process behind the scenes, as it is not unusual for a politician to have his or her own shaman to consult when making decisions. This is nothing special in Tsugaru; it is part of the local tradition to seek a shaman's advice on important matters, including politics. During my fieldwork around Mt. Akakura, I was informed of a recent visit by several political figures to one of the shrines of the ***kamisama*** prior to the elec-

tion for provincial governor, and how the politicians who attended were satisfied with the advice they had received.

(d) Others: Between the village tradition and "street shamans."

Itako and *kamisama* are the most visible categories of professional shaman in Tsugaru. But in reality, there are other shamans or shaman-like traditional spiritual experts of numerous varieties who also make their home there. These range from "street shamans" to village elders who keep the sacred traditions alive.

In the sixties, non-orthodox shamans and spiritual professionals were still active and popular at temple events. These non-orthodox spiritual professionals included blind monks, diviners and palm readers, *yamabushi* pilgrims, male *itako*, and "pseudo" *itako*. Many of these also perform possessions, do divinations, and/or are capable of "seeing" beyond time and space. Yet their non-orthodox status does not allow them to do business in the same official huts with the *itako* at the temple festivals: they end up at the side of the street, or between the vendors, or nestled by the side of the *itako*'s huts.

The "pseudo" *itako* are called *komokaburi itako* (head-covering *itako*) since they usually cover their head with a scarf, unlike "real" *itako*. They are ostracized by the *itako*, and have a very marginal status among shamans; they are considered more beggars than religious experts. Most of them actually do have some degree of official training with a senior *itako*, but for personal reasons could not complete their instruction.

In addition to those who do seances as a business, there are others who carry on the sacred traditions of the community without payment or prestige, such as in the case of

the village *oshtra* seance I described above. In the mountain and fishing communities, the ceremonial masters and sacrificial priests are the hunters and fishers themselves: bear and fish ceremonialism is still observed in Tsugaru without any need to involve paid religious experts. In these traditional contexts, everyone takes up the role of diviner every now and then; and all hunters are assumed to be capable of obtaining divine messages in their dreams, which are taken absolutely seriously and discussed within the group.

In short, if a researcher becomes obsessed with a hunt for fixed, permanent categories of professional shamans, he or she will only see the tip of the iceberg. These salaried and successful shamans are no more than the visible face of the tradition. Behind them are all sorts of individuals and activities, each in its own way a different expression of the "shamanic world view."

Becoming a paid full time shaman often requires more than a spiritual call, and so some choose to remain "amateur" so as better to continue serving people. One of the most capable shamans of recent time in Tsugaru refused for her whole life to call herself an *itako* or a *kamisama*.[64] While she helped hundreds of people, she remained entirely with them, as one of them, an ordinary human being, saying she was not a real "shaman." Ikegami said this about the essence of Tsugaru shamanism: the gods of Tsugaru are ***kyôku kyôkan no kami***, gods who cry together and laugh together (Ikegami 1987: 115). The same is true of their shamans.

Finally, there are the magicians and healers of Tsugaru. In the past, they were commonly called *tengaku-baba* for females, and *bosama* for males. These are derogatory terms and imply a low status. Before the advent of hospitals and licensed doctors, they

treated the sick and attended labours (Wakamori 1970: 3). Even some *itako*, assisted by others, delivered babies, and if necessary, disposed of the newborn child if the mother so wished. Blindness did not seem to stop some *bosama* from treating people with moxabustion, or functioning as midwives (Chiba 1970: 21).

The delivery of babies in Tsugaru was done in the Ainu style until after World War Two: the mother sat on the floor on a straw cushion made for her, and pulled a rope hung from the roof, called *tana* in Tsugaru (*tara* in Ainu). Midwifery thus seems a part of the function of some shamans and/or healers in Tsugaru, and there as elsewhere, its specialization is a post-Meiji development. In some remote areas in Tsugaru, non-licensed midwives attended labour until the sixties, since there were no medical doctors or hospitals nearby.

One retired midwife in northern Tsugaru told me that the reason she became a midwife was because she had weak eyesight. Her account throws an interesting light on the spiritual abilities of midwives and their connection with shamanic functions: she stated that she had a special hand that would tell her everything by touch, and so the weakness of her physical eyesight was often irrelevant (Tanaka 1999 fieldwork).

(3) The shamanic foundation of Tsugaru life

To understand the phenomenon of shamanism in a community, it is essential to examine not only the works of shamans but also those of ordinary people: how they participate in shamanic events and practice shamanic activities — how shamanism as a complex institution is maintained through the preservation of shamanic and animistic

cosmology by a variety of actions. In the previous chapter I discussed how the wellbeing of traditional Ainu society rested on not only the services of shamans but the dramatic performance of various types of sympathetic magic by villagers. We looked at diverse forms of Ainu sympathetic magic, such as the *tomante*, the bear-sending ceremony, the wind sacrifice, the ritual concerning bear mushrooms and difficult labours, and the "exorcisms" of smallpox. In this section I will briefly review counterparts for these in Tsugaru, and examine some common shamanic activities distinct to Tsugaru.[65]

Bear ceremonialism — the counterpart to the *tomante*, commonly known as *kebokai* — is a common practice among the *matagi* people of southwestern Tsugaru where bear are still being hunted, though such hunts are not very common at the present day. In essence, the Ainu and *matagi* bear rituals developed from similar early forms into two different types, due in particular to socioeconomic change in the Edo period (Ikeya 1997: 63). This development created certain differences in ritual between the Ainu and the Tsugaru *matagi*. The Tsugaru *matagi*, for example, conduct a bear ceremony when the bear is hunted, rather than capturing a cub and raising it in the village, which came increasingly to characterize the contemporary Ainu bear ceremony. The influence of Buddhism, such as chanting Buddhist *sutras*, or hoping that the bear can enter Nirvana, are absent in the former but present in the latter. As I have already noted, the bearskin dance was still practiced by all *matagi*, unlike the Ainu, among whom it became a rare regional variant of the usual practice, according to Chiri (Chiri 1973e:10-11). The "heart opening" ritual characterizes some *matagi* in Tsugaru, but according to Ikeya it is not found among the Ainu (see Ikeya 1999 for further discussion on Ainu and *matagi* hunters).[66]

As for wind sacrifices, I have not found any blizzard-taming drama in Tsugaru comparable to that of the Ainu, but Tsugaru people do use a scythe to magically repel the wind, in much the Ainu fashion. I have also discussed the various sending ceremonies and exorcisms in Tsugaru, including the exorcism of the smallpox god, and dolls and figures made of straw. During the Edo period, these exorcisms came to be performed in Tsugaru by syncretic ascetics, *yamabushi* or *shugen*.

As an example let us cite the following account of a Tsugaru *shugen*'s "doll-sending" ceremony by Wakamori, which displays striking similarities to the Ainu smallpox exorcism in which a straw doll is raised and placed at the village border or the river mouth. This in turn suggests a link between syncretic *shugen* beliefs and Ainu shamanism:

> In March of the ninth year of Tenpô (1838), the disease became widespread again, so [the *shugen*] at Daikôin temple made a pair of disease gods, male and female, about two meters tall, and conducted a *kajô-zannmai no hô* (fire sacrifice ritual) for one week. The male statue wore a black kimono, and the female one a black kimono, a lady's sash, and an ornamental hair comb. About two hundred *shugen* and *yamabushi* solemnly sent them away, raising flag(s) and carrying halberds in their hands. When they got to Aomori, the two gods were placed in a boat and sent down to the sea (Wakamori 1970:16-17).

Wakamori goes on to say how the *shugen* transformed the earlier "popular" practice of straw doll sending ceremonies into a large-scale parade influenced by religious asceticism (Wakamori 1970:17).[67] An elaborate indigenous straw doll sending ceremony, to protect against disease, known as *bonno-kami*, was still widely practiced until the early years of Meiji in the town of Ajigasawa in southwestern Tsugaru: three pairs of male and female straw dolls were raised, and they were placed at the village entrance, the exit,

and the centre. The male doll was over two meters tall and had a long sword, but the female one had none (Hirayama 1970: 92-93).

I have discussed the Sakhalin Ainu sympathetic magic to ease difficult labour, using a dog's food dish. In contrast to the strictly limited information available on this subject from the Ainu, in Tsugaru this type of magic is widespread and shows some regional variation. In essence, magic for difficult labour in Tsugaru seeks power, physical and/or spiritual. For example, a string is wrapped around the mother's stomach: the string can be one which was used at a funeral, or from a *sumô* wrestler's loincloth. A bear's intestines may be cut up and attached to a belly band; the mother may be served water in a cup used by a *sumô* wrestler; or she may be served water containing a charm purchased at Oishi temple on Mt. Iwaki, which enshrines the god of labour.

The placenta is the focus of a number of interesting Tsugaru beliefs and practices. The traditional understanding is that difficult labour is caused by a placenta which is "too strong." Therefore, after the contractions begin, the mother is served with various medicine which are known as *ena-koroshi*, placenta killers. The most common medicine is a tea brewed from a mixture of dried bush clover and needles. It appears that there was a tendency to believe that the placenta has a life of its own, reflected in stories about a placenta standing up and walking by itself. Some male elders once placed a mallet in front of a mother, trying to stop her placenta from slipping and coming out.

In the area around Goshogawara city in south-central Tsugaru, horses are believed to be the carriers of the god of labor, so the white hair of a horse is steeped in water and the fluid is served to the mother during labour. Iron, too, is believed to have spiritual

power: water used by an ironsmith to cool iron can be given to the mother (Chiba 1970: 21-22).[68]

Some shamanic practices are distinct to Tsugaru, with no direct Ainu counterparts. As an extension of Mt. Iwaki worship, Tsugaru people commonly divine according to the appearance of Mt. Iwaki. While this practice is closely associated with rice cultivation, its roots may lie in the volcanic activities of Mt. Iwaki, which lasted up to the mid nineteenth century.

In spring after the snow melted, the traditional farming season began in Tsugaru. This is said to be marked by the migration of wild rats, which ride the remaining snow chunks on water from the mountain. About this time, the shape of the remaining snow on Mt. Iwaki is said to be that of an ascending dog and a descending dog, both with their tails sticking straight up. Indeed, there is a proverbial expression, "Iwaki-san no managoyomi" ("Mt. Iwaki's visual calendar"). Miyata reports that up to about World War Two, there used to be an elder in each rice-farming village who could foretell the success or failure of the rice crop that year by observing the snow remaining on Mt. Iwaki (Miyata 1970: 288-289).

Another agriculture-related activity pertaining to shamanism is the rain sacrifice. In the village of Kase, Kiraichi's neighbor to the south, rice farmers gathered during the driest part of the summer, at the waterfall known as Fujino-taki, to conduct an annual rain sacrifice. Several dozens of villagers gathered at an open space in front of a small shrine of the mountain god. They had previously made a straw doll, put a white dress on it, and placed it inside a straw *enjtko*, the round baby-carrying basket. A priest would chant a funeral *sutra*, and a ceremonial master would lead the way. As the baby basket was

thrown into the falls, women started their ritualized crying, inviting the rest to join in vocal mourning. The ceremony has been discontinued today, since the Odagawa dam was erected recently and the water supply has been regularized (Wagafurusato o saguru kai, 1998)

Figure 4.19:
Magonai village fertility stones

A very particular form of stone worship has been preserved in the village of Magonai in southern Tsugaru. A communal shrine, maintained by the villagers without any resident priest or monk, holds round stones which are believed to have the power to make women conceive a child. The stones are dressed in a colorful costume and kept safely on the altar, until a visitor asks to hold one of them. The villager opens the shrine and lets the visitor inside. The visitor must write the names of her and her partner on a piece of paper, which will be offered to the altar by the attendant villager. The attendant will then hand the stone gently to the visitor (see Figure 4.18). If her wish comes true, she is supposed to come back to give offerings to the stone. Indeed, the shrine is full of such donations: baby dolls, baby dress, flowers, toys, etc....

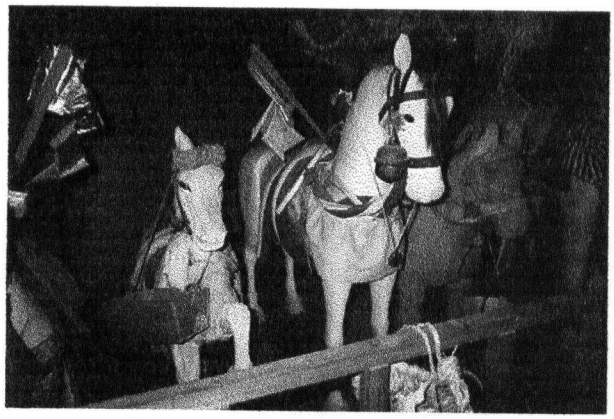


Figure 4.20: Horse images

The Magonai shrine also holds numerous statues of white horses, in a warehouse beside the shrine. These horses, well dressed and decorated,

have all been donated by local people (Tanaka, fieldwork 1996; see Figure 4.20). As I mentioned above, in southern Tsugaru horses are considered to be the carriers of the god of labour. However, in some central Asian Altaic cultures, horses, especially white or white-ribboned ones, are sacrificed to deities. Thus the association of stone worship with the white horse statues at Magonai seems to point to the influence of an ancient ritual involving horse sacrifice (personal conversation with Dr. Svetlana P. Tiukhteneva [Altay Republic], June 1999).[69]

Last but not least, dreams also play a key role in transmitting important information to the people of Tsugaru. *Matagi*, like their Ainu counterparts, rely on dreams in their hunting activities, especially those dreamed by the leader of the party. Dreams are an important aspect of everyday lives of ordinary people, and to this day, people openly speak about their dreams, and try to interpret them in meaningful ways (in contrast to some other cultures where dreams are not to be disclosed to others casually). I grew up exposed to this attitude towards dreams, which was general in my family, and which holds true to this day.

Dreams brought our family a treasure we would not trade for anything. During World War Two, my father spent some time in the village of Kiraichi with my grandmother's family. My great-grandfather, Kasai Manzoku, went to the mountain with his peers to work, and one night, he had a dream. In this dream, he encountered a powerful dragon spirit, which told him that he must find it in the mountain and bring it home. Next day he told his companions about the dream and so they began searching. They found the "dragon," and my great-grandfather carried it down from the mountain to his home on his back, witnessed by my father in a state of awe. It was a large ammonite fos-

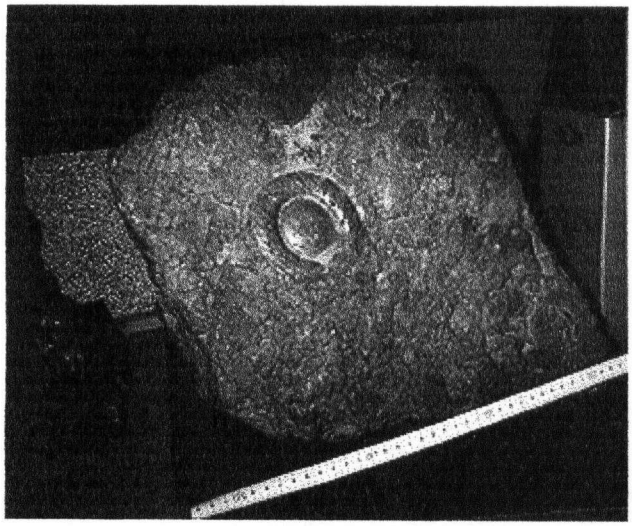


Figure 4.21:
The ammonite fossil from the mountain

sil in a cube of rock nearly a foot square and deep! He brought home this huge spiral gift from aeons of years ago, and the cosmic dragon is still resident in its home in Kiraichi today (see the picture to the left — the white object at lower right is a tape measure).

(4) Shamanic verses transmitted by itako

In Chapter Three I discussed Ainu sacred verses, ***kamuy yukar*** and *oyna*, transmitted by women: the pivotal characters of the former are natural deities, those of the latter are half-human, half-god shamans. Chiri considers that the Ainu shamans, originally both male and female, took part in magico-religious performances involving dance and song, imitating their prey, and that the verbal aspects of these later developed into sacred verses transmitted by women, and epic poetry by men. I discussed how *oyna* appear to be the result of foreign influence from Siberia, and that it is a later genre than ***kamuy yukar***. I also pointed out that *oyna* is linked to the act of crying, which can transport a shamaness into an altered state of consciousness.

Let us now turn to *itako*, the shaman-poets of Tsugaru. As already noted, *itako* can be distinguished from ***kamisama*** on several grounds, including the training in and the use of specific sacred verses as part of their seance. These verses are known as *itako sat-*

mon, a sung narrative whose distinct style is known as ***itako-gatari*** (***itako*** narrative). It is a very important function, and unfortunately this is one area in which ***kamisama*** cannot fill in for them unless they have themselves gone through the requisite training.

The ***itako***'s repertoire of sacred verses is diverse, as we have already said, and it includes ***sutras*** which are either heavily influenced by Buddhist writings or directly borrowed from them, as well as long epic verses pertaining to the history of the Tsugaru people. Below, I will first briefly examine the different subgenera of ***itako saimon***, and attempt to isolate some important pre-Buddhist features. I will then discuss the possible link between oral history and shamanism, using ***itako*** as an example. This discussion will bring us to a point of reference to a similar theme found in Ainu shamanism.

In fact, this is a huge issue, and I am as yet poorly equipped to discuss it in detail. However, I set down what I know here for the purpose of opening up a new and hopefully a productive approach towards studying Ainu and Tsugaru shamans as storytellers/ oral historians.

(a) Itako saimon: sacred verses of the itako

(i) Buddhist influence on *itako saimon* and its limits

Itako saimon includes verses which clearly display Buddhist influence, and this has led to a common impression that ***itako*** are the agents of Buddhism, and their "origin" is rooted in that religion. While this is undeniably true to some extent, I am going to argue here that Buddhism is only one parent of the ***itako*** tradition, and it only exercised its influence at a relatively late stage of its development. By looking at some of the more

Buddhist-influenced sutras, we find that borrowed concepts such as "Hell" and "Heaven/ Paradise" are not faithful to Buddhist ideology, but instead serve as vehicles to express indigenous cosmology. The Buddhist influence thus remains surface rather than fundamental.

The concept of "Hell," *jigoku*, used in *itako saimon* displays the following semantic properties:

(a) "Hell" is for the weak.

(b) "Hell" is a sad place rather than a painful one.

(c) "Hell" is familiar and intimate.

(d) "Hell" is good because it is communal.

"Hell" is for the weak because the main residents of "Hell" in *itako saimon* are women and children — there are men as well, but their existence is less stressed. Both women and children go to "Hell" not because of their sins but because of tragedy and misfortune, such as early death or failure to have a child (and thus not having anyone to look after her).

In *itako saimon*, "Hell" is a tear-jerker, a place to share mutual sadness and pity for misfortunes, rather than a painful imprisonment for the sinful. For instance, expressions such as *awarenari* ("pitiful") *kanashii* ("sad") and *namida* ("tears") make frequent appearances in the *itako saimon* called "Jigoku sagashi" ("Hell search"), a special verse performed at the annual shaman festival on Mt. Osore:

Pitiful is the desperation of women.

If she has no child, how will she make a living tomorrow?

(---------)

Is there another sad Hell in the further north?

The sad Hell follows it.

Is there a Blood Pond Hell?

Blood Pond Hell follows it.

It is infinitely deep and infinitely wide,

In that vast pond,

You know that

Bamboo roots,

Pitiful is that manner, dig and pull

Blood flowing from the nails,

How are we going to make our living tomorrow?

Hard training of *sarira*

How could one compensate?

Pitiful it is to climb the mountain to get to meet each other.

(Koigawa 1953: 54)

The expression "pitiful" (*awarenari*) serves as a refrain throughout the verse. Note also the emphasis on the issue of survival in *this* world, as in "How are we going to make our living tomorrow?" which transfers the agony of Hell to the world of the living. In other part of the same verse, "tears" (*namida*) characterizes the sorrowful passage to "Hell":

The young who do not make it to two, three, or ten,

Bend themselves down on the path of the Six Ways

Hotoke accompanies them in the seven ways

There is the passage to the Pure Land

There is the passage to Azusa,

There is the passage to Hell,

There is the passage to this world,

There is the passage to Buddha,

Can you see the walk in the path that is walked,

can you see the father's tears,

can you see the mother's tears,

Father's tears are blue

Mother's tears are black

Even if you called upon the clouds,

No flowing tears can be stopped.

(Koigawa 1953: 56)

The concept of "Hell" as it appears in this verse really designates the underworld, where the dead go, which is in essence neither good nor bad. "Hell" in this sense is a Buddhist guise under which to preserve an earlier indigenous belief about the underworld. Moreover, although I cannot demonstrate this in full detail here, the whole tone of this particular verse expresses a spirit of mourning, the loss of the beloved and the desire to send the departing soul safely away to the next world. Interestingly, as much as the verse is supposed to evoke the souls of the deceased when chanted at the shaman festival, it also

maintains key features of *indô watashi*, the last address to the soul of a newly departed person to guide it in the passage to the other world.

Furthermore, the "map" of "Hell" described in this verse is full of familiar aspects of this world, and the basic assumption about its membership is that "Hell" does not discriminate among people on the basis of earthly power. Hell is an intimate place, especially for the powerless, since it is a meeting place between the dead and the living, the deceased infant and its mother. "Hell" provides an assurance for the weak that death is actually not the end of everything, and that the dead are never far away. The agony of the dead is released through the agony of the living, and vise versa: the living and the dead work side by side in "Hell."

Finally, in light of the above discussion, we see that one salient function of "Hell" is the empowerment of the weak, by maintaining and strengthening the bond between the dead and the living. In "Hell" one is reunited with familiar faces: as prisoners in Siberian labor camps were said to remark, the climate's bad but the company's good. Whatever happens in this world, there is always "Hell" to look forward to. This familiarity and intimacy with "Hell" may well stem from an earlier belief that the underworld is not a place of punishment, but simply where the ancestors are.

Let us now turn to the concept of paradise in *itako* saimon. Paradise, *gokuraku*, reveals the following semantic properties:

(a) Paradise is distant and foreign.

(b) Paradise is sad because it is not communal.

Paradise-related verses are much shorter than those related to "Hell," and they tend to lack realistic details and hence to remain abstract. In an *ttako saimon* titled "Gokuraku" ("Paradise"), Paradise is depicted as distant and alien:

> Paradise cuckoos hide in deep mountains
> Their shapes are not seen; only their cries
> Paradise mountain for the departing souls
> What ghosts are there to climb?
> Cannot be seen, never to return.

In this passage, Paradise is depicted as a place of invisible beings far away, a place of no return. This is in striking contrast to the realistic and detailed depiction of "Hell," and the immediacy of its residents and their actions. Once you go to Paradise, you are considered causally unapproachable, and the link between the living and the dead is weakened.

It appears that Paradise is a more challenging concept for Tsugaru people to understand than "Hell." Just as it is in the "Hell" verse, "crying" and "sadness" are the media by which the living communicate with the dead in Paradise, but because by its nature Paradise has little room for sadness, such empathic attempts are limited and awkward:

> What regrets do I have in my mind,
> When I meet my sweetheart in Paradise?
> When I look at my sweetheart's tomb,
> Oh Paradise, my tears fall down before I see it.
> Sitting on the river bank of Paradise
> Rain appears to pour from the cloudless sky.

Plum tree blooms in the fence of Paradise,

Its branches and flowers

Are blown down by the morning wind

The Paradise in this short verse ends with the depiction of the Blind God of Paradise, who is a musician, playing the ***shamisen*** to comfort himself, since he "cannot worship the stars, cannot worship the moon."

Thus Paradise appears to be a strange admixture of sadness and alienation with a surface and hardly welcomed comfort; moreover, it is not necessarily a bright place either. At least in the account given by *itako* shamanism, there is little for Tsugaru people to relate to in Paradise, or perhaps little it can offer to them. Paradise symbolizes eternal loss and separation from this world, unlike "Hell," which for all its faults at least remains connected to it. Paradise, in short, breaks the bond between the living and the dead, erecting a "fence" between the two. It is like a mountain top: an object of admiration, high above everything else and splendid to look at from a distance, but isolated and cold to those who happen to be situated there.

At the same time, perhaps this very limitation validates the function of Paradise, because it is profoundly sad, a place where even the parental bond may be lost. This profound sadness, and its paradoxical nature, makes this Paradise more "real" to those who seek an immediate and pragmatic relationship with the dead through shamanism.

In indigenous beliefs, neither Hell nor Paradise exist as such, and the influence of these earlier pre-Buddhist ideas are still found in *itako satmon*. Although *itako satmon* borrowed structurally and thematically from Buddhism and Buddhist sutras, their influ-

ence remained at a cosmetic level. These verses express the distinct, shamanic, world view where the underworld is essentially neither good nor bad, but is instead a mirror image of this world.

(ii) Origin tales

Itako saimon include historical epics of the Tsugaru people. "Oiwakisan ichidaiki" ("Mt. Iwaki life history"), for example, explains how Princess Anju became the deity of Mt. Iwaki. The story is a famous sung-narrative, *sekkyôjôruri*, dating from mediaeval times in Japan, and it is not known why and how this story linked to Mt. Iwaki became widely known throughout Japan, or how it came to be linked with Mt. Iwaki in the first place. The names in the story, Anju and her brother Zushi, are not readily explainable in Japanese either. As I have already mentioned, Mt. Iwaki was originally called Asobe forest, and it was supposed to have became a huge mountain overnight, as a result of a volcanic eruption. In the *itako saimon* about the origin of Mt. Iwaki, Princess Anju, the daughter of Judge Iwaki, flies to Mt. Iwaki and enters it, thereby becoming the tutelary deity; and this was when Mt. Iwaki expanded into its present form. This final part is unique to Tsugaru, and not found in more common *jôruri* versions.

Princess Anju and her brother Zushi were separated from their parents and ended up in slavery. The ending of the story is usually tragic, since they cannot reunite in life: Anju flies home to Mt. Iwaki as a bird. Interestingly, the *itako* saimon "Oiwakisan ichidaiki" retains a similar form to the Ainu *oyna*: it is a first person narrative where Princess Anju tells in her own words how she became the god of Mt. Iwaki. It is thus safe to say that as far as the *itako*'s version is concerned, the story is partly rooted in classical shamanic trance-possession, which Miyata has pointed out as indicative of the ancient form

of an oracle (Miyata 1970: 285-286). Again, this stylistic feature is unique to the *itako*'s version in Tsugaru, and it is missing in more popular versions (Kokugaku-in daigaku minzokugaku kenkyû-kai 1967).

Another well known epic verse performed by *itako* is *Oshira saimon*, accompanying the *oshira* seance. *Oshira saimon* is otherwise known as "Kiman chôja" ("Wealthy Kiman"), "Mannô-chôja" ("Wealthy Mannô"), or "Sendan-kurige" ("Chestnut-colored hair Sendan"). The *oshira* is a pair of male and female statues carved from mulberry wood, supposed to be agricultural and sericultural deities. Their origin is explained by a legend which suggests a nomadic background. An oral tradition relates that a girl fell in love with a horse in her family's stable while her father was away. When her father returned and found out about their affair, he killed the horse, and the girl flew away into the sky, riding the horse's head.[70] (Indeed, the male *oshira* is often represented with a horse-shaped head.) The father in desperation sought divine aid, but she never returned. However, a divine message came to him that white bugs and black bugs would fall down from the sky, the former resembling the Princess and the latter the horse; and this was how silkworms were introduced to the human world.[71] This tale, widespread throughout northern Honshû along with the *oshira* seance, is another indication of a link between Tsugaru and north-central Asia, where horses are commonly sacrificed to deities and hence seen as divine vehicles.

The epic tales discussed above incorporate elements which suggest the existence of oral histories, transmitted by designated individuals in Tsugaru, which remained largely separate from Buddhism and written history after it and the state came to influence the activities of the *itako*.

(iii) *Itako* as oral historians and storytellers

It is not clear when the first *itako* appeared in Tsugaru. However, one *itako* who used to come to the Kawakura Jizô-son temple in northern Tsugaru said that her master was the sixty-seventh generation *itako* in her line (Hanazono 1997). Unfortunately, we know virtually nothing about the exact profession of the *itako* or even if they called themselves "*itako*" in such early times. The blindness which has come to characterize them today may not necessarily have been a requirement before the Edo period, though blind musicians and secular priests from southern Japan are known to have gathered at the port of Tosa during the rule of the Andô.

Nevertheless, we can be certain about one thing with regard to the ancestors of the *itako* in Tsugaru: they were divine oral historians and storytellers.

The existence of oral historians/storytellers in Tsugaru is mentioned in mediaeval records. They are said to have lived in "storytellers'" villages (*katari* in Japanese, *itak* in Ainu) but except for a very few, these villages cannot be found on any map. These ancient oral historian/storyteller possessed tools which could assist their narrative construction, such as story stones, story boards, and story sticks (see Figure 4.21, from Sasaki 1990: these examples are in the possession of the Wada family in Iizume, Goshogawara). The *Tsugarusôshi*, written in 1625, describes the destruction of these villages by the Tsugaru clan:

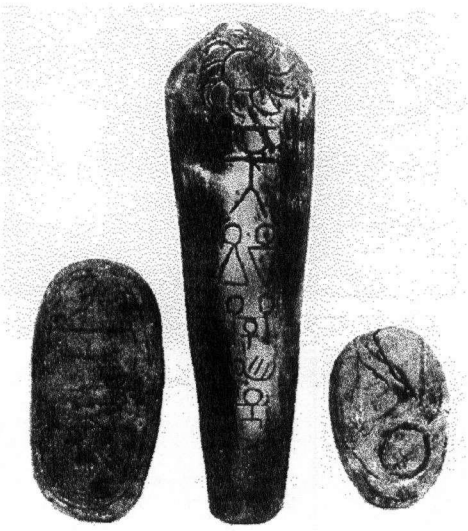


Figure 4.22:
Traditional storytelling tools

> Since ancient times, there have been storyteller's villages in the *Soto-sangun* area of Tsugaru, and old epics and history have been transmitted from generation to generation. These villages are to this day called *Katari*. There were written documents known as *Kataribe gimon chô (Storytellers' questions, with notes)* which collected the stories of the village elders. In the eighth month of the first year of Keichô (1596), Ouura Tamenobu banned and burnt these documents, and thus no one transmits them now.
>
> But prior to this, in the eighth month of the second year of Bunji (1186), Andô Sadasue had respected them and had made the storytellers' village tax-exempt. He documented their ancient epics and history in writing, so as to establish his base in Tsugaru.[72]

Sasaki discusses how in the ancient Yamato state, storytellers transmitted the epics and histories pertaining to their own clan and told stories as part of religious ceremonies. The *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*, the written versions of these legendary and mythical epics, were not meant to be national histories, but were rather aimed at a local and limited audience (Sasaki 1990:194-195).

The sacred verses and epics of oral historians are only meaningful when placed in the shamanic context, where the speeches unified the complex and diverse rituals and ceremonies that enacted and sanctioned the divine origin of a people. The storytellers' ability to remember and smoothly deliver sacred history relied on formulae, refrains and other expressive devices to facilitate the rhythmical and melodious delivery of the words. In Tsugaru, as we saw above, there were individuals who had the same function, who appear to have had a special and privileged status under Andô rule, but were persecuted by the Tsugaru *han*. But, as Sasaki argues, their function was continued by later

shamans, *ttako* in particular, whose story repertoire includes divine epics such as "Oiwakisan ichidaiki" and "Kiman chôja," which are still performed as part of their seance. Indeed, even today, the *Oshtra satmon* serves as a pretext for prophecy and divination by the *ttako* (Sasaki 1990: 212).

Seen in this light, inherent in the shaman as an oral historian is the intellectual power of creating and shaping the divine identity of a people, fixing or negotiating the boundaries among the humans and deities to achieve specific goals. External political motivations which might influence such final goals may or may not coincide with the intentions of a particular people, or a shaman. However, if the two do coincide, political power need not be foreign to a shaman, as is the case with a theocracy.

Now let us go back to where we began in this section: what does this tell us about the link between Tsugaru and the Ainu? We have seen that fundamental to both *tusukur* and *ttako* is the act of delivering divine messages explaining the causes of certain things, including things which pertain to the origin of their peoples and their customs. In both cases, the distinction between "singing" and shamanizing is irrelevant to shamanic practice, as shamanizing is a highly verbal, as well as musical, activity; and in both cases, storytelling, and hence the manipulation of words, is a central shamanic skill inseparable from the act of curing, divining, and repelling bad spirits.

Moreover, the shamanic tradition is supported by all sorts of spiritual experts whose specialty tends to focus more to one side or the other of the healer/historian spectrum: entertainers, actors, magicians, midwives, ceremonial masters, masseurs and so forth. Later, as it became less respectable to be a shaman, these lesser forms of expertise became all that were visible to outsiders: shamans came to wear their more mundane

skills like a cloak. But the shaman as divine historian presides over them, as he or she alone can define and restore the ultimate human relationship with the universe, past, present, and future.[73]

Last but not least important, I should stress that I have no intention of idealizing the *itako*. I wish only to emphasize that they carry on essential elements of the shamanic tradition in northern Japan. Given that traditionally trained blind *itako* are disappearing and being replaced by *kamisama*, it is questionable whether or not the function of oral historian will be successfully transferred to the *kamisama* in the absence of the appropriate motives and the education needed for them to be able to carry on in a similar role.

(5) Recruiting, initiation, training and masterhood: Itako and kamisama

(a) Culture vs. nature

In Chapter Three, I discussed the recruiting, initiation, training and masterhood of Ainu shamans, *tusukur* and *wuetnkarakur*, where transmission of shamanic skills and knowledge depend chiefly on family heritage and spontaneous calling, and the endorsement of the shamanic role often requires community blessing delivered through respected male elders. In Tsugaru, the situation is considerably more complex and variable. At one end we have a feudal-based *itako* system, where candidacy is defined by blindness and the parents' decision to apprentice a woman to a master *itako*, with whom the girl is expected to obtain ascetic training for several years until she receives her spirit guide through the initiation ritual. At the other end, we have non-specialized individuals in remote villages who act as ceremonial masters and divine healers for the

village, whose role and functions are transmitted maternally to daughters (-in-law). Between the two we have ***kamisama***, who, like many shamans found in Siberia or among the Ainu (***tusukur***), often experience shamanic illness, obtain visions and spirit guides spontaneously overnight, and claim that they learn the divine way directly from the spirits. Family does not play a crucial role in transmitting a ***kamisama***'s status or power, but family succession does occasionally occur.

Though it is beyond the scope of the present work to determine the exact explanation for the co-existence of these different levels of recruitment, training, and specialization, it seems common sense to state that the diversity in these features among the above groups indicates different stages of adaptation to and integration with foreign influences such as Buddhism and Shintô, and the evolution of the idea of fixed, permanent magico-religious experts as primary authorities.

(i) Defined by blindness: *Itako*

To become an ***itako*** was one of the few paths open to a blind girl in Tsugaru if her family wished her to survive. Another was to become a *goze*, a blind travelling musician. Blindness was relatively common in Tsugaru until before World War Two, due primarily to poverty and the low level of hygiene. It is not clear when blindness became the determining factor to become ***itako***, but it is often associated with oral poets in traditional societies (cf. Lord 1960). In the case of ***itako***, blindness determines the candidacy for a profession which requires inner sight, and there might have been a prior indigenous conception of special spiritual ability innate in a blind person. Weak sight also appears to have been a significant factor influencing the choice to enter the profession of mid-

wifery in Tsugaru, which was, in the past, sometimes included in the *itako*'s work, as already mentioned.

The training and preparation of novice *itako* in Tsugaru can be summarized as follows. A blind young girl would usually be put into apprenticeship by her parents, who would bring her to a master *itako*, typically when she was in her early teens. The parents would bring rice, *miso* (soy bean paste), charcoal and other necessities for a month to the master's house on the day she moved in. The training, which usually lasted several years, included general domestic work as well as bathing in cold water every morning, chanting prayers, memorizing *sutras*, the manner and methods of rituals and purifications, and observing the *seances* of her master. The apprentices were also given new names.

Their initiation rites took place after they successfully completed ascetic training. Their initiation was called *kamitsuke-shiki*, "ceremony to install a deity" or *tamashiire-shiki*, "spirit entering ceremony," and it is a sacred ritual by which *itako* are wedded to the *kami*. In essence, the ritual served to identify the guiding deity or protective *kami* for each *itako*. Although there were many local variations in the methods of preparation and the initiation ritual itself, it generally involved one to two weeks of austerities guided by a master *itako*, during which the apprentice was given final training, including chanting Buddhist *sutras* or incantations, sets of specialized sacred verses, repeated purifications using cold water, and secret methods. No fire was used in this initiation rite even during the winter.

The day of the initiation, the apprentice dressed up as a bride about to attend a wedding, then she changed to a pure white dress and sat on rice bags placed in front of the

altar. The apprentice repeated the chant, and the master *itako* threw rice cakes at her or hit her with a rosary until she lost consciousness. Alternatively, several other *itako* went round and round the apprentice, beating drums and bells and chanting incantations until she lost consciousness.

As soon as the apprentice fell down from the rice bales, the master asked her loudly, "Which *kami* have you got?" and the apprentice respond by specifying the *kami* which had come to her. This moment marked the birth of a new *itako*. That evening, there was a ceremony called *seishin-hiraki*, "mind or spirit opening," which involved a feast with all of the *itako* who had assisted with the initiation. The first spirit possession for the new *itako* would be limited to the ancestors of the master *itako*, but after this initial performance, the *itako* would become an independent practitioner (Shibata n.d., Sakurai 1988, 1970).

(ii) Invited by the spirits: *kamisama*

In contrast to *itako*, who go through strict training and fixed rituals in order to become shamans, *gomiso* or *kamisama* are self-proclaimed, that is, they depend primarily on their own relationship with the spirits. More specifically, they do not rely on a fixed master-apprentice relationship, as the *itako* do. Their ability is often obtained suddenly, though to maintain and develop it further always requires strict training.

There are two main ways in which a person obtains this type of shamanic ability. The first and more common one is to enter a course of shamanic training or asceticism under a master shaman, or to pray intensively to divine forces, as a way of coping with a life crisis so as to obtain a vision or hear a voice dictating the shamanic vocation. The sec-

ond one is to obtain shamanic ability overnight. Some ***kamisama*** try to find a successor, but unless this is decided by one's own will, a successor will not last for very long. Thus it is difficult to maintain a lineage among ***kamisama***.

The guiding spirits or deities attached to ***kamisama*** are diverse: Amaterasu the Sun Goddess; the dragon or snake deity; Kuanyin; the mountain god; the spirit of Kûkai, the founder of esoteric Shingon Buddhism; the Hachiman deity; the Fudô deity; and village tutelary deities, among others. These guiding spirits are usually not inherited from anyone else, including relatives: according to Eda, the attached deities are strictly personal, and others cannot even understand them (Eda 1970: 337). However, this does not mean that family succession never occurs: Naoe reports a male ***kamisama*** who succeeded to his mother's profession (Naoe 1970: 263).

The method of training is not standardized. A ***kamisama*** follows her spirit guide, and finds the answers she needs. The training might include cold water ablutions, fasting, not eating fish and animal products, religious austerities in shrines and temples, and going to Mt. Akakura. Training and rituals are not the priorities of a ***kamisama***, though; it is more important for her to use her talents, that is, to help those who come to her. Hence, there is no requirement of official initiation by anyone — in the strictest sense, only the spirits and divinities can truly "initiate" a ***kamisama***, and she is validated by her clients.

This should not be taken to imply that a ***kamisama*** is a puppet of the spirits. As I have said elsewhere, no spirit or no deity is considered perfect in Tsugaru. Therefore, it is up to a ***kamisama*** to cultivate a relationship with spirit beings. In this light, we can begin to see that what is problematic in saying that a ***kamisama*** is "chosen by spirits" is

the emphasis on the unidirectional nature of interaction with the spirit beings, whereas in reality, even divine communication is a two-way street. A ***kamisama*** masters the truth that evil and good are two side of the same coin: the face a deity shows depends on how you approach it.

However, their peer relationship with other shamans and priests is also very important for many ***kamisama***, and thus some of them may consider entering Buddhism or going on pilgrimage with shamans as a means of initiation or for the purpose of improvement. As a matter of fact, one vital element in the shamanic education for a ***kamisama*** seems to lie in these relations among shamans, and although their education is not systematized as it is with ***itako***, ***kamisama*** respect their mentors and other senior ***kamisama***.

Today, most ***kamisama*** possess licences as religious practitioners, a practice which owes much to the Religious Corporation Act established after World War Two. Other ***kamisama*** or religious authorities usually suggest that they obtain a license (which is often as easy as paying registration fees), but some get licenses because of ostracism by other ***kamisama***. Many ***kamisama*** are affiliated with Shintô-related religious schools, but Shingon Buddhism is also popular. However, neither the licence nor the affiliation with organized religion makes ***kamisama*** subordinate to any established religious structure: they are governed only by their own deities (Eda 1970).

(iii) The "old ladies" of the village

In some remote villages in Aomori prefecture, the traditional ***oshira*** "seance" is done without the help of specialized and professional shamans like ***itako***, as we have men-

tioned. "Old ladies," or the ladies of the house which enshrines the *oshira*, are responsible for transmitting knowledge about the *oshira* seance and its attendant traditions. This may be a legacy from the past, when more complex and diverse shamanic events were organized by the villagers, and certain villagers took turns filling the role of shaman, those who were better at communicating with the divine under any given circumstances.

Among the Ainu it was traditional that every extended family relied on a *tusukur*; every community recognized spiritual experts, including shamans. It appears that in the past, a similar situation existed in Tsugaru. There was a tendency for each village to have its shaman, a *kamisama*, who also had a holy site of worship near the village, separate from the already Shintoized village shrines. This is still observable in Kiraichi: a local *kamisama* from Kiraichi preserves a holy site of worship on the mountain slope near the Oda river. Both *kamisama* and *itako* came under the influence of Buddhism and the syncretic temples in southern Tsugaru patronized by the Tsugaru *han* in Edo period; however, the influence has been less permanent in other areas of Tsugaru (Sakurai 1970: 309-310). As it is still common in Tsugaru to find villages whose core consists of a tight group of relatives and extended families, there should be no reason why the origin of such a village *kamisama* and the structure of her clientele should be considered separate from her kin.

(6) Division of labour by gender: feminization of shamans in Tsugaru

In Chapter Three I discussed gender discrimination in Ainu society, and the separation between the shamanic function and the "religious" function, the former assigned to women, and the latter to men, a division of labor which is endangered today because of the general bias against both women and shamans among the Ainu. I also reviewed possible reasons for the continuing decline in the status of women and shamans in Ainu society.

Because of the strong tendency in both academia and mainstream Japanese society to represent the Ainu as a "pure" and pristine race having little or no contact with other peoples in Japan until very recently, research on how organized religions such as Buddhism might have influenced them has been almost entirely neglected. This neglect in turn has made it all the more difficult to understand the motivation behind the changing status of women and shamans in Ainu society and in Tsugaru, since religious influence may have played a critical part in this evolution.

In this section, I will survey the evolution of the gender-related division of shamanic labour in Tsugaru, and how the relationship between male and female shamans and their role and functions went through changes during the Edo period and after the Meiji Restoration, due mainly to the influence of syncretic Buddhism, both the faith itself and the Meiji attempts to restrict it. The historical transformation of Tsugaru shamans may in turn help us to form a new perspective to better understand the situation among the Ainu.

(a) The influence of shugen during Edo: a hierarchy in Tsugaru shamanism

Although the shamanic profession is dominated by women in Tsugaru today, such was not the case until at least the Meiji restoration. As can still be seen to this day to some extent, early shamanism in Tsugaru involved the collaboration of both male and female shamans. During the Edo period, for example, *ttako* often married blind secular monks known as *bosama*, who were both healers and epic singers: they travelled together to perform seances and other services of a magico-religious nature for the villagers. Although we have virtually no written records concerning Tsugaru shamans prior to the Edo period, this coupling of *ttako* and *bosama* may well be a continuation of an earlier tradition, where the village chief and his wife (or a close female relative) worked side by side in shamanic ceremonies. This in fact is not only an ancient Ainu tradition but one that was common among the "Japanese" to the south.[74]

During the Edo period, however, many indigenous shamans of Tsugaru came under the direct influence of syncretic *shugen* ascetics, an exclusively male group, who not only propagated Buddhist values (including male chauvinism)[75] but also passed on some of their esoteric knowledge. *Shugen* is a sect of Buddhism believed to have been founded by Enno Ozuno during the Nara period, which spread widely during Kamakura, but in practice, they were syncretic mountain worshippers of many different varieties, in different regions. Although *shugen* are said to have been in Tsugaru since at least the Kamakura period, it was not until Edo that they became prominent.

Shugen worked closely with the Buddhist temples patronized by Tsugaru *han* during the Edo period, as I have mentioned, as well as maintaining the sacred site on Mt. Akakura to continue their esoteric pursuits. This, coupled with the government insis-

tence that *itako* and other shamans obtain licenses and training from the Hôon-ji temple in Hirosaki, helped them to secure a prominent place among the shamans in Tsugaru. These *shugen* were called *hôin-san* in northern Japan, and they were highly respected by the commoners, though in actuality their services remained too expensive for ordinary people. In Tsugaru, their clients were mostly upper-class *samurai* or wealthy merchants and land owners; but they functioned as leaders of various groups of indigenous shamans who served the impoverished majority directly (Wakamori 1970:15-17). *Shugen* also played a major role in promoting Buddhist values among the *matagi*.

But the rise of *shugen* also meant the establishment of a distinction which had not existed before, in the interest of men. Sakurai criticizes the standard position of Shintô historians, which insists that ancient Japanese ceremonials were guided by the idea of *kegare* (impurity), and that women, who undergo menstruation and childbirth, are by and large barred from becoming ceremonial masters. He argues that the concept of *kegare* came to be obsessively exploited by rigid and unimaginative esoteric Buddhists, whose advocates concentrated on removing impurity and followed a strict life style to avoid it. He argues that women have been central to religious ceremonies in traditional communities in the Japanese archipelago, and have been at the same time shamanesses and ceremonial masters. In his view, which I feel is correct, the esoteric sect of Buddhism combined with indigenous mountain worship, and gave its official blessing to male shamans and secular monks in place of traditional shamanesses as its representatives. Women thus began to be excluded from religious matters, from the mountains, sacred sights, and major temple events (Sakurai 1988: 52-55).

This influence is still undeniable even in Tsugaru, where Mt. Iwaki worship became an exclusively male activity, and various taboos against women were held by the ***matagi*** and others. The traditional shamanesses such as ***itako*** thus became subordinate to the ***shugen***. In my view, some of the male-centric bias that exists in Tsugaru culture is pre-Buddhist, but most of it is the work of Buddhists, ***shugen*** in particular. The question is, does the male-centric influence of Buddhism and its syncretic associates end at the Tsugaru Strait? If so, how does one account for similar developments among the Ainu, which I discussed in the previous chapter, including the monopolizing of mountains by men?[76] This question deserves serious attention, though it would take me too far afield to pursue it here.

(b) The "feminization" process after the Meiji Restoration

In 1868, the imperial Meiji government promulgated a decree to separate Buddhism from Shintô. Their attempt to promote Shintô as the state religion gave rise to an anti-Buddhism movement, and friction between Shintô and Buddhist authorities. At the same time, various popular and indigenous forms of worship throughout Japan came to be seen as a national disgrace, a product of savage minds, by the new rulers of this instant "modern" nation. Shamans who did not conform to Shintô were thus damned on both counts, and the more prominent their role, the more determined the attacks were. Thus, in Tsugaru, syncretic ***shugen*** met the same fate as everywhere else in Japan: its practitioners all but disappeared in public, though most of them changed their profession to Shintô priest or Buddhist monk. They were no longer officially shamans but became the servants of religious organizations.

Shugen thus lost its influence over indigenous shamans in Tsugaru, and, upon this, the feminization of the shamanic profession began. Even though the ***itako*** came under constant attack by official media and educators, they survived by going underground or disguising themselves as ***kamisama***. In the absence of powerful male leaders, ***kamisama*** as well began building their own places of worship in Akakura, and they eventually reclaimed this sacred site from organized religion. Ironically, the licensing and regulation of the profession of ***itako*** during the Edo period left ***itako*** and other legalized shamans the only heirs of the esoteric knowledge that had originated in ***shugen***. But in the hands of these female shamans, this once esoteric learning was valued for its practical use, and was applied to everyday circumstances.

(c) Ancestral services

In Tsugaru, as we have said, women have the major responsibility for maintaining a good relationship with the ancestors, and the dead in general. Like the Ainu to their north, Tsugaru people celebrate their ancestral festival around the time of ***obon*** in the middle of summer, but with one major difference: in Tsugaru there are always ***itako*** and other shamans to mediate between the dead and the living. These midsummer "shaman festivals" of Tsugaru long retained female-centred features such as unrestricted sexual license for all mature women, reminiscent of the Dionysian feast held by Ainu women during their ancestral festival.[77] This similarity suggests a link in both cases to a common origin in a fertility cult. Mourning for the dead is accompanied by feasts, dance, musical performances, and market activities, as we will see later in this chapter with the description of the festival at Kawakura.

The guiding assumption for both Ainu and Tsugaru ancestral services is that ancestors have dual roles, dead but irrevocably connected with the living, and thus are ideal representatives to petition higher deities for a response to prayers and requests. Women hold the key to the family's continuation, as the bridge between the two invisible but inescapable family groups, the ancestors and the future generation.

The role that Tsugaru women take in ancestral services should not be seen as inevitable or universal — in some societies men are in charge of ancestral services. The fact that to this day, women remain the primary caretakers of the dead in both Tsugaru and among the Ainu indicates the strength of their common cultural foundation. It is also important to note that in some Ainu communities shamanesses are believed to deliver only the message of the ancestors, ***ekashi itak***, not those of the gods, ***kamuy itak***. This is paralleled, though to a milder degree, by the *itako* who, after coming under Buddhist influence, more commonly performed ***hotoke-oroshi***, possession by the dead, than ***kami-oroshi***, possession by deities (cf. Ohnuki Tierney 1981:102).

(d) Women and saké-making

In Chapter Three I mentioned that in Ainu society, the production of ***saké*** is assigned exclusively to women. This was also traditionally the case in Tsugaru, where the women in charge of making ***saké*** were called ***tôji***, and were often ceremonial masters and shamanesses as well. Since ***saké*** was the primary consciousness-altering substance for both Ainu and Tsugaru people, ***saké***-making was considered a sacred duty. In Tsugaru, rice was not the only material used to make alcoholic beverages: millet and barley was also

employed. It appears that wine-making in Tsugaru has a long history prior to the introduction of rice-wine, and its methods have much in common with those of the Ainu in Hokkaidô (Fukuda 1999: 2-4).[78] Today, the function of *tôji* is preserved by female village elders known as *baba*, such as those I mentioned in the Shimokita peninsula, who also manage *kamado* and village duties, including shamanic rites.

(7) Shamanic performance, dress and instruments in Tsugaru

In Chapter Three I discussed the visible aspects of shamanic performance among the Ainu: dance, musical instruments, dress, accessories, props, and offerings. I also noted the fact that an Ainu shaman may not need any of these since possession, *tus*, may be spontaneous. In Tsugaru, traditional shamanism is expressed through a multitude of different activities and accessories today, but it is still possible to recognize overt similarities with Ainu practice.

Shamanic seances differ according to the kind of shaman, and there are also numerous incantatory performances whose roots go back to shamanic seances and magico-religious activity. In this section, I will first examine the seances of *ttako* and *kamtsama* from the performance aspect, and then discuss other features of shamanic performance in Tsugaru, most notably, traditional dances. Costume and performance styles are subject to constant change in a living tradition, and it is neither easy nor perhaps very useful to compare according to the surface form alone. Thus I will try, where possible, to point out deeper links between Ainu and Tsugaru shamanic performances.

(a) Itako

The annual schedule for an *itako* begins after the New Year's holiday and ends on November 23rd, the day called *yumi-osame*, "putting away the bow." This bow and the large *juzu* or rosary were in fact already in use by shamanesses in ancient Japan, and its presence signals a connection with Siberian shamanism.[79] The string of the bow is tapped to evoke the spirit of the dead, and it is believed that the spirit will then remain at the edge of the bow. The string is traditionally made of hemp, twisted counterclockwise, and it is said that three strands of the *itako*'s hair must also be included in the string (Sasamori 1997: 51; see Figure 4.23, an unstrung bow dedicated as an offering at Kawakura).

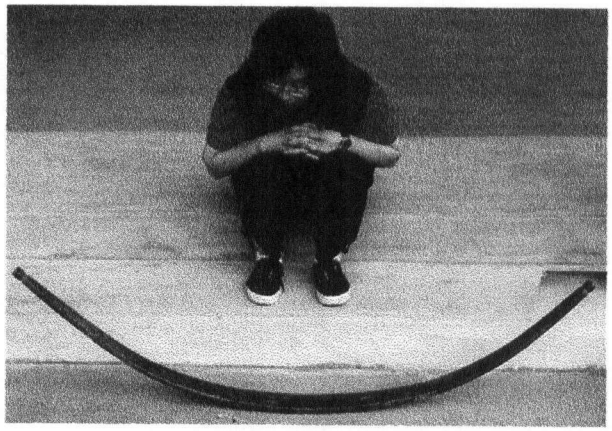


Figure 4.23: Shaman's bow from Kawakura

In Tsugaru, the *itako*'s rosary, passed down generation to generation, is usually made of a combination of beads and various fetish objects received from *matagi* hunters, such as animal fangs, claws, horns, and bones, as well as perforated Japanese coins from the early Edo period.[80] These fetishes are believed to "protect people from evil spirits, expel harmful spirits, and purify the *itako*'s body, which is stained due to possession by the spirits of the dead" (Sasamori 1997: 50).

There are interesting similarities between the *itako* rosary and the Ainu necklace known as *tamasai*. At present, *tamasai* is used by a women at religious ceremonies and funerals. Hayashi Shihei illustrates this necklace as a *shitoki* in his 1785 book *Sangoku*

Tsuran Zusetsu (*Illustrated Survey of Three Countries*), explaining that it is worn around the neck by female Ainu as a kind of amulet. The so-called *shttogi* includes beads and Kan'ei-period coins, as with the *ttako*'s rosaries (Sasamori 1997: 50).

To perform a spirit possession, the most common traditional method is for the *ttako* to first create a place for the spirits to descend. This can be done by filling a wooden bucket with sand and placing a peach tree with red and white paper ties in the sand, with strings made of hemp hanging down from the tree.[81] When this is ready, the *ttako* covers the tree with a cloth approximately one meter long. If the spirit she is about to call is either that of a young male or someone who has died a sudden death, the color of the cloth is white; if it is that of a female it is red. If the spirit was unmarried she will place a flower over the water in a glass. After the preparation is complete, the *ttako* begins chanting and rubbing the beads of her rosary together.

An *ttako*'s delivery of a message from a spirit is called *kuchtyose*. *Kuchtyose* speech can be a melodious dialogue or it can be a response to a client's questions. There are different types: one is a message from the deceased, another is a message from the lost, people who are not necessarily dead but whose whereabouts are unknown. The former class is again divided into two types. Up to the hundredth day after one's death it is called *shtn-kucht*, which literally means "new mouth," and after the hundredth day it is *furu-gucht*, "old mouth." *Shtn-kucht* is avoided if at all possible because the spirit beings have not yet settled down in the other world. In the past, there were also *kamt-orosht* ("bringing gods down"), of all sorts.

The most favorable times for *kuchtyose* are spring and fall. The former is called *hana-orosht* ("bringing flowers down") and the latter is *momtjt-orosht* ("bringing red

leaves down"). On New Year's Day, considered a time when the deities appear, and in May, the time of growth in nature, ***kuchiyose*** is forbidden. It is also forbidden during menstruation or during funerals, the red and black "impure" days.

Another basic ritual for *itako* is the *oshira* ceremony. These *oshira* figures are often found in the homes of old and respected families in Northern Honshû, and some point out a similar practice observed among the Ainu, suggesting that the Ainu word ***shirampa-kamuy,*** meaning "earthly deities" (trees), is related to *oshira*. Indeed, December the sixteenth, known as Shiragami Day, is a day to give offerings of ***shitogi*** to *oshira*.[82]

Itako visit client families at their request in spring and fall to do *oshira-asobase* "entertaining the *oshira*." The *oshira* are given new clothes called *osendaku*, and the *itako* chant *oshira saimon* to bring down the ***kami***. They ward off evil by writing the number 9 in Chinese characters in the air, and then flourish the statues in the air with both hands. As already mentioned, the text is not a religious incantation or a dramatic sermon, but a classic story, an epic, quite flowery and dramatic. The *itako* will also take this opportunity to perform divination for the household and the village.

Sasaki claims that *oshira* worship as it is known today may be relatively modern (in my view, no earlier than the Edo period), but its origins may be related to the Ainu house protection deities known among the Sakhalin Ainu as ***shitenshite*** (Sasaki 1928). His argument is based on the observation made by Nevski in the 1920s, translated and quoted by Yanagida (Yanagida 1969: 427-428).[83]

Kida (1928a, 1929) similarly argues that the Ainu house deities found in Hokkaidô, *chise-kor-kamuy*, as well as the pair of male and female fire-side *inaw* used in Sakhalin, are close relatives of the *oshira*. Kida's argument stresses two important commonalities between house-protection *inaw* and *oshira*: first, they are both associated with the fire deity, and second, both are given new clothes and offerings on a regular basis. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, in Shirahama of Sakhalin, these offerings included accompanying male and female *inaw*. In relation to this practice, I should note that Kida also considers *oshira* to share a common root with the Japanese *hina asobi* (*ohina* doll entertainment), in which a set of dolls represent spirits temporarily visiting a house, *marebito-kami* (*marepito-kamuy* in Ainu). However, among modern researchers, the connection between *oshira* and *inaw* no longer appears to be a controversy (see Kominami 1998, Ichinohe-chô kyôiku iinkai 1987). Some such as Obayashi argue that *oshira* are also related to similar indigenous beliefs in house protection deities found throughout northeastern Asia, perhaps including *ongon*, whose roots may go back to the early clay "Jômon venuses" and which later developed into a distinct form in northern Honshû (Obayashi1997e).[84]

Itako also use drums, though to a limited extent — large Japanese-style ones which are placed besides their altars at home — and *shakujô*, stick rattles consisting of several small metal rings hanging on a metallic frame attached to the top of a wooden stick. In Buddhist ceremonies, a long cane *shakujô* is used during processions, while a short stick one is used to keep the rhythm when a *sutra* is being recited. *Itako* use the short one for healing illness, patting lightly with it, or shaking it around the affected part of the patient. *Gohei*, a sacred pole with pieces of cut paper attached, is used by Shintô

priests; again, it is also an accessory for *ttako*, who wave it in purifications (Sasamori 1997: 49-50). As I have already noted, in Tsugaru, pieces of shaved wood were replaced by elaborate hand-made paper versions, or mass-produced and simplified ones of a Shintô type.

Under the influence of Buddhism, the *ttako*'s other essentials for shamanizing include candles (fire), incense (smoke), and *saké*. Yamada reports, however, that some *ttako* in eastern Aomori used a sacred, lacquered prayer stick, similar to the Ainu *tkupasuy*, when conducting ceremonies. They placed the stick over a large bowl filled with *saké* and consumed the *saké* while pressing the stick with the forefingers. This type of deep, lacquered bowl is known in Japanese as *tsukt*. The Ainu call it *tutkt*, and it is an important ritual object for use in prayers and ceremonies. This practice is very interesting since as I mentioned, Ainu shamanesses such as Aoki Aiko carried out *kamuy-nomt*, prayers, in a similar manner, though such practices were normally monopolized by Ainu males.

Yamada also notes the rich collection of *tsukt* and *htshage* (a special lidless pot; *etunup* in Ainu), similar to those treasured by the Ainu, found in the Lake Ogawara Museum in eastern Aomori. He reports a local custom in eastern Aomori where women drink *saké* from these precious bowls on festive occasions, singing songs to entertain each other (Yamada1982: 202).

Finally, unlike the *kamtsama*, or contemporary Ainu shamans, the seance of the *ttako* requires at least some basic props be used, such as the rosary and the candles.

(b) Kamisama

In sharp contrast to ***itako***, there are no fixed forms for the seance of the ***kamisama*** or her performance as a shaman. There are some ***kamisama*** who use a rosary and ***shakujô*** like ***itako***, but the use of the bow is limited to ***itako***. The use of drums is more common for a ***kamisama***, in front of her altar at home. Some ***kamisama*** also use ***oshira*** and chant ***oshira saimon***, but they are somewhat of a minority. Most ***kamisama*** are affiliated with some kind of religious organization which gives them a license, Shintô or Buddhist, and thus they follow the procedures set by their licensee in their use of props. For example, an esoteric Shingon sect-affiliated ***kamisama*** may use a ***mandala*** during her seance. *Gohei* are commonly used in the altar of a ***kamisama***, and for purification. Candles and incense are common, and so is ***saké***.

Figure 4.24: *Kamisama* and client, Kawakura

In general, the possession of a ***kamisama*** is often spontaneous and thus it does not necessarily require any shamanic props. Some ***kamisama*** don special regalia, such as a pure white overdress and white headband, before shamanizing, but there is no set pattern for their outfits.

(c) Performing with the spirits

In Chapter Three, I discussed two genres of Ainu dance with magico-religious functions: large-scale shamanic possessions to scare away demons, and the shaman's dance on ceremonial occasions, such as the animal dance. In Tsugaru, shamanic dances belong to two genres, which remain either within a shamanic context or survive as a form of entertainment devoid of religious purpose. Below, I will discuss the *neputa* and other dances whose origin has to do with warding off evil, and various masked animal dances.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the *neputa* has its origin in the war-dance of the Ainu.[85] The *neputa* dance is wild, hopping all the way through, commonly in a form of procession on the street, or as a circle dance in an open space. The powerful drumbeat, the sound of the flute, and the endless, repetitive chanting of "*rasseyraa, rasseyraa, rasse, rasse, rasseyraa*,"[86] creates an extraordinary atmosphere in the darkness. Fitfully illuminated by the light from the numerous floats, the dancers go on overnight without much rest, and this is repeated for several days. Once you are in the procession, an altered state of consciousness becomes the norm; you feel so high and powerful that if you were a soldier, you would feel yourself invincible.

Figure 4.25:
Traditional costumes for *neputa* dancers

The Ainu grand procession to ward off evil was characterized by one indispensable physical action: hopping and stamping. This type of dance manifested itself in various forms and on various occasions: war,

warding off demons and disasters, and welcoming visitors who have come by boat. In Tsugaru, the hopping dance of the *neputa* similarly characterizes the descent of Mt. Iwaki, and a variety of processions to ward off disease, evil, and disasters. The Ainu welcome for visitors by sea, a dance of joy as well as a dance to make sure no bad spirits are brought to the community, has the same dual function as the mad hopping dance during the descent of Mt. Iwaki, both rejoicing and making sure no evil spirits are introduced to the human world. In the same way, the procession in the insect-sending ceremony is characterized by hopping and chanting. In some communities, a procession to ward off disease and natural disaster, known as *bonno kami* ("doll god"), accompanies such dances (see the discussion of these dances in Shindô 1970).

I have already discussed the bear-skin dance of the *matagi*, and its obvious parallels with Ainu custom. Another notable masked animal dance in Tsugaru is the *shishi-odori*, which literally translates as lion dance, indicating a foreign influence, since in this region masks represent either deer or bear, used according to a fixed regional pattern. The dance, a curious blend of imitations of wild prey and a mediaeval Japanese Buddhist invocation dance, is often humorous; and again, it includes a lot of jumping motions.[87] The *shishi-odori* again differs from yet another animal dance, the Tsugaru *on-jhishi-mai* (sacred lion dance), in that the latter is a *kagura*, a sacred Shintô performance. In this Shintô version, the lion head is considered the embodiment of the sacred. Thus the performance focuses on the graceful movement of the mask, devoid of humor. The latter dance also shows *yamabushi* influence, and it can be performed for the purpose of village exorcism (Hagiwara 1970: 391-393).

(d) Dolls

In Chapter Three, I briefly discussed how the Ainu use dolls as spirit helpers for children, a concept similar to the use of sacrificial statues. In Tsugaru, dolls have always been shamanic accessories, but their uses and forms have become quite diverse. In addition to the stone *jizô* statues and the straw dolls used for exorcism already mentioned, *matagi* often make carved figures of the mountain god to place on their altars, or sometimes they make wooden dolls, called *sansuke*, to take with them to the mountain as spirit helpers. When the *matagi* of southern Tsugaru visit the mountains on the twelfth day of December to do a ceremony for the mountain god, they must go in a group of thirteen, so as to avoid the sacred number twelve. If for some reason there are only twelve, then a doll is carved out of a piece of wood, and brought with them as the thirteenth person. On the mountain, a temporary hut is raised and food is offered, and prayers requesting safety on the mountain and at home are given to the mountain god. When the group descend from the mountain, the *sansuke* is offered to a local shrine (Ohtsuki 1979: 193; see Figure 4.26 and 4.27 illustrating various wooden mountain protective spirits).

Figure 4.26:
Wooden mountain spirit figures

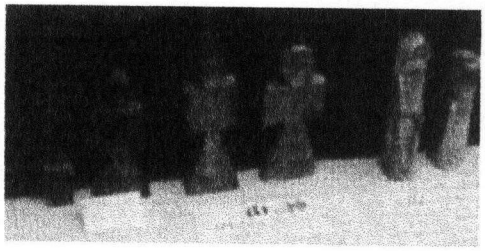


Figure 4.27:
Wooden mountain spirit figures

When discussing the wooden spirit helper dolls of the *matagi*, and the Ainu dolls for weak children, we should also pay attention to the

kokeshi, a widespread type of traditional doll in northern Honshû. The manufacture of ***kokeshi*** is today highly commercialized and mechanically assisted, often mass-produced, to be sold as souvenirs from Tôhoku. However, it began as a hand-carved wooden doll, or even a piece of wood, given to children as a toy. In some regions of Iwate and Akita prefectures, the ***kokeshi*** is still considered a protective deity for children. When a young child died, these wooden dolls were often placed in the coffin, and/or dedicated to the home altar or temples instead of *jizô*. In the town of Inagawa in southeastern Akita, when someone dies, a new ***kokeshi*** is made and attached to a large village rosary made of ***kokeshi***, placed in a box kept by the house where the last person to die had lived. All of these uses for ***kokeshi*** assume that the dolls embody a spirit, and can function as spirit helpers for other humans, if they are handled carefully and with respect. Dolls made and used this way acquire a highly personalized power: they must be sent away once their function is fulfilled, or be preserved in respect and peace.

(8) Shamanesses today: The Kawakura jizôson festival, 1998[88]

The Kawakura *jizôson* festival, known as the "big" festival, is an annual memorial service for both ancestors and the dead. Its core consists of a combination of Buddhist-influenced *jizô* worship and *itako* shamanism, which makes it an excellent venue to study how the shamanic traditions sketched in abstract above express themselves in practice.

The Kawakura *jizô* temple is not subordinate to any other religious organization, and in fact has no official affiliation to any organized religious group whatsoever. It is

located on a small hill three kilometers from the Tsugaru Railway's Kanagi station. In 1893 the temple was accidentally burned in a fire started by the carelessness of a beggar who was living there. The building at that time is supposed to have been thatch-roofed and quite small, so small that one had to bend over while inside. A temporary shrine was in place between then and in 1925, which was locked when not in use. This was replaced by a permanent building in 1925, which in turn was supplanted by the present *Jizô* temple in 1972.

Up to 1972, the temple was the communal possession of a local village, but since then, it has come under the ownership and operating responsibility of the Kawakura Sai-no-kawara *Jizô kôchû* (*Jizô* society). It was originally nothing but a structure with a *Jizô* statue, with no resident priest; but since 1972 there has been a priest living on site, performing memorial services throughout the year. In 1978, a *mizuko Jizô* temple was built to the right of the main temple, which now accommodates not only *Jizô* but the dolls used in surrogate marriage ceremonies for persons who died young, without being married.

The *Itako* festival was popularized after the 1925 reconstruction, and five years later it became more accessible when the Tsugaru Railroad was extended to the area. However, Hanazono (1992) suspects that the temple attracted many visitors even prior to these events.

Very few documents exist concerning the *Jizô* temple and the festival. The village of Kawakura as it stands today is a relatively new creation. The area was originally known as Sai-no-kami village (cf. Sai-no-kawara, which Hanazono suggests was a border settlement), founded in 1596 by political refugees from a branch of the Nanbu clan, who

restored an old and abandoned shrine there (the predecessor of the present *Jizô* temple). Sai-no-kami village was abandoned after a time, leaving its name to the Sai-no-kami river, which runs along the south side of the temple into Lake Ashino. The name of the present village, Kawakura, first appears in 1661, after it was founded by low-ranking samurai whose nativization (or re-nativization) as peasants was being encouraged by the Tsugaru *han*.

Local people have passed down a tradition that the hill on which the temple is located is situated on the old road to Tosa, part of which is now submerged during the summer. I followed the path through the forest, to the back door of the shrine, where numerous *Jizô* and piles of natural stones decorate both sides of the path as it winds up the hill to the hilltop behind the present temple building. The *itako* themselves talk about shamanism performed in the Kawakura area long before the village was founded by Nanbu settlers. An *itako* by the name of Ookawa Hana stated that her master had been in the sixty-seventh generation of *itako*, and that *itako* shamanism was active in Kawakura before the Kamakura period (12th century).

I have a distinct feeling that this hill is connected with an ancient burial ground, like other *moya* or *mori* hills. At the very least, its situation as a border place would have made it an ideal place to bury dead children, or the nameless dead. However, because the place is a living place of worship, no excavation has ever been carried out.

As I have already pointed out, the directional arrangement of the Kawakura temple displays a basic parallel to that of Sannai, the ancient burial and ceremonial ground, traditions which are echoed in Ainu beliefs about sacred directions: east, the main entrance, for deities and west for the dead. Given the testimony of the *itako* who conduct services

here, Kawakura must have been a ceremonial place linked to both the divinities and the ancestors in ancient times, where all borders created by human contrivance became meaningless by virtue of the work of the shamans and the faith of their followers.

Jizô reverence is a syncretic belief which has become attached to Buddhism in Japan, but is not fully derived from Buddhist roots. Tsugaru is the home of diverse types of *jizô*, found on roadsides, the middle of farms, deep in the mountains, and within other shrines, large and small. Sometimes the *jizô* images are nothing more than a natural stone or stones with or without inscriptions or decorations. Most *jizô* appear to be made by local artists or relatives of the deceased, with a great variety of detail and decoration. Hanazono tries to distinguish two kinds of *jizô* reverence: as boundary markers between the villages, which could be used for healing, and as *jizô* which condole with the dead, especially children and unmarried people. However, the division between the two categories is much clearer in theory than in practice.

The original *jizô* stored in Kawakura temple was a healing charm until mid-Meiji, used by local villagers to cure the sick by direct contact or by touching a cloth that had touched the statue. For this reason, it was taken out from the temple whenever needed, until finally some villagers dropped it into Fujieda Pond and lost it on their way to return it to the temple. This healing function is no longer active today, and the *jizô* at Kawakura stand exclusively for the dead.

The three-day *itako* festival is held in mid-August close to the time of the major religious holiday known as *Obon*, the time of the return of the ancestral spirits, celebrated nation-wide. Once every four years it falls on the same day as *Obon*, and the attendance at the Kawakura festival suffers, since *obon* activities, including dance and the *neputa*

parade, take place in the commercial area of Kanagi a couple of miles away from the temple. In the past, though, the *Obon* dance was one of the favorite parts of the big festival, since before the popularization of automobiles visitors camped at the temple overnight.

The structure of the Kawakura festival reveals a complex religious syncretism between Buddhism, Shinto, and indigenous practices such as shamanism, as well as a variety of secular activities such as marketing, entertainment, and food and drink sales. In the following paragraphs I will describe the experience of the Kawakura festival as seen through the eyes of an ordinary visitor.

Arriving at the front gate of the shrine, one is welcomed by stalls selling food and drink. On a hot day, ice cream and watermelon stands do good business. From the gate to the main temple is about fifty meters, with stalls on both sides. Temporary restaurants sell noodles, rice balls, *yakitori*, and *oden* as well as cold drinks including beer and *saké*. Priests in full regalia mingle with the visitors there. There are souvenir stalls as well, but some of the so-called souvenir items have religious significance, as they can be offered to *Jizô*. These include the straw sandals, *waraji*,[89] which the dead need replaced every now and then, to carry on their journeys in the next world, the colorful plastic pinwheels or "wind-flowers" offered to the images along the path to the temple, and even some of the items of food, and flowers. They also sell candles and incense. One sees these items in the stalls side by side with toys for children. Some vendors greet the members of the crowd by calling *irrashai* "come and see," and others just smile at you.

If you are a first-time visitor, you will probably stop at two large wooden signs to the left as you enter, descriptions of the origin of the temple, the letters on one quite faded

and worn, difficult to read, while the other is neatly painted and bilingual, as in the picture. To the right, there is a tall stone Kannon (Goddess of Mercy), but the ground quickly drops away here to a depression or amphitheater centered around a small stage and performance area with a permanent roof. On one of the days that we visited, this was host to a Tsugaru *shamisen* competition, on another day there was a junior *sumo* meet.

Before you enter the main temple, you might glance at the house and office of the resident chief priest, flanked on its left by a large wooden frame with the names of prominent donors to the reconstruction of 1972. There is a small souvenir shop on the ground floor, which sells the memorial tablets used to request services in the temple, *juzu* (Buddhist wrist rosaries), *waraji* with red or white thongs, and charms of various types, candles and incense, and pinwheels, as well as more secular mementos, including souvenir cloths with the temple name, books, Tsugaru *shamisen* tapes, and other things. The office is usually operated by the resident priest and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Saigawa, but during the festival they are assisted by their friends and relatives and outside religious functionaries from the Tendai sect.

On the right, facing the temple office, there is first a small rest house with the inevitable drink machine in front of it. This rest house provides free accommodation for overnighters. Inside, there is a sink, a tatami room, and a large entrance area with a few chairs. The next building on the right is the *mizuko jizô* temple, of which we will say more in a moment. In front of this, there is a large tree, probably a pine, with a sacred rope around it; still further forward, there is the water basin and dippers to wash one's hands. Flanking the path to the *mizuko jizô* temple on either side are five-colored ban-

ners, the colors of the Five Elements, and on the far side of the path, matching the pine tree, there is a small but relatively tall structure, open to the front, housing an image of a *migawari jizô*, a "stand-in *jizô*," who shoulders the burden of one's misfortunes. Closing the temple courtyard at the far end, set a little to the left, is the main temple building; and between the main building and the priest's office two roads lead off, the one to the right running around the side of the main building to the shrines and images there, and the one to the left, nearer the priest's office, slanting down and away from the shrine, flanked on both sides by pinwheels, small *jizô* images, and natural stones with offerings piled in front of them.

A visitor would in all likelihood go first to the main temple at the far end, with offerings of food, candles, incense, and memorial tablets of paper with the names of the deceased person for whom you are arranging a service. Priests sit at the right and left-hand sides, at a long desk slightly raised from the ground that extends over the near half of both side walls, greeting visitors, and accepting offerings of food, drink, and incense that grow into small pyramids in front of them when they are not conducting one of the regular services that are part of the festival. A few administrative staff are positioned near the entrance door, selling tablets and offering other services.

The services are performed several times a day during the three-day festival by priests of the Tendai sect from Hirosaki and northern Tsugaru (Hanazono 1997:78).[90] They take place in an area at the center of the temple, open on three sides and backed by a large screen, where there is a rectangular altar and space for priests and worshippers, surrounded by a low wall. The altar is directly in front of the screen, and its most prominent features are several life-size or slightly larger *jizô* with colorful regalia. The

chanting during a service is punctuated by the sound of a gong, and the performance can be heard some distance from the temple as an underlying rhythm for all the activities at the shrine. Even though the meaning of the individual words of the prayer is unintelligible to all but a very few of the priests, the rhythm defines a sacred context that is impossible to ignore.

The peculiarity of the services in this temple is that they are entirely formalistic: unlike many services elsewhere, what goes on here is not expected to be of any direct benefit to either the worshipper or the deceased. It is purely ritual, though still considered necessary: a preparation, rather than the main action. The function of the priests cannot be fully understood without taking into account that of the shamanesses. Here we have a classical case of male priests and ceremonial masters working with shamanesses like two side of the same coin, the priests in the front (east) and the shamanesses at the rear (west).

Looming over the central altar enclosure, though partially shielded from it at the back by its rear screen, are the offerings and *jizô* statues that line the back half of the side walls and the whole rear wall. To the left and rear, piles of straw sandals, old clothes, kimono, and other goods for the dead are piled under the gaze of a dozen or more photographs of the dead looking down from the wall. To the right rear, there are *jizô* statutes, but the greatest concentration of these stretches right along the back wall. Steps like the bleachers of a high-school football field stretch upward halfway to the ceiling, and hundreds of *jizô* squat along these benches and stare at you, all neatly arrayed by the *hiragana* order of their family names. The feeling of being watched is strong: not an unfriendly gaze, but certainly attentive. One has the distinct feeling that it is your next

move. It does not take experience or familiarity with the local culture to recognize the presence of a life force in these *jizô*. They look as if they have been temporarily frozen in time and space, to meet us in our world. They have an air of immediacy, as if they are only pretending to be statues, and only waiting for us to leave so that they can go back to whatever they were doing before.

Figure 4.28: Bell rope figure in shrine, Kawakura

Some *jizô* wear aprons or other clothing decorated with a cross, though neither the design nor the color is standardized. The same emblem is found decorating the bell-ropes in front of several statues (see Figure 4.28 to the left). The resemblance to the Christian symbol can hardly be accidental, seeing how closely some of the statues resemble Mary figures, right down to the child they cradle and even the lilies offered to them on occasion.

On leaving the temple by the main entrance, one notices that above the door there is a large handwritten plaque giving the story of the developer of the Tsugaru ***shamisen***, a blind musician, a "beggar monk" by the name of Nitabô — telling among other things how he parodied himself in his songs, including his disabilities, "once a handsome man, now an old blind beggar, stumble and fall, stumble and fall." This underlines the importance of Kawakura as the traditional birthplace of the Tsugaru ***shamisen***.

After exiting the temple the visitor turns left to visit the ***migawari jizô***, which is about four meters away from the nearest point of the temple steps. Cloth tied into the shape of a cross and hung from the bell-ropes reinforces the eclectic impression given by the images inside, and the ***migawari jizô*** here has a distinctly female appearance.

To complete the circuit of the courtyard, the visitor, especially when there is no festival, will next visit the *mizuko jizô* temple we mentioned earlier, whose entrance is to the right and behind of the small structure housing the *migawari jizô*. As soon as one enters, one comes up against the altar, flanked on either side by a walkway and by the tablets on the wall for *mizuko*, aborted, miscarried, stillborn, and short-lived children.

Behind the altar in narrow corridors on either side, lined with shelves, are the dolls and other offerings for the local custom of bride-doll marriage. A relatively recent practice, which only became popular after the construction of the present *mizuko jizô*, bride-doll marriage is the offering of a doll of the opposite sex to become the spouse of someone who for some reason or another has died single. The spouses of these dolls are of either sex, and range in age from infants to young adults, and sometimes older. They are represented by pictures, and to judge by these some of the spouses, young men dressed in Imperial Army uniforms, must have passed away half a century ago. There is just as much variety in the dolls as there was with the *jizô*: some of them are traditional, but many are modern, Western, blond and blue-eyed, and even humorous: Kewpie dolls and the like.

The *mizuko jizô* temple is the last of the permanent formal structures on the site. When the visitor leaves it during festival time, he or she will go back towards the main temple, but turn sharply right after passing the *migawari jizô* and go along the right outside wall of the temple. To the right, there are several stalls devoted to the sale of items of practical use: baskets, knives, scythes, and needle-threaders. At the time of the *itako* festival, the visitor will then see the tents and structures of the *itako* and those associated with them: in 1998 these included a palm-reader and two *kamisama*.

The open-sided tents, prepared by the Kawakura Jizô Society, in which the ***kamtsama*** and ***itako*** practice, are placed in two lines parallel to each other at the back of the temple. If you wish to join the line-up of people waiting to consult the shamanesses, you have to take your shoes off and sit on grass mats. Some observe the interaction between the shamanesses and their clients before they decide who to consult, though many already have their favorites whom they visit annually. Some ***itako*** post their names and telephone numbers up on pieces of paper, but others have no such advertisement. In earlier times there used to be over a dozen ***itako*** gathered at Kawakura during a festival, but today there are only a few, all over sixty and none with any apprentices. But some ***kamtsama*** who come to the festival do perform ***hotoke-orosht***, possession by the dead, much in the same manner as the blind ***itako***, sitting inside the tents made for ***itako***.

The people walk along the corridor between the tents, viewing the ***itako*** not only as they give their readings but also as they rest, eat, and drink. The ***itako*** have no great feeling that their privacy has been invaded by this crowd, and do not object to several strangers at once photographing them. Seated before lighted candles, rubbing the beads of their rosaries together in front of them, they perform; the visitors, whether having a reading or merely spectators, are suitably impressed. Sometimes priests from the temple, in full dress, come into the area to observe what is going on or to chat with the ***itako*** or ***kamtsama***. There is no friction between the two, but one receives the definite impression that despite being within a few feet of the wall of the temple, the priest is the visitor. Sometimes the priests even ask the ***itako*** for professional advice, as when some unusually shaped ***jtzô*** were brought to the temple, and the priests turned to the ***itako*** to find out their significance and their origin.

The *itako*'s main narrative is tripartite. After preliminary introductions, names, dates of death, and relationships, the *itako* chants, using the rosary beads, to summon the dead from the other world. The rosary is very long and the beads are large, intermixed with animal fangs and claws. The first part is the *maeuta*, the "introductory song," often including the Buddhist invocation of Amida, *namu amida butsu*. The middle is the *kudoki*, the delivery of the message from the deceased, where the dead typically express their regret for early death and misfortunes, and envy those who are still alive. The third part is the prophecy, where the *itako* will warn their clients of misfortunes to come, such as fire and car accidents, and inform them of the times at which they have to be careful. After this, the *itako* will send the deceased back to the other world. However, there are considerable stylistic differences between the different *itako*, since each is following the particular tradition of the master under whom they trained. The service typically takes ten to fifteen minutes, and the standard fee, unstated but understood, is two thousand yen. Some customers add to this with additional money or offerings of food and drink.

The clients are mostly from the local area, but there are also people who have come to the festival from all over northern Honshû or even southern Hokkaidô, some from quite far away. Foreign visitors, researchers, are also found there. Finally, there are those who are known as *okkake*, "groupies," who follow the *itako* from place to place, some of them taking photos, and some simply looking. A few may even become assistants to the *itako* and help them with setting up and taking down their stalls, and so on.

After passing between the tents of the *itako* behind the temple, the visitor is faced with a small piece of level waste ground to the right, and to the front and left a series of

jizô statues running parallel to the side of the temple (see Figure 4.29 below). There was another ***kamisama*** giving consultations there in 1998, not in a tent but under an umbrella, on a cloth spread over the ground. Near the end of the temple wall, the ground begins sloping down to a signboard telling the story of the appearance of a red snake, representing the spirits of the famine victims of the early 19th century buried on the site, and a small shrine to the nameless dead, ***muenbo-toke***.

The series of *jizô* statues parallel to the side of the temple are intermixed with other sacred sites, memorials to local notables such as folklore singers and racers, wooden tomb markers with metal Wheels of Life in them, and stone tomb markers with the simple inscription "Ancestral Tomb." Visitors walk down the rows of *jizô*, placing offerings anywhere they please — sometimes sprinkling them as they walk — and sometimes stopping to offer prayers.

From this point a road slopes down, forked at the top, with one fork leading from the area of the small shrine and another coming down directly from the side of the priest's residence, joining into a single curved path about ten meters below the small shrine. This path, earth-surfaced, is bordered on both sides with *jizô*, piles of plain stones, and four or five small wooden huts about a meter and a half high holding groups of larger *jizô* statues. The ones lining the road are often broken, sometimes indistinguishable from natural stones piled up, but all of these are given offerings of flowers, food, drink, and incense, as well as masses of "wind-flowers" or pinwheels, the most common offering, sold in the priest's office and by the vendors at the stalls (see Figure 4.30 below). The pinwheels are a modern innovation, replacements for the earlier ***kezuribana***, common through-out northern Honshû, the "shaved flower" made of shaved wood

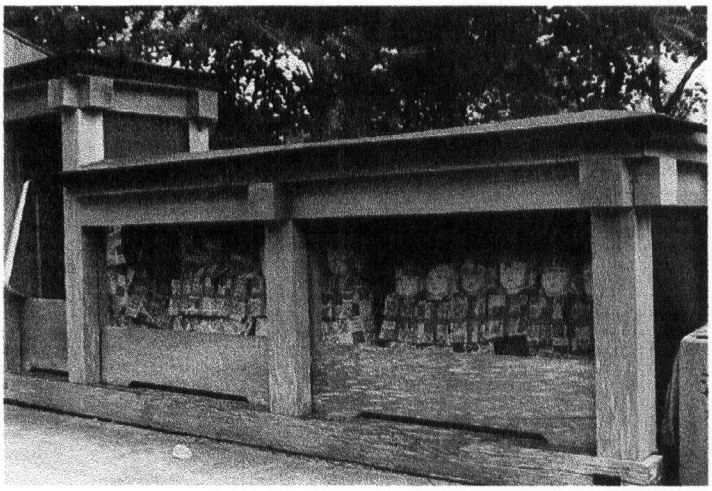


Figure 4.29: Ranks of *jizô* statues

and remarkably similar to the Ainu *inaw*.

Walking down the hill, you eventually reach the water, and from there you can continue, if it is not summer, when the path is flooded. From the banks of the lake, you can see many people on rented boats, some even fishing. You can walk along the banks of the water, which leads you into the woods; a pleasant and popular route either for bicycle or foot. In older times, before World War II, many couples visiting Kawakura (including married couples — not married to each other, though!) would disappear into the forest through the path. During festival time, it was a sort of lover's lane, and often "going to Kawakura" was an excuse to meet one's sweetheart regardless of marital status. At that time, the folk dancing, which went on nearly the whole night, would have given still other opportunities to arrange and consummate relationships.

When we were visiting Kawakura, the festival coincided with *Obon* activities organized by the town of Kanagi. Thus, the dancing took place elsewhere, as did the *neputa* parade, the singing competition, and so forth. This coincidence, and the general custom of visiting families during *Obon*, made Kawakura unusually quiet in 1998, but the people at the stalls stated that this was an expected lightening in the pace of trade and not indicative of a trend.

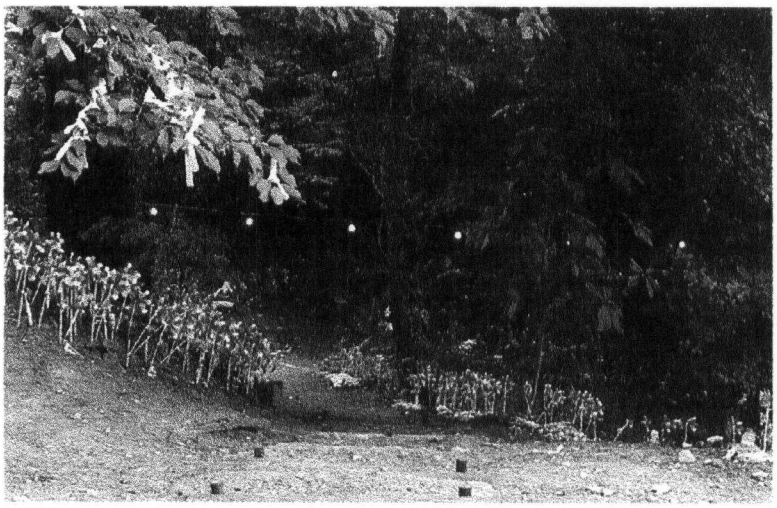


Figure 4.30: "Wind-flowers" lining the path to the river

The final day of that year's Kawakura festival was marked by the wind. The weather had been quite good up to that point, dry but not too hot, but in the afternoon of the final day a strong, cool wind began to blow. This wind, coming from the eastern mountains, is called the *yamase*, and it is one reason why Tsugaru has remained a "backward" area. In summer the *yamase* from the mountains, and in winter blizzards from the sea, have made Tsugaru a particularly bad place for agriculture and even for existence in general. For some reason, Kawakura seems particularly prone to these strong winds, as if it attracts them from all directions. But the wind at the same time seems to protect the place spiritually, since it is constantly purified by the moving air like cold pure water washing the place. The wind blows as if saying, *if you come to this place with pain, you can leave it here.* People say that when you leave, you will know that something washed away your pain, and the power of your prayers has been magnified. Kawakura with its strong cold winds may not at first appear to be a friendly place at all, like Tsugaru in general, but once you are inside the wind, at ground zero, the turmoil ceases, and you know that it is a very special place.

Shaped by its Japanese-style temples and its syncretic forms of worship, Kawakura today does not remind anyone of its Ainu past; but it remains neither a Buddhist estab-

lishment nor a commercial tourist site. It has become a place of worship unique to Tsugaru. The same holds true for the shamans, *itako* and *kamtsama*, who are a vital symbol of Tsugaru's indigenous culture. The Ainu past, and the Ainu heritage which form a vital underlying element in the activities surrounding Kawakura, still linger in the minds of the local people. One of the caretakers of the temple, Mrs. Saigawa, told me, after several visit to the temple over the period of two years, that "you are not the only one. If your family stayed in Tsugaru, the Ainu-ness would not stand out as much (as in Hokkaidô) so you would just blend in." Mrs. Saigawa spoke of her own lineage going back to the chiefdom in what is now the town of Nakasato, defeated by the Tsugaru clan just before the Edo period. "The Andô was taboo, and the Ainu were taboo. So many taboos here. But things are changing now — at last. You are not the only one."

Nevertheless, Mrs. Saigawa was also quick to question the single-minded type of ethnic revival, which has caused numerous armed conflicts and imposed yet more social boundaries throughout the world, most devastatingly in the Middle East: "Wherever you come from, whatever beliefs you have, we hold ceremonies and festivals together, for the different deities, and this is the Tsugaru way. Our ceremonies must be accompanied by feasts and entertainments, and people just come and enjoy. We respect everyone's ancestors here, and this is our tradition."

Summary and discussion:

Shamanism as a process: the separate paths of a pair of birth twins

This chapter has examined various aspects of the shamanism and related spiritual beliefs and practices found in Tsugaru and its surroundings, and compared them with those among the Ainu in Hokkaidô and Sakhalin. In a conclusion, I will review our results, and then move into a broader discussion of the relationship between the two shamanic heritages, that of the Ainu and that of Tsugaru.

There is a general underlying harmony that runs through the cosmology of both the Ainu and Tsugaru, such as the ideas of the three cosmic zones and the world axis; the presence of holy trees and holy mountains, as well as shaved wood or one of its more contemporary variations as the earthly manifestations of this axis; animistic beliefs shaped by a traditional hunting-fishing-gathering ecology; a belief in the sacred power of fire, and its association with feminine force, which resulted in the household being designated as female; belief in an underworld which resembles this world; belief in a variety of spirit helpers and mischievous spirits; and belief in a divine origin, a link to a sky world populated by other beings. Belief in the east as the sacred direction, related to sun worship, is not uniform among the Ainu as a whole, but it is common among the South-western Ainu. Its roots are to be found in Sannai and Kawakura in Tsugaru.

There are many cases where spiritual beliefs and practices take identical or highly analogous forms in both these groups, such as certain beliefs about unusual deaths and special funeral treatment for these; burial practices whereby the deceased's house in the other world is secured through ritual; exorcisms involving straw dolls, processions, and characteristic "hopping" dances to the accompaniment of wild cries; mountain worship

and visits to ancient stone deities, with a climactic and ecstatic experience of unification with the tutelary divinities; belief about the destinations of the soul — the mountain, and/or beyond the sea; use of dreams for guidance in hunting and other routine activities; and general consideration of both the good and the evil aspects of the divine and sacred, and human responsibility for maintaining a productive relationship with them.

But the examination of specific forms of rituals or shamanic genres often reveals that the two groups differ in consistent ways, and these differences, to a large extent, are explainable by external influences. *Matagi* bear ceremonialism is a case in point; the formation and transformation of professional shamanic genres, the *ttako* and *kamisama*, provides another example. As I have already made clear, the transformation of indigenous customs in Tsugaru and Hokkaidô has been heavily influenced by the attitudes held and the policies practiced by the political and economic authorities who had either official or *de facto* control over the respective regions. In Tsugaru, the indigenous population and their customs were forcibly integrated with Buddhism and other syncretic beliefs through the policies of the Tsugaru *han* during the Edo period, so that compared to Hokkaidô, where the majority of the indigenous population remained socio-politically separated from the ruling class, the most prominent shamanic practices and hunting ceremonies came to take on an outwardly Buddhist shape. Nevertheless, the common elements were not eliminated, and many have survived to this day.

As for the *matagi*, many of their taboos, crafts and ritual objects have much in common with those of the Ainu hunters also known as *matagi*, not to speak of their use of numerous Ainu words. Although their bear sacrifice and sending ceremony often required the participation of Buddhist priests, resulting in the prayers and ritual practice

acquiring a tinge of Buddhist ideology, they still retained features rooted in the ancient forms held in common with the Ainu, such as dancing in the flayed skin, the making of the same type of ornamental offerings symbolizing their god, and the orderly display of the bear's intestines after the dissection (Ikeya 1997: 60).

The *itako* and *kamisama*, for their part, took on their current form relatively recently: they show not only the influence of Buddhism but also the professionalization and specialization of earlier community-based shamans which took place during the Edo period. Although available written documents concerning the nature of earlier shamanism in Tsugaru prior to the Edo period are limited in both quantity and value, I believe it is safe to assume, given Ainu autonomy in most areas of the region until the end of the sixteenth century, that a similar, if not identical, form of *tusukur*, village-based trance-possession female mediums, existed throughout Tsugaru.

While this basic function of *tusukur*, or more precisely proto-*tusukur*, has been preserved by both *kamisama* and *itako*, with the official promotion of *itako* as Buddhist-trained shamans by the Tsugaru *han* a division of labour emerged, as did clear differences in the means of recruitment and initiation into shamanhood. These specialist shamans of Tsugaru have focused their activities around designated temples and shrines, and have come to consider themselves professionals who deserve financial compensation for their services. Still, these professionalized shamans retain features in common with their Ainu colleagues, including the ritual worship of snake spirits and their role as divine poets and oral historians (*itako* in particular). I also noted that as with the Ainu, midwifery was a shamanic function in Tsugaru in the past, both for *itako* and for blind

male travelling healers; and that some *ttako* in the Shimokita peninsula conducted prayers in a similar manner to Ainu shamans and male ceremonial masters.

I also discussed examples of shamanic beliefs and customs distinct to Tsugaru, such as the twin salmon myth, the *oshira* god, and stone worship at Magonai, all cases where I have not been able to locate equivalent customs among the Ainu. The twin salmon myth is found in other parts of the circumpacific region, including the northwest coast of Canada, along with aspects of the ceremonialism and certain of the taboos associated with the myth. The *oshira* god is a very interesting form of shamanism combining several different cultural practices. While its *materia medica*, *oshira* figures, share a common origin with the *inaw*, the sacred shaved wood of the Ainu, they have become associated with sericulture through the adaptation of an origin tale about silkworms from the Asian continent. Moreover, it is possible that the origin tale, which involves a romantic theme in which a young woman falls in love with a domesticated horse which is killed by her father, finds its origin in the horse sacrificing cultures of semi-nomadic peoples in northern Asia. These may well have influenced the development of similar culture in northern Japan, Tôhoku in particular. In connection with this, I discussed the possibility of an ancient horse sacrifice practiced at Magonai village, where the natural stone worship of a form of fertility cult has been associated with offerings of fully decorated statues of white horses to the village shrine.

While these examples indicate commonality with other traditional cultures on the Asian continent and/or the circumpacific region, there are other cases such as the *mushi-okuri* (insect sending ceremony) and the divination known as *sangu*, where Tsugaru's link to the rice-growing culture of Japan is obvious. Over the past few centu-

ries rice cultivation has been forcibly promoted in Tsugaru, central and southern Tsugaru in particular, and there has been a significant incorporation of beliefs and ritual practices introduced to Tsugaru by settlers and other foreigners, including religious authorities. All the same, we need to be cautious about to what extent these agriculture-related rites are truly and entirely "new" to the region, given its long history of agriculture, including rice cultivation, as well as the fact that indigenous hunter-gatherers in Tsugaru found it somewhat easier to adapt to the sedentary lifestyle which was encouraged after the Edo period.[91]

Scholars tend to place their study of Tsugaru shamanism strictly within the often nationalistic framework of scholarship on Japanese shamanism, considering it either as a deteriorated form of "proper" Japanese tradition, or at the best, a preservation of the primordial beliefs and practices of Japanese folk custom. Indeed, it is inevitable that when viewed this way, neither Tsugaru shamans nor their practices can occupy a central place among the religious phenomena of Japan proper. This is nothing to wonder at, since they were never meant to compete in that company: their not-so-ancient roots go back to a not-so-ancient time when much of the region was not part of Japan, at least from the point of view of the indigenous inhabitants, chief among them the Ainu. The indigenous shamanisms of Tsugaru and Hokkaidô are best understood as twins, born of the same mother, which took different paths, and adapted to different social, economic, and political circumstances during the Edo period. While Edo Japan appropriated the indigenous shamans and shamanism of Tsugaru, they did not do so with respect to these in Hokkaidô, since for much of the Edo period the island remained foreign to Japan. A more precise analogy may be that Tsugaru shamanism is a twin who was kidnapped, and Hok-

kaidô Ainu shamanism is its sister, who grew up without remembering her existence. After several centuries of separation, the two have acculturated differently, one as marginal Japanese, the other as "internal foreigner."

In order to understand the complexity of Tsugaru shamanism and its relationship to the shamanism of the Ainu, it must be seen as an institution involving not only shamans but a whole set of spiritual beliefs and activities which make up a shamanic heritage. Moreover, shamanism must be seen as a process rather than a fixed product of a past culture which can never be restored as it was. Indeed, Tsugaru shamans and shamanism reveal syncretic aspects, like any living tradition: change is inevitable. *Itako*, for instance, might use candles and incense in the Buddhist manner rather than a hearth and tobacco, but the most fundamental feature of indigenous shamanism in northern Japan, trance-possession communication with the dead and the deities, has remained the same. The language to convey the divine words has changed, but the basic pattern of delivery, first-person sung narrative, as well as its link to oral history, has remained the same. The ancestral rites, and general care for the ancestors, for both Tsugaru and the Hokkaidô Ainu have continued to be the preserve of women, and their distinct Dionysian characteristics mark them as a vital part of indigenous continuity.[92]

The diverse beliefs and customs which relate to animism and shamanism in Tsugaru cannot be understood fully without understanding those of the Ainu. But the study of the Tsugaru spiritual heritage also sheds light on Ainu culture, and makes inevitable certain questions which have not customarily been asked: questions relating to the topic to what extent is modern Ainu culture "pristine" and "authentic"? For example, I have discussed the role of *shugen*, syncretic Buddhist ascetics, in the general male monopoliza-

tion of mountain activities in Tsugaru (and their influence among the *matagi*), and the general discrimination that works to exclude females from authentic religious acts. Similar gender bias has been detected among the Ainu in Hokkaidô, but as far as I know, it has been assumed both by contemporary Ainu and by scholars to be an essential attribute of their indigenous culture. Could not these biases have been exaggerated due partly to the popularization of Buddhism (Japanese or other versions in Asia), which relied greatly on semi-secular practitioners whose origin was regional and humble in nature? In Japan, they were *shugen*; in Siberia many centuries ago, many shamans came to be influenced by male-centric Lamaism. This topic is worth our attention, since it also seems to have some connection with the development of metallurgy. As I noted, *shugen* activities were often closely associated with metallurgy (as in the case of Mt. Akakura and the image of the *oni*). Indigenous iron technology in Hokkaidô must have been known to the outside world, at least to those who maintained direct trade relations with the natives there.

Tsugaru shamanism provides an interesting contrast to Hokkaidô Ainu shamanism in that its maternal core is very much alive, known to all, and supported by the majority. Female shamans in Tsugaru are no secret to anyone, and no male leader would presume to stop them from praying to deities or speaking the words of divine beings. Unlike present-day Ainu shamans from Hokkaidô who are given little or no official role as ceremonial masters, Tsugaru shamans are free from such restrictions: they have domestic *oshira* gods to entertain and divine with, drums to beat and bells to ring, and ancestral rites to conduct or assist. In this freedom from restriction, Tsugaru shamans can be compared with those of the Sakhalin Ainu, whose diversions from Hokkaidô Ainu practice,

including the overtly "showy" characteristic of their shamanic seances, tends to be explained in terms of their geographic proximity to Siberia. A socio-political explanations may be better here: it appears that the Soviet attitude towards the Sakhalin Ainu, at least in modern times, was more tolerant of their indigenous customs and ethnic identity than the Japanese. Sakhalin Ainu settlers in Hokkaidô have spoken of their problems adjusting to the Hokkaidô norm, where the boundary between Japanese and Ainu is rigid, because in Sakhalin, Ainu and Japanese residents were both no more than one of many ethnic groups who interacted amongst each other on a day to day basis.

As I remarked briefly in Chapter One, it appears that the essence of indigenous culture has been maintained via the maternal line in Tsugaru. Compared to the situation among the Hokkaidô Ainu, the function of the family in the populations in Tsugaru is much better preserved: women have been the domestic "chiefs," keepers of the domestic fire, *kamado*, not only for families but also for communities and beyond. As we have seen in the discussion of *tôji*, wine-maker and ceremonial master, the women of Tsugaru have always remained at the crossroad between the sacred and mundane, the religious and political, the sensual and the spiritual — but all of their work begins and ends at home in the kitchen, where the goddess of fire protects and confirms them. Women, fire, house, family, and community — all interchangeable with the concept of *kamado* — are the maternal essence of the Tsugaru heritage.

Scholars have often complained of difficulty understanding Tsugaru culture, and they have repeatedly pointed out that Tsugaru lacks many of the organized, unified religious and social structures that are commonly found in "Japan." To demonstrate that this complaint is misconceived and groundless, I have discussed the centrality of the infor-

mal yet well recognized social network captured by the concept of ***kamado***. Because of ***kamado*** and the strength of maternal tradition, imposed religions such as Buddhism and even Shintôism acquired a distinctly indigenous flavour in Tsugaru: they became Tsugaru Buddhism and Shintôism, particularly in the hands of ordinary people and their shamans, whether or not the authorities wished them that way. The syncretism of Tsugaru culture may not be to the taste of traditionalist Ainu, but it remains a living tradition deeply integrated into the everyday lives of ordinary people, like the air they breathe.

Joseph Kitagawa wrote as recently as 1987 that the Ainu and the "Japanese" are mutually exclusive ethnic populations, and the Ainu only managed to preserve certain features of their archaic religious and cultural tradition because of their historical isolation from the rest of the populace. He thus contended that "the Ainu legacy throws little light on the religion of non-Ainu people in prehistoric Japan" (Kitagawa 1987: 31). This statement, while by no means unusual for a "scholar" in this field, displays a spectacular ignorance of both the indigenous history of northern Japan and the diversity of the contemporary forms of indigenous faith. It will be plain by now from my discussions and illustrations that in Tsugaru, the Ainu and the "Japanese" are anything but mutually exclusive groups, and that both together have contributed to the creation of the distinct culture of the Tsugaru people.

Our last diagram (Figure 4.31 below) is an attempt to represent how Tsugaru and Hokkaidô indigenous cultures exist within the Ainu culture complex of northern Japan, and how Ainu identity is present in the two contexts, based on the assumption that shamanism lies at the core of both. The "cookies" metaphorically represent the general cultural context; the "chocolate chips," the existence of persons who claim to be Ainu.

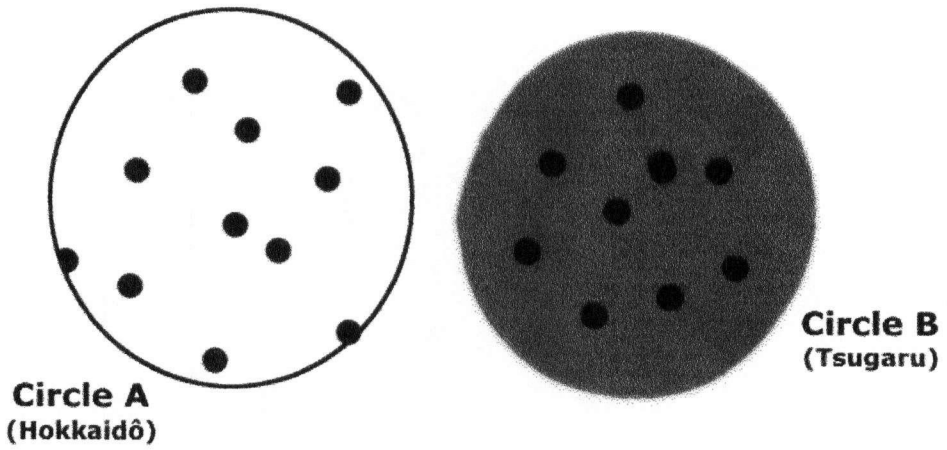


Figure 4.31: Ainu identity and cultural contexts
in Hokkaidô and Tsugaru

Circle A represents the case of Hokkaidô, where the Ainu stand out clearly against a "blank" cultural context of settlers and colonialists, maintained by and large separate from the traditional Ainu culture indigenous to Hokkaidô. Like a chocolate chip cookie with plain batter, the Ainu "chips" are readily recognizable and easy to perceive within their sharply differing context. Circle B, on the other hand, represents the case of Tsugaru. Here, the "chips" are set in a dough much closer to them in color and taste, and are thus less easily distinguished from their context; but the context itself is richer. In much the same way, the Ainu identity in Tsugaru is less salient than in Hokkaidô, because Tsugaru culture in general is much richer in Ainu content.

Endnotes

1 Koigawa 1953: 56. This is the ending section of a long shamanic verse, which is repeated five times addressing different directions, east, south, west, north, and centre.

2 For a review of public opinion and regional government attitudes towards shamans in Aomori before and during the Second World War, see Ikegami 1990.

3 Tamuramaro-related stories also appear in the *Konjaku monogatari*, including one which depicts him as the legendary founder of Kiyomizu temple in Kyoto. (Kokuto 1979)

4 The *neputa* is one of many indigenous customs banned by the political authorities of early Meiji, who considered them a "national shame" and detrimental to progress. Those prohibitions also included stone worship, roadside stone statues, insect-sending ceremonies, shamanism, the *bon* dance, and the *enburi* dance. Similar orders were promulgated nationwide, but in regions where no religious, medical, or entertainment alternatives were available to ordinary people, such as Tsugaru, this only perpetuated popular alienation from the bureaucratic establishment. Activities, instead of being terminated, went underground, and people did their best to hide their traditions from the bureaucrats. This basic alienation from top-down initiatives on religious matters characterizes the Tsugaru way of worship to this day (Nishigaki 1970: 378).

An excellent review of the campaign against shamans, ***ttako***, ***kamtsama***, and other religious figures in Aomori, with a great deal of contemporary source material translated from newspaper accounts and some interesting comparative notes relating to similar actions in Okinawa, which was located too late to be fully utilized in this dissertation, can be found in Ikegami 1990, available on the World Wide Web (http://www.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cpjr/folkbeliefs/ikegami.html).

Even though he does not explicitly address indigenous issues, Ikegami observes that the difference between the attitudes of the regional elites in Aomori and in Okinawa (where the late 1930's saw an actual purge of shamans, with more than 400 arrests) was due to their respective perceptions of the "Japaneseness" of the local traditions. Okinawan elites apparently did not feel they were "Japanese" enough, and so tried to wipe out their traditional spiritual customs, whereas in Aomori the elites had become much better at putting a superficial Yamato gloss on local realities (cf. for example the almost surrealistic account in Ikegami 1990 of an incident in December of 1936, where the Chief of Police in Aomori assembled the local ***kamtsama*** to lecture them on the true meaning of their profession according to the *Kojtkt*: "You ladies and gentlemen call yourselves ***kamtsama***, but I wonder if you know what a ***kamtsama*** really is?").

5 Even among some educated persons of the younger generation, who are casual about accepting the Ainu past of Tsugaru, there is still despair about the supposed absence of "native" customs, since they do not realize how thoroughly immersed in the "native" they actually are.

6 The case of Tsugaru is probably similar to the Christianized and assimilated Ainu in Russia, for example, whose culture deviates considerably from Hokkaidô Ainu norms. The problem is that scholars have not been interested in studying the transformation and adaptation of Ainu culture to contemporary circumstances, assuming that once you become Christian you are no longer a real Ainu. For that matter, there has been no study on contemporary Ainu life and Buddhism in Hokkaidô, either: again the assumption has been that when one becomes a Buddhist, one ceases to practice Ainu beliefs.

7 This "undersea" world is a common theme in Japanese folklore as well. In Tsugaru, however, specific places such as Tosa or Towada have origin tales which have to do with monsters, usually large snakes, who are the masters of the lake.

8 Traditionally, Tsugaru people believed that dragons or large snakes in the water controlled weather, especially rain, and so sacrifices were offered to the dragon. Dragons are also mountain deities — as I discuss later, my great-grandfather brought back a stone 'dragon' from the mountain which he found after being guided by a dream, which was a large ammonite fossil.

9 In 1996, the Keikokan museum in Aomori City put together an exhibition comparing Ainu designs and religious objects with those known in Aomori. In one section, Ainu *inaw* were compared to a replica of a rope-tree made using tree fibers. In Aomori, sacred ropes are ideally made by the male master of the house, and to this day, many villagers follow this custom and decorate houses, trees, rocks, and other objects with hand-woven ropes at New Year's. The researchers from Japan (includ-

ing some Ainu) who visited the Ainu collection in St. Petersberg, Russia, also noticed the dim and variable boundary between rope and shaved wood, as the Ainu shaved wood in this collection is often used to wrap and tie things, in the same manner as rope (personal communication with Hasebe Kaguhiro, chief curator of Hakodate City Museum, 1997; see also Hasebe1996).

10 This account is from the Shimokita peninsula, but I believe it is true for the whole of Tsugaru.

We should also note that the distinction between the soul, *tamashii*, and the spirit, *rei*, can be difficult in Japanese, since *rei* can mean either the soul, the spirit, or the ghost depending on context. These are all common words in Tsugaru today, but the term *rei* seems to be relatively new. In Tsugaru, the distinction between these meanings may be even fuzzier, since when people talk about 'ghosts,' the ghosts are often assumed to be no different from living humans. The fact that they no longer have a 'real' body often does not matter. Just as dream is considered a part of ordinary reality, 'ghosts' are not a pale reflection of a past life, but the living souls of the dead. Whether something is embodied in a concrete form tends to be less important in Tsugaru, when it comes down to dealing with spiritual matters, because these are real enough without it.

11 Compare Ikegami's opinion with Ohnuki-Tierney's report on the relationship between deities, demons, and human beings among the Sakhalin Ainu, which I believe is trying to address the same phenomena we are concerned with here but is contradictory and incoherent, leaving the Ainu unique in a rather surrealistic

ability to be "powerless" towards gods and thus to transform the nature of the universe:

> What we see, then, is that the power to turn any beings of the universe into either a benevolent or malevolent elements rests in the hands of the Ainu, who, in Ainu theory, are powerless. In addition, this ability of the Ainu to form and transform the nature of the beings of the universe gives an amazing fluidity in the basic scheme of classification of the inhabitants of the universe; a member of one social group can transfer to another (Ohnuki-Tierney 1974: 109).

12 This is also a commonly practiced charm against the god of the blizzard among the Ainu. With sickle in hand, the Ainu often addressed the blizzard with phrases like "If you do not behave, you will lose your underwear, wind goddess!" (Chiri1973n: 12-13)

13 A wild horse running in the rice fields is believed to reduce the spread of insects. Insect-sending ceremonies of this sort are commonly found in traditional rice-growing communities throughout the Japanese archipelago. According to a piece of folklore in the village of Shariki near Tosa, this practice goes back eight hundred fifty years, and some of its original practitioners in the area came from Izumo country in southwestern Honshû (Kitazawa 1995b: 4).

Traditionally, in southern Tsugaru, the beating of drums by young villagers replaced the dance. This loud drumming is shamanic in origin, and the drummers,

all amateurs from the village, chant "The beat will bring the heat!" (Shindô 1970: 397).

14 None of the major *inari* shrines in Tsugaru, even the Takayama *inari* shrine, have any association with Fushimi *Inari* in Kyôto (Naoe 1970: 257).

15 This fox worship as an aid to fishing is a regional phenomenon in Ainu territories. Sarashina et al. reports an Ainu tale explaining the origin of fox worship in the Saru region in southwestern Hokkaidô. *Marten* was an important god descended from Heaven. When he burnt *mendoch* (*kappa*), two kinds of foxes came forth from the ashes: an evil fox from the red ash, which tricked humans, and a good fox from the black ash, which helped humans and responded to their prayers. The latter could cure human illnesses, save fisherman from rough seas, and help them catch many fishes.

However, divination using a fox skull is more widespread than prayers to the fox god. Even in areas of northern Hokkaidô such as Asahikawa, Ainu fishermen put fox skulls on their heads, saying "if there will be a big catch, stand with your jaw towards me," and shake their heads to drop the skull (Sarashina et. al. 1976: 297-301)

16 In Tsugaru, fox divination is more complex and more common among the fishing communities than among the agricultural communities. Fox divination follows a similar pattern throughout Japan, but there is nowhere where it is comparable to Tsugaru in its complexity (Naoe 1970: 259).

17 The ethnoscientist Yamada Takako (1994) argues that Japanese traditional beliefs are animistic and centered on nature-worship, as is observable in the earliest official historical documents such as the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki*. In this respect, the "Japanese" and Ainu share a broad basic framework. However, Yamada argues that there is a difference in that the egalitarian nature of the Ainu world view is violated by Japanese cosmology, which assumes a hierarchal relationship between humans and deities, with clear and absolute boundaries between them (Yamada 1994:188-230). While her effort to make this distinction is praiseworthy, her conclusions are shaped to a great degree by the nature of her initial assumptions: that the so-called "Japanese" are homogenous and confined to an exclusively agricultural lifestyle. Moreover, the texts she has drawn on are artificial constructs of the imperial ruling class, and they may unduly exaggerate the difference between their own ideas and those of the indigenous people they were opposing. Shamanism in practice is pragmatic, and abstract theory plays a very minor role in day to day operations, as pointed out by Ikegami (1987:104-119). Perhaps most important of all, many people of Tsugaru have never been confined to an agricultural livelihood and have been accustomed to utilize whatever values and practices immediately available to them that seemed useful.

18 According to a version transmitted in a *matagi* family in Hirosaki, the dragon princess gave birth to twelve mountain gods in a mountain hut, assisted by a "good" *matagi* named Somin. A *matagi* named "Kotan" was late in attending this important labour, and hence earned a bad reputation. Later, the Ox-head Heaven King went hunting, and at night he needed accommodation. Kotan refused to take the

king into his home, making his five sons exorcise and expel him. The King walked seven *ri* (2.44 miles) to Somin's home, where he was welcomed and treated well. After staying there for seven days, the king sent the gods of disease to Kotan's house and killed all of his children, but his wife was saved since she was a daughter of Somin. She was given seven mountains and seven valleys and was inaugurated as a *matagi* (racial founder?). Her line is known as the eastern *matagi* and they are the descendents of a dragon king from Tenjiku, India. The descendents of Somin came to be called the western *matagi* (Chiba 1970:175-177).

The story contains inconsistencies but deserves attention. Kida argued that the term "kotan" in this story derives from the Ainu word meaning "village" (Kida1932). His argument was criticized, because one Ainu word might be a mere accident and does not prove any link to the Ainu. But to this day, no serious research to either support or refute Kida's argument has been done, and it tends to be denied based on the popular, but increasingly obsolete, assumption that the *matagi* are "Japanese" and thus cannot be related to the "Ainu." Chiba, for example, tries his best to defend *matagi* as traditional "Japanese," with a culture connected to the sea, which he believes to be completely different from hunters like the Ainu (whom we know to be people of the sea as well): "According to Origuchi Shinobu, a dragon king's wife giving birth in the mountain is derived from the sea-based life of the ancestors – and this motif was a familiar divine origin tale to the people in Japanese archipelago in the past, and *matagi* who believed such tale cannot be thought to have been descended from an exotic hunting people such as the Ainu" (Chiba 1970:180).

According to Kida, the *matagi* community descended from Kotan in the above story is Hosono village in Namioka in south-central Tsugaru. On February 22nd of the year 1694, four hunters from Hosono village pledged to Tsugaru *han* that they were the descendents of Kotan and were indigenous *matagi* until 1690, and offered bear intestines as tribute to Tsugaru *han*. But they were not allowed to hunt since they were no longer officially registered as *matagi*. They claimed that the mountain god was not happy and many misfortunes fell on them, and thus they needed the official *matagi* status (*matagi-yaku*) to be granted by the *han*. (It appears from this that Tsugaru *han* had distinguished *matagi* from Ainu.)

The first appearance of the term *matagi* in Tsugaru *han* official documents is in *Tsugaru han nikki* (Kan'ei 16, June the seventeenth): the Imabetsu Ainu offered bear skins as tribute to Tsugaru *han* but this time they were not treated the same as *matagi*. But the question is, how were they different? Was the difference perceived to be ethnic, or functional, and what was the context? Many questions are still unanswered.

19 Obayashi, quoting Tsuchihashi, points out that there was a concept of *tamano-o* ("soul's string") in classical Japanese which was similar to the Ainu concept of soul, *ram-at* ("mind-string") (Obayashi 1997:178, Tsuchihashi 1990: 26-29).

20 Ikeya writes: "The author believes that the Ainu and Matagi bear rituals developed from similar original forms into two different types: the Matagi bear festival, in which a Buddhist priest participated, and the Ainu bear cub sacrificial ritual. Whether the original basically similar form developed independently into two dif-

ferent forms of ritual or whether these two different rituals developed through the spread of culture is a subject which needs to be clarified through further investigation from the viewpoint of socioeconomic change in the Edo period" (Ikeya 1997: 62)

21 There is a difference in opinion among scholars concerning the Ainu belief about the reincarnation of ancestral souls in infants. Fujimura, on the one hand, considers such a belief an ideological tendency rather than fixed and deterministic; Obayashi, on the other, contends that the Ainu believe that ancestors from both maternal and paternal lineages of an expected child decide who should return to this world, and the choice is made according to the gender of the child. The candidacy of the reincarnating soul is determined by his/her good conduct in the previous life (see Fujimoto 1982: 112-113, Obayashi 1997a: 179).

22 At the *jizô* temple in Kawakura, for example, when a ***kannon*** (***guanyin***) statue was donated, it was placed near the entrance gate to the north, facing exactly east. The temple caretaker had consulted a ***kamisama*** before deciding the location, and the ***kamisama*** had told them that the venerable god should face the sun. The statue was originally erected somewhere else, in commemoration of and comfort for young soldiers killed in the war (Tanaka fieldwork, 1999).

23 The former was said to be practiced until twenty or so years ago among some *matagi*, but probably not today.

24 This twin salmon myth is also widespread among the First Nations peoples on the northwest coast of Canada. Obayashi states that it is not found among the Ainu because the Ainu abhorred twins (Obayashi 1997d: 143-159). I have not been able to confirm if there is indeed a similar myth among the Hokkaidô Ainu, but Obayashi's explanation is invalid: twins are also abhorred in Tsugaru but this did not stop them from having the salmon myth. In Tsugaru, when a twin was born, one of them was often killed at birth. In some areas, twins were believed to be reincarnations of double suicides, and the parents were looked down upon by others, since the twins had to be married to each other (Chiba 1970: 23). On the other hand, twins were not abhorred among Sakhalin Ainu but were considered very special:

> ...the birth of twins, especially when both are males, is the most important and most welcome type of birth. A twin which is called, literally, a "gift from the deities," and the twins require special treatment. When they sleep they must be placed on the most sacred side of the house, and their belongings, such as clothes, may never be placed on the rear (west) side of the house. A girl who is born into a family immediately after male twins is called a "servant of the deities" and is also treated by the family with special care (Ohnuki-Tierney 1974: 55-56).

25 The house raising ceremony in Tsugaru deserves attention. Houses were traditionally built by the men of the family when they were smaller and made of adobe, but today professional carpenters are hired to do the service. The main ceremonial masters are the carpenters themselves, who conduct purifications and offer

prayers. A Shintô priest is invited, too, but his role tends to be nominal and initial, and he soon gives way to the carpenter. After the carpenter purifies the house (exactly how is not described anywhere), rice cakes are thrown to the four directions, starting from the east, then to the west, then to the south, and finally to the north. After this, a big feast is held and everyone is invited. Offerings to the raised frame usually include a whole fish, kelp, salt, ***saké***, rice, and vegetables, as well as carpenter's tools. A pair of straw sandals with one of the thongs cut off is placed on top of the main house pole (Ichihara 1970: 213).

26 To be exact, the road runs south-east.

27 No bones or any funeral materials have been found from these tombs. However, according to one of the guides at the site, the corpses' legs may have been inclined slightly towards the east, over the slope.

28 Kiraichi is located on this indigenous road as well. There is more than one footpath crossing the Nakayama mountains, which run north-south in the Tsugaru peninsula, from Kiraichi to Sotoga-hama, the north and northeastern shores. Local people told me that an experienced ***matagi*** or mountain worker could reach the eastern shore in a four-hour trip via the ***kemono-michi***, "animal paths." It is said that during the war between the Kiraichi Ainu and the Tsugaru clan in the late sixteenth century, the Ainu blocked the mountain path between Kiraichi and Iizume to the south, where they had a large "castle-like" fort, and the Tsugaru ***han*** had to hire a local guide who knew the way, and who could talk to the Ainu. This "traitor" was given the family name of Tsushima after the Ainu defeat, and he became the

founder of the wealthy Tsushima family of Kanagi, Dazai Osamu's birth family. (Dazai's true name was Tsushima Shûji).

29 The term exorcism is used here for convenience, but it is not carried out to wipe out or exterminate evil: its purpose is to make sure the evil influence is minimized by keeping it safely away from the person who is affected, often only temporarily.

30 At the time of observation in 1967, the village had one hundred forty households, and most of them were affiliated with the Sôtô sect of Buddhism.

31 Dumplings are called *kata-shitogi* (hard *shitogi*) or *futatsuki-dango* (twice-pounded dumplings), since they are made in a hurry. The rice is called *ippaimeshi*, which is cooked just for the deceased, and placed in a special bowl topped with a small mount of rice. The top part is called *saba* ("head" or "top" in Ainu), and it is for *muenbotoke*, people who died leaving no one to attend their funerals. Satô considers the former to be an older custom than the latter (Satô 1970: 230).

32 Pronounced either *uchigi* or *utsugi*, depending on the village. The tree is widespread in the hills and mountains, and has pretty pink flowers resembling cherry blossoms. But it is smaller than a cherry tree, and its fruit is not edible. The *uchigi* are strictly funeral trees, the tree for the dead, and thus it is taboo to cut and use them for occasions other than funerals.

33 These tiny offerings are common gifts for the dead and ancestors in Tsugaru, similar to the Ainu to their north, who use grains of rice.

34 These are all in the area formerly known as Sotoga-hama, the last documented Ainu "territory" in Tsugaru.

35 Some Hokkaidô Ainu offered fish bones and other "dirty food" to evil spirits, to appease them (cf. Chamberlain 1888, XXXVI, "An inquisitive man's experience of Hades"). Note also that both Tsugaru people and the Ainu believe that the soul of a young child who has died is dangerous and spiteful, and not easy to console.

36 Self-abortion was a common practice, and many woman died of infection afterwards (Chiba 1970: 23).

37 The pilgrims dance and chant repetitively throughout their pilgrimage: "*Saigi, saigi, rokkon saigi, oyamani hatsudai, rokkon syôjo, itsuni narurai, namukimyô chôrai.*" The chant is a humorous folk rendition of a solemn Buddhist prayer, and it make no sense at all, but the sound goes with the music (Shindô1970: 413).

38 There are four routes to climbing Mt. Iwaki: Nagahira, Hyakuzawa, Dake, and Oishi. In the past, Nagahira was also used by pilgrims (Miyata 1970: 279).

39 Although Ubaishi is commonly believed to be the furthest point that women could reach, Wakamori points out that it is more likely to be named after an exorcism of a *yamauba*, mountain witch, by an ascetic (Wakamori 1970:14).

40 This type of divination is commonly known in Tsugaru as *sangu* ("spread offerings"), and is practiced in many ponds and lakes.

41 As a result of the uncontrollable behavior of the pilgrims in general, the stone deity came to be locked inside the altar, protected by a lattice, in the sixties.

42 Compare these "wild" Mount Iwaki activities with the following description of the Dionysian mountain cult: "The Greeks also had their fertility rites, performed annually in the spring. But the worship of Dionysus was something more complex....It was not just a sensual orgy, but was attended by discomfort and risk. Plutarch records how, at Delphi, the worshippers set out to climb the 8,000-foot Mount Parnassus, were cut off by a snowstorm, and returned with their clothes frozen stiff as boards" (Taylor 1954: 219).

43 Most of these *obusuna* shrines came to be identified with Shintô-related gods such as Inari, Junmyô, and Kumano. These are all foreign gods introduced to Tsugaru during the Edo period or in Meiji, which penetrated into the region along with the development of rice fields, resulting in the creation of new branch villages (Miyata 1970: 294).

44 See the comparison of Moya-yama in Aomori and Akita prefectures, and Moiwa yama in Hokkaidô, based on extensive field work in Yamada 1993a:121-136 and 1993b: 249-272. As for *-mori* names, their link to the Ainu language is less clear, but Fukuda, for example, offers a few possible cases of - *mori* names that have a connection to Ainu in Fukuda1991. Also see the Ainu explanation for *mor/i* in Yamamoto 1991:100.

45 In Tsugaru dialect, *tayû* can mean priest (Shindô 1970: 397).

46 According to the *Tsugaru Ittôshi*, the origin tale of Mt. Iwaki can be summarized as follows. Mt. Iwaki was a small mountain originally called Asobe no mori (Asobe forest) and *oni* lived there. The noble Hanawaka-maru came and conquered the *oni*, with a swastika and crosier. The defeated *oni* and his four daughters were forced to produce an affidavit stating that they would never seek revenge or do any harm to humans and animals. They were then spared, and hid in a cave on Mt. Akakura. Princess Anju flew to Mt. Iwaki, and entered it as its goddess. Then the volcano erupted, and gave the mountain its present size and shape.

47 During the Edo period, a taboo was observed when passing through the caves on Mt. Iwaki, which were said to be the dwelling of *oni*: Make no noise and speak no words. If someone broke the taboo, natural disasters and foul weather were expected (Miyata 1970: 283).

48 In the fifth year of Meiji (1872), the Japanese government issued an order for the abolition of *shugen* throughout the country. Most *shugen* and *yamabushi* were absorbed by Buddhist sects and state Shintô (Wakamori 1970:18).

49 Offering raw eggs to the snake deity is also practiced in Okinawa and many other traditional areas in Japan.

50 A common Hokkaidô Ainu interpretation of the name of the mountain "Osore" is that it is derived from *us-or(o)*, meaning "gulf." It is considered to have nothing to do with any meaning associated with "Hell." Indeed, the mountain is locally called Mt. Usori.

51 It is 879 meters above sea level.

52 A genre of religious performance that was widely adopted after the mid-Heian period (eleventh century) is *etoki*, or mandala preaching. *E* means "picture" — in this case, a religious picture or mandala — and *toki* means "explanation." The preachers displayed pictures of Heaven and Hell and explained the consequences of one's good or bad conduct on earth. *Etoki* were performed widely by the travelling preachers and entertainers, wherever a crowd could be gathered: at street corners, in temples and shrines, or near the inns and entertainment districts (Sekiyama 1973: 106, 1978:87)

The source material for *etoki* was drawn from the *Ojô yôshû* (*Collection of Essentials for Rebirth in Amida's Pure Land*), compiled by Genshin (942-1017; Morioka and Sasaki 1990: 214). The vivid description of Hell and Heaven by means of *etoki* was such an emotionally powerful method of spreading Buddhist moral values and the doctrine of rewards and punishment that it captured the imagination of many visual, performance and literary artists during later times, including performers of *rakugo*, a genre of classical storytelling which emerged in the town of Edo and developed into a popular national art in contemporary times (see Nobuhiro 1986 and Morioka and Sasaki 1990 for a discussion of *rakugo* and popular Buddhism).

Examples of these Hell and Heaven mandalas are to this day proudly displayed by local Buddhist temples in the town of Kanagi near Kiraichi.

53 "Buddhist sutras such as the *Agon-kyô* and *Shoho-nenshô-kyô* say that it is a woman's innate nature to commit sin, and that she will be abandoned in the blood pond hell. Not marrying, having an abortion, infanticide, or deserting a child – all of these will inevitably result in a woman being sent to the blood pond. Institutional religions would not forgive such conduct, because they were organized by and centred around the interests of men, but not of women. *Itako* can summon the spirit of a dead infant. Mothers can hear the voices of their lost children, and usually the spirits say no reproachful words but only kind, thoughtful greetings to their mothers. In tears, mothers say their apologies to the children. The *itako* give relief to those women" (Sasamori 1997: 52-53). Popular Chinese sectarian texts influenced by Buddhism, however, state that women can be rescued from the pool of blood, and that there are rituals to assist this (information from Dr. Daniel Overmyer, February 2000).

54 Mt. Osore is also known for its gold deposits, among the richest in Japan.

55 Note that I do not mean to imply here fire worship in the Zoroastrian sense.

56 Mt. Iwaki had large deposits of ***kettekkô***, a kind of clay ironstone used in the earliest stages of metallurgy. Seven ancient iron production sites have been located, some of which are suspected to belong to the late Jômon period (Shibata 1995: 55-56)

It is well known that shamanic knowledge often travelled with the spread of metalurgy. Sugawara argues that metallurgy was introduced to the peoples in the Japa-

nese archipelago by groups who also had a knowledge of shamanism, and that there is a close link between the early mountain ascetics (who eventually became *shugen*) and early metallurgy and ironworking in the Japanese archipelago (Sugawara 1999). In another paper, Sugawara argues that the Japanese sword became curved after the Heian period because of the influence of indigenous northerners (in his view, Ainu), and that it was the indigenous people in northern Honshû who produced the most excellent swords, and traded them both northwards and southwards (Sugawara 1997). If we put the information in his two papers together, an interesting hypothesis emerges: northern shamanism and metallurgy is rooted not in Hokkaidô but in northern Honshû.

But how far do these 'roots' go back? Standard Japanese archeology traces the existence of 'real' metallurgy no earlier than the late Yayoi period (the third century CE) and holds that it began in the south (Sugawara 1999: 60) However, Fukuda discusses the possibility of a close relationship between the indigenous people of northern Honshû and the ancient people of Siberia, where metallurgy began as early as eight thousand years ago. It is known that wooden bent-nosed masks are used by shamans in many parts of the world, including the natives in Siberia, the Inuit of Alaska, the Iroquois, the Kuril Ainu, in Korea, and in Ceylon. Fukuda discusses several late Jômon clay masks with bent noses, excavated in Aomori and Iwate prefectures, which he considers must have been impractical for shamanic use as they stand. He also gives examples of the ritualistic use of bent-nose masks in contemporary Japan. Such masks are either demonic, masks of *oni*, or comic one such as *hyottoko*, fire-keepers. Both of these are linked to fire and/or

metallurgy. In recent years the study of *oni* has become important, as it has revealed an intimate relationship between cult and folklore concerning *oni* and early production of ironware in Japan (Fukuda 1988, 1989).

57 Six is also a relatively common organizing unit in the central court after the Heian period. Six is associated with Buddhism in Japan, and there are numerous names and practices associated with the number six in Japanese Buddhist tradition: *rokudô* means the six levels of the other world, from which the ideas six *jizô*, six *guanyin*, and six pennies for the deceased are derived; *rokudô-rinne* is the reincarnation in the six levels without enlightenment; *rokubu* or *rokujû rokubu* is six or sixty-six *bu*, which means pilgrims; *roku-hei* is six evil influences on the mind, and so on. Further study is required to determine how the symbolism of the number six evolved in Japanese Buddhism.

58 In the prefecture of Nagano, the Suwa shrine hosts a traditional ceremony of tree-sending once every six years. In this ceremony, a large tree is cut from the mountain, decorated with ropes and shaved wood, and carried around by dozens of semi-naked males. It is eventually tossed down the valley. Local people believe that this tradition is indigenous to the region, and that it originated some time during the Jômon period.

59 These six rice balls are made from a special part of the rice harvest called *inakazu* ("rice number"). An *inakazu* is ten *shima*, which is a bundle of twelve rice plants, from which the main seed heads have been removed. Compare this numbering system with the traditional Chinese calendrical arrangement of the "twelve heav-

enly stems and ten earthly branches" where the permutations of one cycle of ten and another of twelve define a sixty-part series.

60 In Japanese mythology, the founding deities of the ancient "Japanese" descended from Heaven in a cunningly built sky ship called *amano-iwafune*. We should note that *ama*, "heaven," is a homonym of *ama*, "sea." Note also the similarity to the Ainu idea of their flying ship, the *shinta*.

61 However, even though I present them as professional shamans, I should warn the reader that in reality most of them live like ordinary housewives or peasants, and some of them only meet with their clients occasionally, as seldom as twice a month.

62 Sasamori encountered cases of women suffering from possession by fox spirits, as well as being informed by a psychiatrist at Hirosaki University Hospital that although for almost 30 years there have been no patients acting like foxes, he is still treating one who is possessed by a frog that lives in the pond at Hirosaki castle (Sasamori 1997: 53). According to my own experience interacting with people in Tsugaru, fox possession is still a relatively common metaphor for getting lost or suffering from a mild form of mental illness.

63 *Oroshi* is a nominal form of the verb *orosu*, whose meanings include: (a) to bring something down, and (b) offload something, as in offloading trade goods from ships.

64 The late Ms. Kudô was not in fact an ***ttako*** but a ***kamisama*** according to a totally objective classification, since she was not blind and did not apprentice. But people, including temple caretakers, called her an ***ttako*** (Tanaka fieldwork, 1999).

65 These indigenous customs and beliefs, as well as their Ainu counterparts discussed in Chapter Three, may be referred to as "popular religion" 庶民宗教 or "folk religion" 民俗宗教 for some purposes, for example, when comparing with Chinese indigenous traditions. However, in China diverse traditional ethno-cultural groups have been recognized as native populations, and hence the term "folk" or "popular" may enhance indigenous pride without homogenizing the ethnic diversity within the state. In Japan, the terms "folk" 民俗 or "popular" 庶民 have too often been used to refer to various traditional local customs of the illusory "homogenous" Japanese race, and to deny ethno-cultural diversity and regional indigenous 土着／先住民 identity.

66 Some of the common misunderstandings about ***matagi*** include that concerning their belief about the god of the mountain, who is said to be the governor of the mountain. Ikeya, for example, points out that for the Ainu, the bear is the mountain god, and this is a major difference from ***matagi*** (Ikeya 1997: 61). However, as far as ***matagi*** in Tsugaru are concerned, the bear can be called the mountain god as well (Ohtsuki 1979: 192). Another important commonality is the use of the ***onkami*** gesture for greeting and expressing gratitude: this is in fact a common and universally understood piece of body language among many indigenous peoples in the circumpacific region, including the west coast of Canada.

The comparative study of Ainu hunters and *matagi* remains at an elementary level, and so we need to wait for further in-depth research on the subject.

67 The Ainu *satmon*, ordeal by hot water, was also a common ascetic practice among *shugen* in general (Wakamori 1970:15).

68 The placenta, once it is out, is placed in the stable where the horses will tread on it; or buried in a shadowy area where family members will walk on it; or buried near the outside toilet where people will walk on it. The practice of having the placenta stepped on is common among the Ainu — it is associated with the hope that the child will grow strong and healthy. It appears that the placenta is treated as if it is a deceased child: In Hirosaki city and Inagaki village in southern Tsugaru, memorial stones for placentas have been raised by midwives and gynecologists.

Moreover, Tsugaru people traditionally treasured the umbilical cord. In some areas such as Ajigasawa, it was kept and used to treat serious illnesses including cancer: the male cord for a male, the female cord for a female. However, the first-born child's umbilical cord should not be given to anyone; if it is, the child's life will be shortened.

Various taboos are observed at childbirth. A very common one is the avoidance of the labour house by both loggers and *matagi*. They call it *higa-warui* ("bad fire/day"), avoid staying at their own houses, and change the ashes of the hearth (Chiba 1970: 21-22).

69 We are reminded here of the cart drawn with a white horse mentioned by Aiko's mother at her death. The association of various dramatic performances, drum beating and so on, in Tsugaru should also be noted — it will be discussed more fully below. Ancient "Japanese" people in Nara and Heian period also practiced horse sacrifice (see Kaneko 1997: 57-86).

70 In yet another popular version of the *oshira saimon*, the horse is killed and its skin flayed off and hung up to dry. A wind blew, and the skin wrapped itself around the girl and took her up to the sky (Sasamori 1997: 50). A similar story is also found in Okinawa (Kominami 1998).

Images of white horses, dressed in colorful clothes, can be found in numerous village shrines in Tsugaru. Horses are also intimately linked to sea travel in ancient times. For example, the *e-ma* ("picture horse") is an wooden tablet with a horse drawing and prayers, offered to shrines in the hope it will ensure a safe sea journey (see Figure 4.32 to the right).

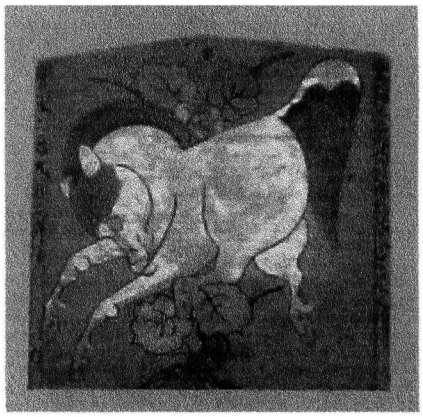


Figure 4.32:
E-ma plaque

Those with some knowledge of Chinese mythology will perhaps notice a resemblance between the *oshira* legend and the Chinese story about a romance between a girl and a stallion from the fourth-century *Soushenji* (*A Record of Research into Spirits*), translated in Birrell 1993: 200. In the Chinese version, however, the story differs in some respects, in that the daughter of a village chief who

had gone far away on business asks the horse to retrieve her father, and she would marry the horse when it brings him back. The horse flies to the sky and brings the father back, but afterwards, begins behaving strangely. The horse gets killed by the father and its skin flayed off; and finally the skin wraps itself around the daughter and flies into the sky. The two finally turn into silkworms.

Recently, Kominami has published an interesting discussion on the link between the above story and the versions widespread in northern Honshû. The Chinese count is influenced by the nomads such as the Altaic people, who ritualistically sacrificed horses and flayed off their skins — such customs were originally foreign to the Chinese, who sacrificed pigs, sheep, and cows (there were also horses sacrificed for oaths and war, and in tombs, which Kominami does not appear to know about). Kominami hypothesizes that the horse sacrifice and its associated oral traditions were first adopted in western China in Sichuan, where they had a close relation with Tibetan ethnic groups and northwestern indigenous peoples. He believes that the horse sacrifice and skin flaying rituals had already been established in northern Honshû in ancient time, before sericulture was introduced to the region. The Chinese story was introduced to Japan by people who had the knowledge of sericulture and fabric production, but it came to be indigenized in northern Honshû where horse sacrifices already existed.

Kominami's application of diffusionist ideas to explain the prevalence of similar tales in northern Honshû as well as in Okinawa (that these stories were first introduced to central Japan and then spread to the borderlands, where they remain

well preserved today) is questionable in that it assumes that there is only one possible way a cultural trait is transmitted, from "centre" to "edge," more specifically, from the Chinese continent to Yamato Japan and from central Japan to Okinawa and Tôhoku (Kominami 1998).

Note that this discussion of the *oshira-saimon* should be considered separately from the origin of the *oshira* god and *oshira* figures, which are more closely related to the Ainu's *inaw*, and which are certainly earlier than this *oshira-saimon* (Kominami 1998, Ichinohe-chô kyôikuku iinkai 1987). The cult of *oshira* as a whole is hence a curious fusion of several different cultural influences.

71 An example of this *oshira saimon* is translated into English by Miller 1993: 351-358, from Yanagida Kunio's "Oshira-sama kô" ("A study on *oshira*-worship"), in Yanagida 1969 12: 267-431.

72 Similar accounts are also found in Fujii Iyo's *Katariba jinyôshôki* (1697) and *Arahabakigami no rekiho goki tsuzuri* (n.d.).

73 This shaman-historian model is in sharp contrast to Shintô shamanesses, who tend to be divine dancers.

74 In the Miho shrine in the prefecture of Shimane, the oldest Shintô shrine in the prefecture, the Shintô priest conducts ceremonies with his wife, the priestess known as *ondo*. The priestess is not only a ceremonial master but was also a shamaness in the past, something which is obvious from her makeup, costume, the

use of the mirror, and the wooden board to receive deities (Sakurai 1988: 21-22; Sakurai 1955).

75 It is well known, for example, that Mt. Kôya, the home of the esoteric Shingon sect founded by Kûkai in the ninth century, forbade women to enter the holy mountain. It was only after World War Two that the restriction was removed. In the world's only human rights museum, Liberty Osaka, run partly by Buraku people (the social outcasts of Japan), the sign forbidding women to enter Mt. Kôya has been reproduced and is on permanent exhibit.

76 The esoteric *shugen* preachers as well as secular priests were essentially "nomadic" in that they constantly travelled around for survival. Activities such as trading were essential for the majority of them, since they had to support themselves without any assistance from their distant temples in Kyôto or Kamakura. It is important to understand that, although I use the term *shugen* in this paper to refer to religious ascetics and popular practitioners of the doctrine of Buddhism in mediaeval Japan, in reality, it is likely to have been an umbrella term for what appears to have been a whole range of religious practitioners.

The sermon tradition of Buddhism in Japan was shaped not only by the monks and missionaries who catered to the upper class, but also by a lower, broader, less refined but far more numerous array of travelling preachers who spread stories promoting Buddhist ethical values. What these lacked in doctrinal subtlety, they more than made up in mass appeal. These popularizers travelled over the country with a mission to spread Buddhism to everyone, and to solicit contributions for

pious purposes, such as the Kôya-hijiri. All of them functioned not only as priests but also as entertainers, since preaching was a social event, a rudimentary form of "mass media," whether the audience was a relatively educated group at court or a large group of the non-literate masses (Morioka and Sasaki 1990: 211-213; Sekiyama 1973: 59-90).

77 This was a socially sanctioned occasion for married women to spend a night or two with someone else before the Second World War (Fukubean 1998).

78 Fukuda observes two major points in which indigenous wine-making differs in Hokkaidô and Aomori. First, while the Ainu used millet, lily-roots, tree syrup, and wild fruit, in Aomori tree syrup and wild fruit do not appear to be common ingredients. (However, wild grapes, as well as ***kokuwa***, small vine fruits resembling kiwi in their appearance and taste, were common ingredients for wines in Tsugaru.) Second, the traditional Ainu mixed wild fruit with cooked millet to make wine — this method was called *momura* in Aomori in ancient times. Later, barley and rice malt were introduced to Aomori (Fukuda 1999: 2-3).

79 Nevski, a Russian folklorist, commented in the 1920s that the characteristics of an *ttako* ritual resemble those of shamanism in the North. He suspected, for example, that the *ttako* use of bows is due to the ultimate origin of their rituals in an ancient hunting culture. Other important characteristics which point toward the *ttako*'s ancient origins are: (1) the use of fangs, claws and bones in their rosary; (2) that augury by the *oshtra* is sought before hunting; and (3) that a stingfish is offered to the mountain god (Nevski, translated and quoted by Yanagida, in Yanagida 1969).

80 "Kasai's prayer beads have the following objects in two places. The first half contains a piece of deer horn cut in a round slice, two Kan'ei-period coins, the fang of a bear, a fox jawbone, two Kan'ei-period coins, an animal fang, four Kan'ei-period coins, and possibly the skull of a small animal, while the second half contains two Eihô-period coins, a piece of deer horn cut in a round slice, two Kan'ei-period coins, two pieces of animal bone, a sliced horn, a Japanese serow horn, a sliced horn, and two Kan'ei-period coins" (Sasamori 1997: 50).

81 See Bodde 1975: 127-130 for the Chinese legend of Shen Shu and Yü Lü, a pair of deities who reside on the cosmic peach tree as guards at the Gate of Demons 鬼門 in the northeast, with the duty to bind evil spirits with rush ropes and feed them to tigers. Bodde quotes Wang Chong in the first century CE, who explains that this was why people on earth set up peachwood statues of Shen Shu and Yü Lü, and of tigers, and hung up rush ropes as protection against demons.

82 December is the month of deities in Tsugaru, and to this day, many families follow the tradition of enshrining and giving offerings to numerous deities: December the first, Mt. Iwaki, which receives the most lavish offerings; the second, Bisyamon; the third, Zenhô-ji; the fifth, Ebisu; the sixth, Benten; the eighth, Yakushi; the ninth, Daikoku; the tenth, Inari or Konpira; the eleventh, *ofunadama* (the ship deity); the twelfth, the god of the mountains; the fifteenth, Hachiman; the sixteenth, Shiragami; the seventeenth, Kannon; and the twenty-fourth, Jizô. This is subject to variation depending on the region and family, but it offers clear evidence of the religious syncretism of Tsugaru life (Miyata 1970: 290).

83 Yanagida thinks that the god *oshira* is not the god of silk, but originally the guardian deity of the household, as families not engaged in sericulture also worshipped and still worship it. The *oshira* guards houses from fire and burglary, helps with rice-planting, and has a number of other functions (Yanagida1969). The *oshira* is also a *tobi-gami* (flying god): if a person strongly desires to have *oshira* figures, then they will supposedly fly through the air to her house.

84 According to Sasamori, *oshira* gods in some areas "dislike chickens and chicken eggs. So the owners of the god's image cannot cook chicken or eggs inside the house; they have to do so outside. Sometimes even eating chicken or egg will invite trouble. If a man is impious or handles the image disrespectfully, he will invite divine punishment, be seized by disease, afflicted with an eye disease or suffer a deformity of the mouth. In this case, repentance and offerings (often of *saké*) may restore his health" (Sasamori 1997: 51).

85 In the village of Kodomari, for example, the traditional *neputa* procession consisted of male and female dancers with decorative swords, wild horse figures with bells, flute, drums, and petroleum can drums, and doll-shaped floats. Both men and women wore red undergarments (Shindô 1970: 397).

86 In the fall of 1994, I saw the Nanai (Hôchen) people's dance performance at the National Museum of Ethnology at Osaka. One of the dances began with the unmistakable chant, "*rasseyra, rasseyra, rasse, rasse, rasseyra.*"

87 Hagiwara points out the influence of Buddhism, observable in the verses sung as well as the in the form of the parade, which resemble the ***nenbutsu odori***, the Buddhist invocation dance widely popular among the non-literate population (Hagiwara 1970: 391-393)

88 It appears that the Kawakura area was inhabited well before it fell under the control of the central government. A few minutes' walk away from the present location of the temple is an important archeological site that was occupied at least part of the time from early to late Jômon, a span of about three thousand years. Another site three kilometers from the modern temple has evidence of more recent settlement, as late as the ninth to eleventh century, and perhaps beginning during the Jômon period (Kanagi-chô 1978: 76).

89 It is customary in Japan to dress the deceased in a white outfit, complete with a white headband, hand cover, leg protector, and straw sandals. This is known as ***shi-tshôzoku***, "the dress of the dead." The Ainu share in the same tradition, differing from the "Japanese" chiefly in the use of a variety of colors and elaborate stitchwork with cloud-like Ainu ethnic motifs.

90 The Tendai sect appears to have been favored by the Abe and Andô families. Kawamura (1964) discusses the graveyards of the Abe and Andô in Kitakanagasawa, in which a total of thirty-one tombs have been found. The earliest of these tombs is over seven hundred years old, and the newest was completed about six hundred years ago. All but three display signs of Tendai affiliation.

91 The so-called *tanokami* (god of the rice field) commonly worshipped in northern Honshû is syncretic in nature. The *tanokami* is believed to reside in the mountains during the winter, and come to visit the villages in the spring and summer. Hence *tanokami*-related ceremonies such as *enburi* which are practiced in eastern Aomori prefecture have a similar basic structure to the Ainu bear-sending ceremony, in that the mountain god is invited to the village in springtime by masked dancers who bring the god to the rice fields to entertain him. The *tanokami* is essentially treated as a *marebito* (*mareptto* in Ainu), a rare and honored visitor who brings good fortune.

92 In fact, these ancestral rituals stand in contrast to those found in China, Korea, and many parts of Japan, which are male-centred, at least in the public arena (cf. for instance Kendall 1985, Chapter 7). The reason they have survived to this day may be that Japanese officials and religious authorities have failed to recognize them as a religious act — perhaps they are not solemn enough? — and have dismissed them as a "ladies social activity." Nevertheless, they may reflect some of the most ancient customs of the indigenous peoples of northern Japan.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Figure 5.1: The sage emperors Fu Xi and Nü Wa, half-human and half-snake, holding the compass and square symbolizing their role in the construction of the universe
(rubbing from Feng and Feng, *Research on Stone Carving* [1821/1934] chapter 4)

(1) The path of tradition and the cycles of time

I began this dissertation with a great myth, the story of Isis and Osiris. Now that I am close to my ending, I would like to relate a personal myth, one of the special memories which lends a deeper sense of meaning to our otherwise routinized everyday lives, when we finally decide that the story is worth remembering and telling to others.

As a storyteller, I have the responsibility to both invite and send off numerous spirit beings and forces which come to express themselves in our journey; and this usually requires prayers and/or songs, among other things. But of course these are not yet

accepted form in a dissertation. In writing this final part, I thus picture myself sitting with you in a gathering place of spirits, and I wish to speak to you intimately. I wish to lead our discussions into an open-ended circle, rather than to end them in a linear fashion.

One evening almost twelve years ago, I was attending an Ojibwa (Anishinabe) language class held at the Native Friendship Centre near Spadina Avenue in downtown Toronto, a few minutes walk from the main campus of the University of Toronto, where I was completing an undergraduate degree in linguistics. That night, our class had the privilege of a visit from a respected Anishinabe elder who was also a sessional lecturer at the University of Torento in Peterborough, Ontario. Something this elder told me that night, after the class, in the corridor outside the classroom when there was nobody but he and I present, had enormous significance for the course of my academic career, leading me to the research I have presented above.

It so happened that I was one of the quicker studies in the class, which was made up mainly of Ojibwa people who had little or no knowledge of their own language. This was no miracle, and no sign of special talent on my part; it was rather because my native language, Japanese, is a syllable-timed language like Ojibwa. Most of my native colleagues, on the other hand, had English as their mother tongue, since their language and their very cultural existence had long been under the gravest of threats in North America.

There was something about this gentleman that made me feel close to him, a feeling of *deja vu*, that "I knew him from somewhere." Thus, I wished to talk to him in person. I

was also fascinated with the language (and the literary arts) of the Ojibwa people, to the extent that I had considered doing graduate level research on the Ojibwa language. So, I wanted to ask him if it would be possible to get more feedback on spoken Ojibwa, perhaps in some communities within driving range.

The elder did not give me a chance to ask him the questions I had in my mind, the typical questions of a novice linguist such as "How many speakers of the Ojibwa language are there today?" "Where can I meet them?" and "Do they speak dialects?" Instead, he said to me, in a friendly and gentle tone of voice, with his eyes looking straight into mine: "If you want to know about our culture, it is important to learn your own tradition. You should know your own tradition." There was nothing critical in his words or the way they were delivered; I did not feel I was being rejected or trivialized. Indeed, my mind did not wish to swallow his words blindly, and my original questions would soon have sprung up had I had the time to continue conversing with him. But the time we shared in this life, and the conversation we engaged in, did not go on much further. Someone called him from down the hall, and he had to go. He gently complemented my efforts and interest in learning his native tongue, and gave me a salute in Ojibwa, ***kegowabumin minwa***, which means "until we meet again, for now," since there is no "good bye" in his native language. That was our first, and our last encounter in the linear progression of our time. Within half a year he died of lung cancer, to everyone's surprise.

Unforgettable encounters like this may happen in anyone's life, leaving the strong impression that they have not just happened by accident, that they were meant to be — synchronic events, to use a Jungian term. As I think about that evening in the corridor now, his voice is still vivid and immediate: in a flash of light we were there, and then

gone, like two comets crossing a dark sky. A typical interpretation of this encounter, to a modern mind, would be that it was a pure accident; another, more traditional and/or Jungian, would be to consider it a work of "relations," inevitable and deeper levels of connection, often hidden to the surface consciousness.

Such an understanding of "relations," however, is not entirely unknown to "pure" scientists. Gould, a geologist, zoologist, and one of the best known contemporary philosophers of science, argues that what we call history is not simply made up of so-called objective historical facts, but is also derived from "deep time," cosmic cycles or patterns which transcend irregular and idiosyncratic aspects of historical phenomena, what we more commonly call "just history." The former, he calls time's arrow, and the latter, time's cycle.

The modern mind, a result of the rapid growth and expansion of faith in time's arrow, tends to emphasize the constant creation of history at the cost of ignoring what continues and persists: every moment brings something new, and better; change is good, the future is better than the past. Thus the past often becomes equated with useless waste, and human civilizations as well tend to be reduced to products of a linear process of evolution, which assigns each social group on earth a spot on a straight line drawn between two points: tribal society and nation-state. And yet, Gould shows how both of these two systems, time's arrow and time's cycle, have been recognized by historians of the earth system, and how the dynamic interaction of the two gives birth to a cosmic object:

> How then, can we judge the interaction of time's arrow and time's cycle within each object? I can specify two incorrect approaches: we

> must not seek one in order to exclude the other...; but neither should we espouse a form of wishy-washy pluralism that melds the end-members into an undefined middle and loses the essence of each vision — the uniqueness of history, and the immanence of law. Arrows and cycles,... do not blend, but dwell together in tension and fruitful interaction. (Gould 1987: 200).

My Ojibwa teacher did not use any special terms to explain the understanding of history Gould captures so well above, but he was referring to essentially the same process, history as both external and internal to a cosmic experiencer, something new and old at the same time. Whatever fascination I had about the Ojibwa, he knew, would neither make me an Ojibwa, with all their glory and despair, nor would it satisfy my pursuit of knowledge about "others," given my peculiar life circumstances. Learning about "others" entails a prior process of understanding and accepting self, through much trial and error, and I did not have a full awareness of that at that time. After I began my training in anthropology as a graduate student, I often preferred to dismiss his reminders as a passing cliché so that I could swallow modern and post-modern theories and participant-observer ethics as quickly as I could; but other times, I paused to hear the lingering echoes of his words, whose echoes sprang up suddenly from time to time.

I have struggled to find a middle place where I could reconcile the often destructive tension between cycle and arrow – a priesthood doling out academic justice on human endeavour on the one hand, and a call from a grave to resurrection from the ashes on the other – an interdisciplinary praxis, where the reaction to the restoration of a cultural tradition is neither cynical (as in the post-modernist version, "all traditions are invented"), nor reduced to museum artifacts or other cultural displays for special visits and "occa-

sions." In due course, it became clear that his questions had been my own questions even before he expressed them to me. The path to my own tradition is the path I have taken, for that was something I had long both desired and denied; others do not necessarily have to follow me. The path you choose is special, and for you alone to see and to walk, since our lives are embedded in time's cycle: it is neither above, below or beyond us but within us, for all.

(2) The walls within: the impediments to "homecoming"

In fact, my path, the pursuit of knowledge about my own tradition, led me to not just one indigenous heritage, but two: one in Hokkaidô and the other in Tsugaru. At first, the two appeared to be at best distant cousins: indeed, almost all existing scholarly accounts have treated the shamanistic traditions of the two areas as the "ripe" fruits of distinct ethnic cultures, one Ainu and the other "Japanese," and have refused to see either as a product of relatively recent socio-historical circumstances, processes rather than finished end products. Like similar phenomena elsewhere, the indigenous shamanisms and their related complex of beliefs and practices in Tsugaru and Hokkaidô have been depicted as fixed and pristine, canonized by the imperialist ethnography of the past two centuries, which defined all local customs up to the Tsugaru Strait as the subject of Japanese folk culture studies proper, and the customs of indigenous Hokkaidô as falling within a very different scope, that of Ainu ethnology.

Yet even the most casual examination of the indigenous history of northern Japan, and comparison of the forms, function, and formation of the shamanic traditions on

either side of the Tsugaru Strait, reveals a *process*, the transformation of indigenous cultures and beliefs over the last four centuries, and the relative newness of the contemporary situation. As we have seen, much of Tsugaru was traditionally occupied by indigenous populations who not only spoke a language which was a member of the Ainu language family, but also conformed to an indigenous ways of life inseparable from the place they lived; they may have called themselves *chupkaunkur* the people at the base of the sun. The establishment of Tsugaru *han* would not have been possible without overcoming these different ethnic groups, and gaining sway over indigenous trade.

There is no evidence whatsoever that the indigenous populations and communities of Tsugaru ever disappeared from the face of the earth. Rather, Tsugaru became an instant, imagined "Japanese" community in the eyes of rulers far away in southern Japan. What these rulers saw had only the most tenuous of connections with the reality of life for the people who lived in the north, and who had been turned "Japanese" overnight by a stroke of the pen; and the combination of southern illusions and northern realities was to usher in a long series of economic and human disasters.

After the region's conquest by Tsugaru *han* just before the Edo period, the feudal fiefdom did its best to integrate the new state colony into the socio-economic system dictated by the central government of Edo, as well as to use Buddhism and other religious institutions to standardize and assimilate indigenous spiritual practices. The effort was never completely successful, but it was made, and its "accomplishments," if nothing else, provided cover for the deep-rooted indigenous undergrowth that remained. This is in sharp contrast with the socio-economic process that took place in Hokkaidô, whereby the indigenous populations remained as ethnic "other" for much of Edo. The

governments, both regional and central, profited from keeping them officially apart, to differing degrees in different times, to be sure, but always separate, never assuming a common cultural identity with their colonizers. The culmination of this attitude towards the Hokkaidô Ainu was the Hokkaidô Former Indigenous People's Protection Act, implemented at the end of the nineteenth century, and in force until only a few years ago.

While from the standpoint of justice or human rights there is little to choose between the two differing ways the indigenous populations were treated by state authority, the difference did produce a sharply divergent perception of "self" and "otherness." In Hokkaidô to this day it is the norm to see the Ainu and the "Japanese" as water and oil, ice and charcoal, and hence any discussion of a middle ground between the two seems a self-evident absurdity. There is no middle ground: you are either Ainu or "Japanese," and the attitude even of some Ainu activists who are alive to the injustices their people have suffered tends to fall into the pattern of "what concord hath Christ with Beelzebub?" The long pressure of official attitudes may have moulded them into an uncannily precise mirror image of that which they ostensibly oppose: as Nietzsche remarked, he who fights too long against dragons becomes a dragon himself.

This separatism manifests itself in a number of ways: for one, a myth of a pure and homogenous Ainu race and customs, which must be restored by refusing inter-ethnic marriage and eliminating external cultural influences. So-called "Ainu" culture in Hokkaidô has thus become alienated from the day-to-day lives of the Ainu people, who are mostly monolingual speakers of standard Japanese, educated in Japanese schools, and participating in mainstream Japanese culture. Such "Ainu" cultural practices tend to be confined to places and events which offer no challenge to the nineteenth-century

romantic depiction of the Ainu. Given the limited context for the positive assertion of perceived Ainu identity, it is understandable, though hardly acceptable, that some Ainu propagate a highly racist view towards more assimilated, "mixed blood" populations, saying that unless they "look physically Ainu" they are not Ainu. In reaction, many younger generation Ainu have refused to follow this path to a promised heaven of tradition, saying, for instance, that if wearing Ainu costume is the only way to join the Ainu *Volk*, they can live without it.

In contrast to this, the situation in Tsugaru emphasizes the "middle": everybody is somewhat indigenous, not just those who claim Ainu ancestry. The very dialect they speak contains numerous so-called Ainu words; their customs were forbidden by the government as embarrassing remnants of Ezo savagery well into the modern period; their shamans transmit the origin tales of their tutelary deities and their relations to the land and spiritual landscapes; and their lifestyles continue to engage them on a day to day basis with the ancestral memories and oral histories "written" all over their land.

While it may not be too controversial any longer to speak of Tsugaru as an indigenous community, to address an Ainu identity in Tsugaru is still not easy. There are a number of reasons for this. First, there is the issue of intra-cultural sub-boundaries: it is not clear where to draw the line between "Ainu" and indigenous Tsugaru. While there is a minority of people who assert Ainu identity or can trace their roots to Ainu ancestors, seen in a different light, these could equally well be indigenous persons from Tsugaru.

Second, there are the inter-cultural sub-boundaries within Ainu culture as a whole, which have been arranged under the assumption that the Hokkaidô model is standard, and the others are somehow deviant or degenerate. At present, the Tsugaru Ainu might

at best be seen as defective Ainu by the majority of Hokkaidô Ainu, rather than as having an equally strong identity based on a distinct history and sub-culture. Thus while both the Tsugaru Ainu and the Tsugaru community have preserved their traditions as living things, part and parcel of their mundane, everyday existence, it has been at the price of their "visibility" in the Ainu culture complex of northern Japan.

Both of the questions above are related to the difficult task of understanding and accepting the cultural complexity of the Ainu, regional, social, and historical. If the minimum requirement for membership in the Ainu community is defined solely by linguistic criteria, as is the case with some other indigenous peoples, including the Saami, then the scope of the Ainu cultural revival will be expanded to include literally millions at present neglected by the Hokkaidô Ainu Association. But if the emphasis is laid on the "racial" aspect, or the definitions set according to outdated research on Ainu culture, the internal "walls" will be more easily perpetuated and the "Ainu" people will be entrenched behind them as a tiny and besieged minority. This will be to the great profit of certain Ainu groups, those whose attitude can be summed up by the Chinese proverb that it is better to be the beak of a chicken than the rear end of an ox; but the greatest beneficiary of all will be the Japanese state.[1] Finally forced to admit the existence of an indigenous Other, they will have walled it up, and left it to wither.

But perhaps, in the pursuit of power and recognition for the Ainu, many Ainu may have been blinded by the very modern idea that you have to be the same somehow, in looks and conduct, as if there ever were a fixed and rigid administrative standard in traditional Ainu societies. Indigenous reality was indifferent to state-imposed official borders, and cultural differences were negotiated and tolerated insofar as the communication was

reciprocated for mutual benefit. It came to me as a striking revelation one day that setting up a "standard" is a favorite game of the modern mind, and one does not have to model oneself on an "Ainu" that is officially sanctioned. I just had to tell my story; where I come from is nothing to be ashamed of, or to feel inferior about.

The international presentation of who the Ainu are thus requires serious consideration. Those participating in international indigenous conferences to debate the definitions and the rights of indigenous peoples, including the United Nations World Indigenous People's Working Committee, need to be careful that their definition of Ainu does not serve the purposes of the historical oppressors of the Ainu. It should be no surprise to find out that at present, only Hokkaidô Ainu, or more specifically, the Hokkaidô Ainu associated with the Hokkaidô Ainu Association, qualify for public funding from the Japanese government to participate in the UN delegation.

My quest for cultural tradition has shed light on other formerly taboo topics, such as gender inequity among the Ainu and the parallel process that has depressed the shaman's status in Ainu society. To our surprise, the silence of gender tension has been broken recently by a young female Ainu college student who has written a graduation thesis on gender inequity and indigenous peoples. Unlike previous generations of Ainu women, for whom the chief virtue was endurance, younger Ainu women have been influenced by the worldwide trend towards gender equity and some of the more positive values of mainstream cultures. They are not willing to blindly return to "tradition" without reflecting on the socio-historical process which has shaped their cultures and defined its internal power relationships. Noting that gender inequity is a topic of universal significance, for indigenous peoples in particular, Hasegawa has reminded her Ainu

colleagues that whatever may have been done to them by others, the Ainu themselves perpetuated gender inequity, and it is they who must act to remedy it (Hasegawa Yûki 1999). However, it may not be easy for Ainu men to listen to women's concerns, or give up their power, since they exist within a highly sexist mainstream society, where even a high-ranking foreign envoy, after putting his wife into a Vancouver hospital (and himself, much to his surprise, into a Vancouver police station), saw nothing strange in explaining that his actions were an expression of "Japanese culture" — and besides, his wife had "deserved it."[2]

Gender, regional, and other tensions within the Ainu expose fault lines often hidden by the glorified rhetoric of Ainu heritage, and their justifiable demand for self-determination and cultural revival. Questions such as the incorporation of Ainu views in scholarly works, government documents, and mainstream media are undoubtedly of critical significance, but the more pressing question might be "whose/which Ainu view is to be taken into consideration by whom, and why?" "Who are the Ainu?" is a question that finds different answers depending on which Ainu group one asks, and who is representing that group. Up to now, political power has dictated cultural definitions, and the image of the Ainu has suffered because of the preconceptions powerful Ainu leaders have nourished, such as the one which confines the Ainu forever to Hokkaidô as small-scale hunters and gatherers. The perceptions of these leaders have gone unchallenged in the absence of self-aware Ainu historical thinking, and the Ainu now face the danger of becoming their own best oppressors, cementing themselves into the tomb of an eternally present past. The present "Ainu cultural revival" is largely focused on the authentication of "showcase" models for display, rather than reflecting on deeper and dynamic values which could

integrate the fragmented cultural traits available as guides. It will be difficult to restore what has been lost in ways which are meaningful in contemporary time.

The diversity within the Ainu includes not only powerless groups and individuals but also those who succeeded in mainstream society, concealing, forgetting, or never knowing their roots. The reality of some of these Ainu puts the lie to the image of Ainu as the victims of history, and their negative portrayal as an inevitably "inferior" group. Even if we are to adhere to the narrowest definition of the Ainu offered by the Ainu Association of Hokkaidô, there are persons with Ainu ancestry in government offices, the medical profession, political movements, and academia; such persons are successful entrepreneurs, and high-profile athletes and artists. But many of these hidden Ainu do not wish to reveal their Ainu identity in public because of the stigma attached to being Ainu, the politicized identity and perceived ethnic distance which would make of them a "foreigner" in their own country. Yet the presence of these individuals within the Ainu community at large would have a tremendously positive effect on others, the young in particular.

To break down the walls within and restore a coherent cultural meanings to their existence, the peoples of the indigenous cultural complex of northern Japan need to commit themselves to an imagination which transcends the conceptual boundaries which have divided and conquered them for so long, confining them to a dark and narrow place. They must learn to see themselves as leaders, sooner or later – though repatriation has hardly begun, much less been completed – and to share universal human goals transcending ethno-cultural boundaries. There is an inherent contradiction in seeking independence and cultural revival on one hand and yet trying to preserve the advan-

tages of being the oppressed minority on the other. Such a contradictory effort will end by doing nothing but make its proponents look ridiculous.

(3) Shamanism, history, and the healing power of narrative

The term *saman* in the Tungus language designates a person who has access to "knowledge." Indigenous people traditionally understand "knowledge" to be inseparable from emotional, spiritual, and physical experiences, and hence inherently personal. Abstract knowledge extracted from lived or perceived experiences and expressed verbally or symbolically is only one kind of "knowledge." From the indigenous perspective, knowledge is alive and active, like all things in the universe. Hence, even when historical events never get written down, they do not fade away; they linger on, seeking means to express themselves, and they persist in the present. Marker writes:

> The exclusion of the historical voice silences Native people who cannot explain their experiences and interpretation of reality without locating it in a larger wash of time. (...) To avoid acknowledging this history as a strong force in the present moment is akin to ignoring a powerful spirit that wishes to communicate its presence. The spirit of these stories grows more insistent and vigorous; it demands to be contained in the present. My Musqueam friend said it succinctly: "That history is more a part of the present than it ever was in the past." (Marker 1999: 27).

In the light of history as a powerful force in the present, we can better understand why the traditional shaman's functions included story-telling, bearing witness to causes or events otherwise unknown. The shape of the story may be metaphorical or explicit, but

the effect will be equally profound, as in the case of personal curing through abreaction.[2] Yet a shaman's work is necessarily a collective curing, especially when a historical process has deprived a group of its voice. Moreover, the curing will never be complete without the personal testimony of the other side, the antagonists. In the case of Japan, healing for northern indigenous peoples will involve bringing together narratives from both sides, the Ainu and the diverse groups made invisible by the umbrella label of "Japanese," whose socio-historical relationship is far more complex and intertwined than is usually assumed.

In this study, I have tried to shed light on the complex problem of history, culture, and indigenous identity in northern Japan, but in fact I have hardly scratched the surface. More voices, not only of scholars but also of ordinary people, need to be heard, in order to compensate for the silencing which has gone for over a thousand years, and whose effect is felt to this day. These stories, moreover, need to be brought together, to dispel the darkness left by the gaps on either side.

I have come to feel an unmistakable affinity between a shaman and a historian: like shamans who situate themselves between this world and other worlds, a student of history is required to develop an equally liminal capacity, to move freely between past and present, texts to lives, and retrieve meanings which can only be shared with his/her conversational partners, dead, alive, and/or yet to be born.[4] However, a shaman departs from conventional historians in a fundamental way, since his/her goal is not so much to describe and reconstruct history from an outside point of view but to relive past experiences and act as a knower. This does not mean that s/he literally experiences the past events in their specific detail, but rather, that his/her experience, through submergence

in the so-called shamanic state of consciousness, is mythological or archetypal in nature. This is why a shaman's testimony tends to be more than words; it is a story, and more than a story; it is a song, and more than a song; it is performed in real time, but is more than a performance; it vibrates and resonates with the orders and cycles of which humans are only a part. This is why shamanic testimonies necessarily take the form of first-person narrative: *I am a cosmic actor who unites life and death, the alpha and the omega.*

In the ultimate sense, the meaning of these sacred testimonies remains with the people who have transmitted them and respected them as an organic part of their lives, history, and land. The moment these stories are looked upon as mere "evidence" of culture, pieces of art, or specimens for a collection, they lose their essential life force, without which the spirit cannot communicate its fuller message. This is why many indigenous peoples forbid personal narratives and spiritual experiences to be disclosed casually to outsiders; careless handling, even by outsiders, is believed to stop the power flowing in them. Nevertheless, in recent years, some of these sacred testimonies have come to be written down and published by the keepers of the traditions, since keeping them completely within would now endanger their transmission. Thus while it is inevitable that we as scholars must deal with them as they come, in fixed forms and outside their organic environment, and there is undoubtedly some benefit in analyzing them, we must be aware that there is much more there than rhetoric, plot and beauty. Their tangible makeup, like time's arrow, is only a shadow of their substance, time's cycle.

Shamanism has served peoples all over the world as a mechanism of healing and cultural sustenance, restoring communal integrity and social identity in the face of external

pressure. Shamans and spiritual leaders have endured socio-cultural transformations, overt and covert discrimination, and in some cases, political persecution. At times, when so-called tribal peoples appeared to have lost their socio-cultural strength, some scholars speculated about whether they, shamans or native peoples, would survive or disappear.[5] Both native peoples and shamans continue to challenge these speculators, by not only their sheer persistence, but sometimes also by what appears to curious eyes a sudden resurrection. In some cases, the ethnic silence might be broken within a generation, in other cases, it might take centuries. In Japan, where the indigenous populations and the conquerors have co-existed for more than two thousand years, a simple dichotomy does not suffice to express their intricate relationship. Yet precisely because of this reason, the state's bureaucracy has favored reductionism for the sake of convenience and rule.

I have illustrated the complexity of the transmission of shamanic knowledge and spiritual leadership in northern Japan, and how different socio-historical forces have influenced the formation of distinct shamanic heritages in the two different regions, Hokkaidô and Tsugaru. I have attempted to show that, if we look at the deeper values and principles which supported the indigenous shamanisms of northern Japan through time, the two traditions reveal a common root. They are, in fact, twins: one portrayed and perpetuated in a distinct and exotic ethnic costume, the other integrated into the ordinary lives and day-to-day activities of the community. The former now faces the challenge of justifying its existence as its chief transmitters, women, continue to endure the power inequities within an Ainu society which may have overemphasized political leadership in the narrow sense of the term. The latter, often looked down upon as a degenerate form of Japanese shamanism and a vulgarization of Buddhism, must express the

deeper roots beneath its Japanese veneer, otherwise it may become nothing more than surface. The two are complimentary, each having something to offer the other, and if they can interact fruitfully, the barriers may be lowered for both. Through its shamanic heritage, Tsugaru can provide an alternative model for indigenous cultural revival to the Hokkaidô Ainu, many of whom have come to believe that shamans and shamanism are something shameful. And if shamanism is accepted as the core of Ainu culture by those concerned with its revitalization, it will become clear that Tsugaru culture is the closest living indigenous relative of Hokkaidô Ainu culture.

(4) A beginning

> *I don't know the future. I'm not here to tell you how this is going to end.*
> *I'm here to tell you how it's going to begin.*
>
> Neo, in *The Matrix* (Warner, 1999)

I have spent a great deal of time looking at the past in this dissertation, but now it is time to speak about the future. What are the implications of this study about the history and shamanism of the peoples connected to Ainu culture?

First of all, my discussion of Tsugaru shamanism and the Tsugaru spiritual heritage is meant only as a first contribution to a critical enquiry into the indigenous cultures of the Japanese archepelago, northern Honshû in particular, which deserve much more attention than I have been able to give them here. The indigenous customs and beliefs of northern Honshû, its spiritual heritage in particular, deserve scholarly attention in their own right, rather than being subsumed or at best contextualised against the background

of Japanese folk study or national history. They need to be seen as players on a larger stage, that of world indigenous cultures, those of the northern Pacific Rim in particular.

I hope that in their light, we can begin to see that the Ainu of Hokkaidô are but one part of the present-day indigenous culture complex of northern Japan, which I have called the Ainu culture complex, representing the broad linguistic continuity which unites the past and present of the region. If Japanese identity is based on false assumptions about its own unity and purity, then it can only be healed and restored by understanding and accepting the cultural diversity within "Japan" and the differing historical perspectives from which it can be viewed.

This means, for one thing, a critical enquiry into the established presentational frameworks and the assumptions which support them, which have become the foundation for the whole range of "folk" study in Japan and of the "Japanese" peoples. The ethnographic discourses which permanently influenced modern Japanese folk study during the Meiji era needs a thoroughgoing review, to determine the ideological basis of the dualism between the "Japanese" and the "others," the notion of "authentic" vs. "regional," as well as discourses on the "vanishing." The preconception that Japan existed prior to its invention in the modern period, common among many scholars in Japan, seriously obstructs the development of a healthy and legitimate scholarly enquiry into the question of its pre-homogenized state. For example, the ethnic minority known as Burakumin, are still generally seen as a minority, not an indigenous group, in spite of the claims and evidence brought forward by some of them, which traces their roots centuries prior to the Edo period when they became outcasts, "non-human." This direction of work, however, might be best reserved for researchers outside Japan, or anyone who is free of

the danger of losing his or her job or public image in Japan, for in the final analysis, what it amounts to is to put Japanese studies into quotations.

Moreover, although the present study does not specifically aim at contributing to Ainu indigenous education, whose focus has been on the teaching of language, I believe that it has presented some important considerations which require reflection by those who wish to facilitate such education in the public arena: questions of identity and internal socio-cultural diversity, gender and other types of equity, spiritual education, and historical and cultural transformation.

At present, there are no public indigenous educational programmes available for the Ainu (or anyone else) in Japan, and all Ainu language programmes are privately run. The Ainu Culture Promotion Law is supposed to provide funding for research pertaining to the Ainu, as well as for cultural revival activities. However, at present, Ainu representation on the decision-making body is minimal, and the so-called expert committee is dominated by scholars selected not by the Ainu but by the government. If the Ainu in Japan gain indigenous educational rights and eventually establish cultural programmes overseen by themselves, they will benefit greatly by studying indigenous education abroad. The Japanese government and its educational planners are neither capable of understanding the need for minority and indigenous education nor do they have any sympathy for it.[6]

As a long-term goal, the Ainu in Japan, who are the most financially secure of all Ainu groups in the world, should see to it that other peoples pertaining to the Ainu outside Japan, including those in Russia, are eventually brought together for the purpose of mutual understanding and support. This process will necessarily highlight the cultural,

linguistic, and historical diversity of the Ainu people(s). It will not be an easy task to carry out, but with the assistance of on-line communication and distance education technology, such a "homecoming" is more possible today than it ever was.

Throughout this study, I have attempted to address the need to perceive phenomena, including ethnicity, beyond the convenient simplifications of dichotomy and oppositions. A dichotomy is after all only a metaphor, which can serve as a useful conceptual tool for a taxonomic purpose; in reality, conceptual opposites interact, exchange, and dwell together in tension, constantly giving birth to forms which add unique elements to both. Like the twin snakes, male and female, whose bodies are so intertwined that they are inseparable but whose heads are separate, any living existence is full of this kind of tension, to be within and without at the same time. To lose that tension, is to lose the life force it contains and embodies. As Gould states, "The boundaries between oneness and twoness are human impositions, not nature's taxonomy" (Gould 1987: 200).

Ethnicity is one of the more difficult concepts to deal with in overcoming this dualistic thinking, since ethnicity is justified more on emotional grounds than by analysis, and the existing political situation tends to limit discourse on existing ethnic categories. Nevertheless, regaining our ability to engage in such discourse, beyond existing political and administrative boundaries, beyond the roles of villains and heroes, is key to the mutual construction of a transformative experience.

Perhaps we have been conditioned to see ethnic categories in a concrete and rigid way, static and solid, like "territories" which can be divided and fortified. If we can adopt a different basic metaphor for understanding ethnic as well as environmental issues, and see them as a "flow" – like water – then not only history in a particular region but also

migrations over vast times and spaces become crucial elements in understanding and contextualising our identity in relation to others.

This might sound like a romantic and unrealistic idea to some, but the oceanic peoples, islanders in particular, have been perplexed by metaphors such as "mother earth" because it is the sea that is perceived to be maternal to all life forms. Among such peoples, the issue of racial mixing may be seen in a positive light: the Micmac people of Northeastern America, for example, call mixed-race people "Rainbow" people, or "Golden" people, accepting them as the fortunate carriers of more than one heritage. Thus an important direction for indigenous studies on the peoples in the Japanese archepelago might be to examine traditional but alternative metaphors and stories concerning ethnicity, and to question how and why a concept such as "mixed blood" came to be seen as s negative and taboo concept.

Finally, there is also an important issue of ethics and pedagogy surrounding the teaching of shamanism as an academic subject in classroom settings. Teaching courses on shamanism in public settings, including post-secondary institutions, has been controversial, as it often involves a non-native instructor/expert teaching sacred properties considered esoteric by native individuals and groups. At the same time, there are limits to what such classroom learning, within a mainstream administrative setting, can accomplish. Yet the irony is, an instructor with proper shamanic training and community support is the very person least likely to find his/her way into academia, and complete the necessary degrees in the face of prejudice and misunderstanding. It might even be easier for such individuals to pursue degrees in medicine, law, or education, and so contextualize their background in a more "neutral" and thus less vulnerable way. Even then, a sha-

man in an academic institution will find it extremely difficult to harmonize his/her native training with institutional norms.

At the University of British Columbia, however, the situation is eased for spiritual educators because of the existence of the First Nations House of Learning, which actively invites native students and scholars from all origins to share spiritual teachings and ceremonies on a regular basis. There are resident elders, spiritual leaders, available for spiritual guidance and support for those in need. As a beginning, I suggest that shamanic teachings (or whatever they might be called) be planned and implemented in full collaboration with this existing center for spiritual education, as well as selected community advisers. I believe it is important and possible to broaden the scope of spiritual education to include cross-cultural perspectives on the issue of religion and spirituality, once solid indigenous support is established. Such programmes will be necessarily "experientialist," meaning that learning is shared, and the students will be given a choice as to which expressive forms s/he wishes to explore, to gain spiritual insight rather than simply to analyze phenomena. Such expressive forms may include song, dance, storytelling, and other visual arts, as they have been integral parts of aboriginal education throughout the world.

Modernism has created many ideologies which have been challenged by deconstructionist thinking, which in turn has often relegated human imagination to a mere hallucination. But after all, imagination is the fundamental source of creation and of healing, as is attested, for example, by shamanism in indigenous cultures all over the world. Like a novice shaman, we have received a call from a new world we never before imag-

ined to exist. Our only limits come from the rigid forms and ideas that have been imposed on us by the past, the matrices that constrain our ability to imagine how far we can go, and who and what we can become.

> *I'm going to hang up this phone, and then I'm going to show these people what you don't want them to see. I'm going to show them a world without you. A world without rules or controls, without borders or boundaries, a world where anything is possible.*
>
> *Where we go from there, is a choice I leave to you.*[7]

Endnotes

1 Insight into the structure of internal Ainu racism comes from other indigenous societies. Dawn Marsden, a "white" person of Native and French ancestry with Indian status, for example, has illuminated the destructive rigidity of the terms and phrases which are used to designate an aboriginal person of mixed ancestry in Canada, such as born-again Indian, urban Indian, or "apple":

> Native terminology hides the hierarchey of belongingness that has been instigated, perpetuated and maintained by Canadian governments, policies and individuals, and which has been duplicated and accepted as the status quo by many native individuals. Terminology serves to divide and conquer Native people. As long as Native and White societies are opposed in their relationships, terminology will be used as a weapon to gain ground, on both personal and official levels (Marsden 1998).

My personal experience has been much the same, and I can list a number of derogatory or confusing terms that both Ainu and other people use to designate my identity: born-again Ainu, *shamo* (a derogatory word for Japanese), wanna-be, Ainu in spirit, partial Ainu, *jtbunde* Ainu (Ainu by self invention), urban Ainu, Japanese outcast.

2 "In February of this year, the highest ranking Japanese diplomat in Vancouver, Japanese Consul Shuji Shimokoji, was arrested for beating his wife, who showed up at

an area hospital with two black eyes and a bruised cheek. Shimokoji created an international furor after making a statement to police that this was a matter of "Japanese culture" and that his wife "had deserved it." The Foreign Ministry initially did not seem to agree that wife beating was part of Japanese culture. They immediately ordered Shimokoji to return to Japan. However, the ministry later wavered and demonstrated that wife beating is at least tolerated in Japan by means of its light punishment. After grossly failing in his primary duty in Canada, to protect and assure the safety of Japanese citizens living there, Shimokoji was reassigned to a new post in Japan with a 10 percent cut in pay for three months." (From the website of the magazine *Japan Traveller*, http://www.tic.joho.com/JT-99-09/99.09-tidbits.htm)

3 See Levi Strauss 1962 for a classical study of Cona shamanic healing by abreaction.

4 The deep connection between the divine element in shamanism and the recording function of the historian explains what has puzzled many beginning students of Chinese culture, the sacred weight and function of what to an outsider seems merely secular history. In China, the historical recording function began with Shang dynasty scribes, who took down the words of the gods and ancestors. The later divine undertones to recording history are represented, for instance, in Mencius' claim that Confucius edited the dry as dust annals of his home state with far-reaching moral effects: "Confucius completed the *Annals*, and rebellious ministers and treacherous sons were struck with terror" (*Mencius* 3B/9) and his remark about the permanence of historical judgements, "They [evil princes] will be

named 'the Dark' or 'the Cruel,' and even though their descendants be filial and kind, they will not be able to change such designations for all time" (*Menctus* 4A/2).

Wang Dong (1993) has an interesting discussion of how the roots of the Chinese historical tradition are to be found in religious activities and shamanism, and ultimately in an animistic concept of the universe, though he suffers from the usual Mainland Chinese tendency to consider the evolution towards secularism an unqualified Good Thing.

5 Examining the universal effect of drumming in inducing shamanic states of consciousness, Harner points to a productive direction for the study of shamanism, which is essentially experientialist:

> Today students of shamanism have at their disposal the means to develop scientific evidence for the existence of spiritual experiences deeper than human culture. What we call "altered states" are the doorways that shamans worldwide have discovered again and again over thousands of years. Whatever we choose to call those doorways, "trance," "ecstasy," or the "SSC," such terminology is relatively unimportant compared to the mysterious hidden universe onto which they open. In the century about to begin, we will have an unprecedented opportunity to join science with shamanism to discover where those doorways lead (Harner 1999: 76).

6 Recently, the Japanese parliament has passed a law to make it obligatory for public schools all over Japan to display the Japanese national flag and sing a national anthem which glorifies the emperor on designated occasions. This met strong resistance and criticism from educators and media alike. However, no serious consultations with ordinary citizens were carried out when making this decision.For those in Japan who traditionally called themselves the People at the Base of the Sun, including some Ainu groups, obligating the use of the Japanese flag should also entail an obligation to explain what it really signifies.

7 Neo, in *The Matrix* (Warner,1999). Both *Matrix* quotations come from Neo's final speech.

POSTSCRIPT

A FORBIDDEN TO COME PLACE

A study on shamanism and spiritual practices should ideally include a vivid ethnographic narrative on contemporary shamans. While the following narrative has no direct link to the core discussions of the present dissertation, it complements it by providing first-person testimony in an autobiographical form, thereby connecting it to the transforming reality experienced by an informant — myself. Beside, this way, I can get to introduce myself a bit, not only as an academic student of shamanism, but also as someone who is "stuck" with it. Spirits, spirit helpers, demons and gods, visions and dreams, all permeate my world, and that of my families to some extent, in spite of the occasional terminological disputes we have over them. Moreover, traditional spirituality marks only one aspect of the healer heritage of my extended family, my grandparents on my father's side, my parents, myself, and my brother — all of whom once lived under a single roof. I am the only "ugly duckling" in this three generations of professionals trained in modern medicine.

I. Coming home to Mt. Iwaki

In the spring of 1995 I took a trip to Japan, travelling across most of the Japanese archipelago, from Nagasaki on the southern island of Kyûshû, to Nibutani, an Ainu community in Hokkaidô. Although my primary official purpose was to negotiate about peace

education in Vancouver with Nagasaki City, I also knew that I had to get to Nibutani, for reasons I will describe later, even though I had no specific academic justification for that part of the trip. I sensed a link on a deeper level between my two destinations, one of them more of this world, and one more spiritual, and I expected that this link would manifest itself in due course.

That year, I was involved with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days organizing committee in Vancouver, and gave myself the task of delivering a message from Nagasaki to Vancouver, partly in response to the modification of the Enola Gay exhibition project at the Smithsonian Institute. My own decision was influenced by my father's actions. In February of that year my father, whose fourteenth birthday was marked by the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, participated in the Nagasaki Peace Marathon, and for the first time I found out from an article in the newspaper that every year on August the sixth he prayed for a college friend from Hiroshima who died from radiation poisoning shortly after his graduation. My father appeared in several newspapers in southern Japan — he received a special participation award by the Peace Marathon organizing committee, since the numbering of his birthday, the seventh year of the Shôwa era, August the ninth, coincided with the date of that year's Nagasaki Day: the seventh year of the Heisei era, August the ninth, a sequence of 7-8-9.

My motive in these actions was not primarily political, but more that of *kuyô*, comforting the spirits of those who died in the atomic bombing, in the spirit of remorse. In retrospect, I had wanted to give voices to those who were gone, reduced to ashes and soil, never given an opportunity to testify to what they saw and experienced in their lives. The Japanese government's attitude towards their imperialist aggression before and

during the war, as well as domestic tragedies and criminal actions (for instance, massacres of Koreans and exploitation of comfort women) has always been nothing more than an embarrassed silence, if not outright denial.

When I talked about my motive to the Nagasaki Foundation for the Promotion of Peace, it was particularly favoured by Yasui Sachiko, a survivor of the bomb and a storyteller, who expressed a strong interest in coming to Vancouver to talk about her experiences. She told me that as a survivor of the bombing who had seen hell, there really was no obvious boundary between the dead and the living, as she continued to worry about the well-being of her family who died fifty years ago, and they too talk to her every now and then.

After my visit to Nagasaki, I found myself on a trip to Mount Iwaki, which my grandmother used to climb on pilgrimage. Perhaps because of her belief, it had always been the most sacred mountain in my own mind. Nevertheless, the idea of going there at that time was not part of a prior plan but suggested by a friend of mine I visited in Hiroshima, a chiropractor.

All through the trip, I felt that a warm wind from the south was chasing me. When my friend drove me to an old Shinto shrine in her town, Kabe city, we tried a little rain magic with her son, pouring water over a small dragon statue, since the whole of southern Japan had suffered from a serious drought for several months. To our surprise, and in spite of the weather forecast, the rain did begin pouring down a couple of hours later. On our way back from the shrine, when we were in the car, I saw a man in brownish clothes, with a hat, but with no facial features, walk into the car as it was moving. My friend, who was driving, did not see him, but her son sitting in the back seat did. I told

my friend to make a U-turn and go back. I silently prayed in the car for him to rest in peace, and the boy in the back said that as we passed the spot he heard a chime from a hand bell of the type used in family altars.

At the time, I was on my way to my home in Hokkaidô with no specific plan for any side trips. As it turned out, my friend had always wanted to climb Mount Iwaki. She set the pace, and so we took the bullet train from Hiroshima all the way across Honshû to Morioka city in Iwate Prefecture, a half-day trip. We got to Morioka in the evening of early May, late spring in Tôhoku, and I still felt a human-like warmth in the air. To get to Mount Iwaki we had to take a bus from Morioka city to Hirosaki City in Aomori, and from Hirosaki transfer to another bus going to the Mount Iwaki area.

We sat at the back of the bus from Morioka, a night bus. About half-way through the trip, I felt as if someone had put a heavy weight on my right hand, and it became numb. I closed my eyes, and I saw an orange ball of light placed on my hand, about the size of a basketball. I opened my eyes again and there was nothing, but when I closed them again, there was a bloody head on my hand. Opening my eyes once again, the head was gone, but the dark forest beyond the windows of the bus was all in flames. Then I realized that this was Aterui/Atoroi's land, and my right hand began to recover, slowly. I felt I still had the head, in some way, and since I felt had to put it somewhere I put it into my heart.

We got to Hirosaki very late that night, and so we decided to stay there for one night. The next morning, we finally reached Mount Iwaki. We chose a local inn close to the Mount Iwaki Shinto shrine, which turned out later to be significant for our future actions.

As I stated earlier in this dissertation, the Mount Iwaki pilgrimage is a communal event right to this day in some communities, with a date fixed by tradition. The individual pilgrimage, however, can take place at any time of the year. You can either walk from the bottom to the top of Mount Iwaki, or take a bus to the middle and then a lift for most of the rest of the way. During the winter the pilgrimage is of course not possible because the whole mountain is covered with snow, but it becomes an excellent downhill ski course. From spring to fall visitors may simply walk an hour or so over the rocky areas of the mountain top.

There are actually two peaks to Mount Iwaki. One is fifteen minutes walk from the end of the lift, and the other is twenty minutes further on, altogether about an hour's round trip if the weather is favorable and the wind gentle. When you get to the higher peak, you pay a visit to the little shrine where the mountain deity is acknowledged.

The top of Mount Iwaki has always been kept in its natural state, since it is a religious site and the rocks are considered to have souls. They are there to remind us of our ancestors. People have to walk over the rocks, since there is no paved path. Moreover, this short walk to the two peaks can often be challenging since the weather and the direction of the wind is unpredictable on the higher parts of the mountain. It can change within a few minutes and they tell you to be careful if you feel the wind is becoming too powerful — when the weather becomes too dangerous for people to walk they make an announcement at the top of the lift. It is not a destination for a family picnic or for the disabled, since it often becomes a mild form of mountain climbing.

When we decided to go to the top of Mount Iwaki, the weather was cloudy and a bit windy. We rode the lift up, and the wind strengthened and blew down on us from the

mountaintop. When we got off the lift, the sky was covered with clouds and a cool wind had begun to blow strongly, as if to warn us not to come. So we walked first to the lower peak, which is to the right of the end of the lift, and reached it easily. We observed the view of the villages at the bottom of there, slightly brownish-green slope and scattered communities, and I told my friend to go back, since I felt it was too dangerous to get to the higher peak. I found a wooden sign post bearing a message, "Peace On Earth," and said to her, without thinking (as is often my practice on very important occasions), "Hey, there's the message right there! We don't need to go any further!" I will never forget how cold her eyes were, since up to that point she had felt that I was leading the trip. She was utterly determined, since this might be her first and last chance to come to Mount Iwaki, and said she would go ahead anyway, with or without me. Then she took off, so I had to follow. She said she had a bad knee, but she was going to make it to the top, as if to remind me that this was a spiritual quest rather than a simple physical activity or matter of curiosity: I did not come here to let you spoil my pilgrimage like this, coward!

As we walked towards the higher peak, the sky got darker and the wind got stronger, always blowing in our faces. Half-way through, we heard the loudspeaker announcing that it was too dangerous to climb and that the lift was being stopped. But my friend remained determined, and I had no choice but to follow her. We were almost crawling on the rocky slopes, which were slippery, and we were badly prepared for rock climbing. Only a few people came back from the other direction and there were now a couple of mountain rescue team members with skies on their back heading somewhere, maybe searching for missing people. I thought that we had made the wrong decision and the situation was becoming too dangerous, that we should not carry on, or something horri-

ble might happen. We must have climbed forty minutes instead of twenty because of the wind, and we could not see the top, because of the irregularity of the terrain.

However, all of a sudden the wind ceased and there was no movement in the air. As we climbed the last hill the slope levelled off and the mountaintop was flat. What a contrast, this peaceful and quiet area — even the sky seemed to be a bit brighter. All of a sudden I felt as if I was lifted up to a totally different sphere. My friend turned her face towards me and smiled, "We made it." I could hardly believe it.

There was a small shrine at the very top of the mountain, and strangely, when we stood in front of the shrine there was a single gust of wind coming directly down from the sky, no breath of air anywhere else, making it impossible to light the candles of the altar. The clouds broke up, and sunlight came down through the gaps. I sensed the warmth of the sun, and closed my eyes. I felt a gentle female person standing right beside me, and she said she was the goddess of the wind. So I told my friend, who was next to me, that the mountain god is a goddess, that this deity was a female deity of the wind. She said, "Tennyo ga" (Heaven-woman), and seemed content with our accomplishment. I thanked her for not giving up, for I would have never made it if I were alone. She looked at me with a knowing smile and said, "Now I know you needed me."

We began walking down slowly. The wind became much softer: it was friendly and gentle all the way through this time, as if it was carrying us down. We felt almost as if we had tamed it. We couldn't believe it was the same wind. When we took the lift back, it was still playing with us. We laughed all the way through, because everything seemed like magic. We told the wind to go away, and it went away; invited it to come back, and it came back.

We took the bus down to the inn in the mid-afternoon, trying to get to the Mount Iwaki shrine near the inn where we were staying. However, by mistake we got off one stop too soon. Instead of Hyakuzawa Hot Springs, we got off at the Gaku Hot Springs stop, but since we were not in a terrible rush, and the area turned out to be a pleasant mixture of local shops, we decided to spend some time there. I felt like taking a hot bath and washing my hands in spring water, so I proposed visiting a local hot spring. We chose one of them near the bus stop.

As we entered the hot springs, we saw there was a piece of calligraphy resembling snakeskin on the wall at the entrance to the change room, saying "*ryûjin*" 龍神 (dragon deity). In front of this was a container for offerings, with several eggs in shells and *saké* in a *tokkuri*, a *saké* bottle. It reminded me of something, but I couldn't remember exactly what. It was something in my family that I knew and had seen before, but I could not remember exactly when. My friend, on the other hand, found it all very curious.

We took a bath, and when we left, we found an *inari* shrine, for the fox spirit. We had lunch there and took another bus to finally get back to Hyakuzawa Hot Springs and the Mount Iwaki Shinto Shrine. I was not particularly interested in visiting the shrine, but my friend insisted, so we went. My lack of interest was because Shinto shrines in Tôhoku generally tend to promote the conquest of the indigenous population by the *Sei-itaishôgun*, Sakanoue no Tamuramaro, who was instrumental in luring Atoroi to Kyoto where he was executed. Moreover, the founding deities of Mt. Iwaki Shinto shrine, re-established after Meiji, include Tamuramaro's father, a real historical character, along with such mythological personages as the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Nevertheless, I followed my friend to the shrine, just as I had done when going to Mount Iwaki.

The main shrine was located on a slope, its entrance leading to the gate through many long flights of stone stairs. Once we got to the top, I found something curious. There was a pathway to the right just before the main shrine, which lead to a small local *ryûjin* (dragon) shrine. We went to the main shrine, and briefly observed the service, threw a few coins into the collection boxes, and clapped our hands twice. Then we went to visit the *ryûjin* shrine, the dragon deity. Walking down to the dragon shrine, we saw another small shrine beside it, which we discovered was a fox shrine. This is curious because I had been told that the fox and the snake do not get along together as deities in Shintô shrines. Nevertheless, the local people didn't seem to care about that.

The next morning my friend left. She went back to Hiroshima but I decided to stay for another day to visit a local shamaness. Mount Iwaki has a twin next to it, known as Mount Akakura, which as I mentioned earlier is a mecca for shamanism, particularly *kamisama*. Along the slope of Mount Akakura one can find numerous small shrines of various shapes and hues which belong to them. These shrines in the wilderness are created for their spiritual training and purification rites, and with their clients and followers they carry out training to obtain higher powers.

The owners of the inn I was staying at were the ones who had suggested that I visit one of these shamanesses. The night before my friend left, as we were having dinner in the inn, we had been chatting with them. When I asked them about well-known *kamisama* in the area that I wanted to visit, they had suggested the one they had gone to until she had died. The shrine was still maintained by her caretaker and successor, who had been her assistant. They arranged a ride for me in the morning, actually with a delivery person who was going in that direction, and I arrived.

It was early in the morning, perhaps quarter to nine, and the shrine was located at the bottom of Mount Akakura. It was a large, relatively old residence with a main hall and many rooms for followers. In front of it was a red Shinto gate, a *torii*, and a large stone monument commemorating the work of the late Soda Fuji, the gifted ***kamisama*** who had developed this shrine. The place was very quiet and there was no trace of people around. In fact, it was in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by unoccupied land.

I opened the wooden Japanese-style doors at the entrance and said *ohayou-gozatmasu*, good morning. It was dark inside and appeared quite empty. A few seconds later I heard people talking inside. An old man opened the inner door, looked at me, and disappeared. Then an elderly woman appeared and bowed. I said, "*Sumimasen*, excuse me, I heard about this shrine from such and such a person, and I would like to know more about it." She said, "Come in," and I took my shoes off and followed her.

To the left of the entrance door there was a large hole with a wooden floor, and also on the left-hand side was the altar with all sorts of offerings displayed, *saké*, rice, fruit, all piled up. Facing the altar to your left there was a rectangular space with a small table and felt mattresses around it. She took me there and sat down, inviting me to sit as well. I sat, and she took the fortune-telling calendar and asked my name, my age, and my date of birth. I gave this information in Chinese characters, but I felt she was misunderstanding me — I hadn't gone there for fortune telling, but anyway, I just sat there and listened to her advice. So she flipped through the booklet here and there and read the parts that were relevant to me, giving me some general advice on my future, marriage, finance, and so on. That took about ten minutes. I thought that I should make some offering to the ***kamisama*** or the shrine and so I asked her what I should give. She said, "whatever you

feel," and I think I took two thousand yen. She gave me the envelope to put it in, and then she took it to the altar and placed it there.

She asked me where I came from, and where I was going. Obviously she thought I was a traveller, even though I spoke the local dialect. I said, to Hakodate, and she said, "Are you from Hakodate?" I said I was born there, and my parents were still there. She became a little more personal. I said that I had climbed to the top of Mount Iwaki yesterday, in spite of the bad weather, and she said that Mount Iwaki is one face, Mount Akakura is another face, and that they have the mountain pilgrimage around the twentieth of August every year. The pilgrimage to Mount Akakura was a real journey, with no technical assistance: you basically follow the path through the wilderness, past the sacred sites revered by your predecessors. It's a full day trip, beginning with purification rites; and the pilgrimage can be used as an initiation for apprentice shamanesses as well.

Then I told her about our experiences climbing Mount Iwaki, especially with the wind, and that I felt the god of Mount Iwaki was actually a wind goddess. She seemed to find my comment strange, but agreed that the mountain deity of Mount Iwaki was female. She went on to say that the mountain deity of Mount Akakura was male, and that the two made a pair.

She then related a very interesting oral tradition, a version of the origin of the *neputa*. According to this, when Atoroi was fighting with the southern soldiers, he took refuge in Mount Akakura, in the woods. He had only a few soldiers with him. However, he cut down the trees and made hundreds of boats, and placed them on the water (probably the Iwaki River) brightly lit. From a distance they appeared to be hundreds of rescue boats coming to reinforce him, and the southern troops were terrified.

Whether as King of the Evil Way 悪路王 or under names closer to the one he bore in life, Atoroi [Aterui] has become an archetype of the indigenous warrior, even in regions such as Tsugaru where he was not likely to have led his troops. While tales about Sakanoueno Tamuramaro have been popularized by force across northern Honshû, a different story told from the indigenous perspective still persists in some areas, such as Akakura.

She asked me if I had seen a snake, "hebi mita ka?" I said I hadn't seen a live snake, but I described the *ryûjin* calligraphy to her, and the offerings to the snake, eggs and *saké*, at the hot springs. I also mentioned that we got off the bus by accident. The woman called the old man, her husband: "Come over here, she's from Hakodate and she's going back tomorrow. She's seen snakes. She met the goddess at the top of the mountain." She then took out a scroll and opened it in front of me, saying, "Mount Iwaki and Mount Akakura worship go back for a long, long time. Several generations ago, a shamaness protecting this shrine, a *ryûjin-sama*, wrote down the oral traditions about Mount Iwaki and Mount Akakura worship." She said, from the scroll, that the Mount Iwaki shrine had been visited by people from all over the world in the ancient past, and that this origin tale has been passed down for many generations. She also took out an old seal whose design had been dictated by a vision about the snake. She then opened a drawer and took out an old mirror, seven inches long and oblong. The mirror had some brown stains inside, which formed strange shapes. She said that this corrosion had a sacred significance.

At the bottom of the mirror were a few wavelike lines, which she said were interpreted as representing Mount Iwaki and Mount Akakura. She added that after the master

shamaness had died, another outbreak of rust had appeared towards the upper left of the mirror. It was three dots arranged in an almost equilateral triangle, a pyramid shape. She said that she didn't know how to interpret this, and asked if I had any suggestions. I did have some idea, but I did not tell her. I had seen that very triangle shape twice in March of 1990, within one week, over the sky of downtown Toronto. However, I could not explain clearly in this particular context what significance it might have. On my meeting her question with silence, she said that the only thing she could think of was that the triangle points in the direction of the north, judging from the way in which Mount Iwaki and Mount Akakura are depicted on the mirror. She added that there might be more messages in the future that would help her to understand.

Finally, after being introduced to the treasures of the shrine, I asked her about this respected shamaness who had died several years before, Sudo Fuji. She took me around the hall, pointing to the various pictures, thank-you letters, mementos of her travels to sacred sites, and celebratory remarks, and describing how popular she had been, with hundreds of followers, including many celebrities.

Her husband seemed to be pleased with my interest in her, though he didn't speak much, saying only that "you already have a guiding spirit." I was not sure what he really meant, though. There were only a few serious followers of the snake cult in the region, but the owners of the inn I had been staying at were still their clients; the hot springs we had visited by accident turned out to be relatives of the other owner. I had unwittingly been visiting a series of connected people and places, in a chain of synchronic events.

By this time, it was near noon, and they invited me for lunch. I refused it politely, but they said they wanted to tell me something else, so I went to eat. She said, "Sudo Fuji

has four children and two of them live in Hakodate, since she herself was originally from Hakodate. Her children did not respect her profession, and after her death, none of her children came to visit the shrine or sent any offerings for her." So she felt that in this one respect the shamaness was not happy and was harboring a residual anxiety about her children. Maybe that's why I was led to this particular shrine among many. She took the temple's business card and wrote down the names of the two children in Hakodate, one of whom was running a pub in downtown Hakodate, and asked me, if I had a chance, to go and visit them. Her husband said that I could be a good ***kamisama*** but I should be careful with the mass media. Some shamanesses got so popular on TV, he said, but they were sceptical about them.

II. A summons from Nibutani

In February of that same year the spirit of Kaizawa Tadashi had come to me in a dream. He had died in February of 1993, at which time he was the vice-chairman of the Hokkaidô Ainu Association, and primary editor of the *Ainu History* (5 volumes to the present day). He was the chief proponent of reconstructing Ainu history from an Ainu perspective, and was not hesitant to assert that even the so-called "pure Japanese race" shared Ainu ancestry, right up to the Imperial Household itself (Kaizawa 1993: 31-34, 134-139).

Kaizawa Tadashi had been one of the most respected Ainu elders in Nibutani, and integral to the life of the community. But in my dream he appeared to be in a cold and dark place, deprived of words. He seemed to be wanting to say something, but he

remained completely silent. The dream bothered me, because, as much as I admired the cultural revival in Nibutani, I felt a deep pain every time I visited. I had sensed that there was something very special about Nibutani ever since I had visited the place for the first time when I was twenty-one. But over the years I learned that Nibutani, too, was a community divided, especially after the forced development of the government-funded Nibutani dam project which drove some Ainu residents to relocate and sank many Ainu cultural sites under the water. The dream indicated to me that this was not what Mr. Kaizawa would have liked to have seen happening.

Thus, I had carried something with me from Canada with the hope that I could find a place to offer it to a higher being. It was a piece of paper with a prayer in a form of poetry. It was addressed to various gods in nature, above all the fire god, ***Ape fuchi kamuy***. Since I was never trained to give prayers in any particular form, the only way I knew was in the form of poetry. When I wrote it I realized that I had to take this prayer to Nibutani.

I had also had a personal desire throughout my trip to visit Nibutani to meet the revered shamaness Aiko Aoki, who was probably the last Ainu woman with almost all the supernatural abilities respected by traditional Ainu. I had been to Nibutani several times prior to this, sometimes as an interpreter for some of the most prominent public Ainu figures in the community. I had been at Nibutani Forum 93 (see Kaizawa ed. 1993), the world indigenous people's gathering (which I was asked to attend on behalf of a friend in Vancouver who had a schedule conflict), where I had ended up as a communication facilitator between Northwest natives from Canada, the forum staff, and local Ainu. Going to Nibutani to meet Aiko was politically very delicate for me, because of the intri-

cate social relationships within the community; and since it is a small community, it would be impossible for me to remain invisible while I was there. I knew that Aiko had been suffering from ill health for the past few years, and had been in hospital recently, so I did not know whether or not she was able to speak to me even if I did go to see her. I had no official channels to work through, and no-one was available to introduce me.

In an objective sense, I had no adequate explanation to myself or to others why I had to be so concerned with the affairs of the Ainu or Nibutani. On occasion I had been questioned by my Ainu colleagues who thought that I was somehow different from other Japanese academics who could not hide their superior attitudes towards them. All I could say then was that, "I think the Ainu are very important to me, and Ainu things are somehow my things as well." I had wanted to find answers for the questions which had kept something inside of me dead quiet for a long time. I no longer even remembered what these questions were; all I knew was that I was alone with them. Like Kiraichi, which my father never encouraged me to visit or to ask questions about, the Ainu were a forbidden destination, but one never to be erased from my genetic memory. I did not yet know, then, that I too was an Ainu.

When I got to Hakodate, I still could not decide whether to go. It was a dilemma; I had faced it but not solved it. A friend of mine in Hakodate, a practicing *Yijing* master (who is also trained in esoteric Buddhism), whose sensitivity and wisdom I respect greatly, took me out for dinner one night and sensed my problem.

At this point, the trip felt like climbing Mount Iwaki, but worse: instead of a wind there seemed to be some dark stormy force rising from Nibutani, trying to blow me away, as if I were not welcome there. But on the other hand I had a counterbalancing

urge to go, or return, as if I had left my soul in Nibutani. My *Yijing* master was confident that everything would be fine once I got there. He said that going to Nibutani was the main point of my trip, but it might be a good idea to take sea salt, just as he does himself when he feels some bad energy.

So, just as my girlfriend had gotten me off my rear end and up Mount Iwaki, my *Yijing* master overcame my reluctance to go to Nibutani. I trudged off, salt in hand (actually, I think he gave me the salt). I went to Sapporo first, since I unaccountably neglected to get close enough to the door of the carriage to make it off the train at the right stop (to get to Nibutani from Hakodate you have to get off at Tomakomai Station and then transfer to a bus or train). From Tomakomai to Sapporo is less than an hour's trip, so I decided to spend some time in Sapporo to visit Nagai Hiroshi, the author of the book about Aiko Aoki. I found a modestly priced inn in Sapporo, not too far away from the central station, and went to have a cup of coffee before I phoned Mr. Nagai, who didn't know me from Adam.

I walked into a cafe which looked quite ordinary, but which proved on the inside to be decorated according to rather unusual tastes. The walls were covered with antique clocks, dozens of them, none of which worked, and the room dividers were made of fake plastic candles with electric light bulbs: the early Poe look. All the clocks were frozen in time, all at different times, forever indicating the moment they stopped moving. I honestly thought that I couldn't have chosen a better place.

From the pay phone inside, I called Mr. Nagai, hoping he would be in. He was. He was kind enough to tell me I could visit him at home, and so I went. When I arrived, we did not speak much at first — he was obviously in the middle of his own work and not

too willing to spend much time with me. I explained my relationship with some of the Ainu leaders and introduced my concerns about Nibutani, but he didn't seem to be much interested. However, after a while the conversation turned to talking about the boundary between life and death and he began asking me questions about my own personal experiences. He was told by Aiko that one has to follow one's own personal path and that one has to cultivate the inner senses. Once we got to this point, I felt that we were on familiar territory, and our conversation became very casual.

By that time his wife had returned (she volunteered at a hospice for dying people, and she has also assisted Kayano Shigeru's work), and we went on to have a very enjoyable evening talking about his own experience of so-called supernatural events, such as communication with spirit beings, near-death experience, and communication with birds. I was able to gather bits and pieces of information about Aiko's personality. Strangely, it seemed to overlap somewhat with that of my own grandmother. I talked about Mount Iwaki, and the suggestion made by my *Yijing* master to visit Nibutani. His wife gave me a few books by Takahashi Keiko, a respected spiritual leader and a writer, whom she had assisted personally when Ms. Takahashi had come to Sapporo recently. We promised to keep in touch in the future, and parted.

The next day, I took a train with a renewed resolution to get to Nibutani. However, I managed to disembark at Mukawa Station, about half an hour by bus from Nibutani. I still felt this dark stormy force coming from Nibutani and had a very unpleasant feeling about going there. So I walked around Mukawa Station and decided to spend a day there. There are a few Ainu-related sites in Mukawa, including a museum, which was closed that day. So I lay in my room in the Japanese inn, and opened one of the books by Taka-

hashi Keiko at random. I usually don't read this type of religious book, so I took it quite lightly, just opening it and flipping through pages. That particular book was about her encounters with the spirits of the dead, with messages for their living relatives. As a spiritual leader and a philosopher, she gives lectures in public and her audience often includes the dead. Her style of writing was fascinating and artistically refined, very calm and peaceful, and feminine. So in spite of my premonition about the book, I came to like it. But I didn't want to finish reading the whole book in one session, because just as with the salt I had in my pocket, I wanted to be reminded of its power constantly.

The next day, I finally took the bus. But once more I didn't make it to Nibutani. Instead, I got off at Biratori town, and went to a coffee shop. I was still pondering whether or not to go back to Hakodate. I opened Takahashi's *Tenrut*, this time at page one, and was totally astonished. In Chapter One she described her visit to Hakodate after communicating with those who died of a major fire there some sixty years ago. She had been born in Tokyo, but she called her visit to Hakodate one of the most memorable events of her life, describing it as a sacred place under divine protection, but with layers of deep pain. She related to the fire in Hakodate early in the last century that killed nearly twenty thousand people, including many women in the red-light districts who were too weak to escape. My father was still a small child when the fire happened, and I heard about it from one of my elementary school teachers, how the beach close to the school was used as an assembly point for the burned bodies of the dead.

Having read this, I began to see the connection between Nagasaki, Hiroshima, the burning forest in Morioka, and the history of my own birthplace. It was fire that had induced all these tragedies. Was I to expect more of this in Nibutani? I had an intution

that I had to get to Nibutani to understand something about fire. So I finally got up and set off, ten minutes ride on a local bus to Nibutani.

The sky was dark and it was drizzling when I arrived. Since I had never been to Aiko's house, I had to ask several people near the bus stop how to get there. It was only a few minutes walk away from the bus stop, but I went around and around a few times before I found it. Unpaved roads are still common in Nibutani, and there is no way to distinguish between houses of the Ainu and those of the Japanese residents.

There was nothing dramatic about Aiko's home. It was just another Japanese style house, with no ceremonial objects or decorations that would indicate her Ainu heritage. I stood in front of the Japanese-style entrance door and said "*Konnichi wa*" (Good day), but there was no answer. I put my hand to the door and opened it gently. There were several pairs of shoes in a small entrance space, and I said "*Konnichi wa, gomen kudasai*" (Hello, excuse me). The inner door slid open and a woman in her mid-thirties appeared. She looked at me without saying anything for a few seconds and I said, "I came to see Aiko *obaachan*." (Mr. Nagai had phoned Aiko about my visit.) The woman's face disappeared again and I heard her talking to someone. She came back and invited me into the house.

Aiko was laying on a couch in the middle of the living room, stroking a cat perched on her chest. There were a couple of visitors in the room talking to her, so I sat to the side. Her husband was reclining on the floor close to the garden, opposite to the entrance. He was quiet and appeared to be ill (I learned later that he had Altzheimer's disease).

I did not immediately notice any trace of Ainu influence in the room other than a few *inaw* at the corner of the house. I knew Aiko's husband was not Ainu, and she had several daughters, none of whom had taken up her profession. As I observed Aiko reading the palms of the young college students, not local people, who had come to consult her, I learned that she had a hearing problem, and she was saying that she could not see very well either.

When these visitors had gone, the woman who had invited me into the house, Aiko's youngest daughter Itsuko, told Aiko that Mr. Nagai's acquaintance was here. Still on the couch, Aiko looked at me, and said "Come closer." Then she asked, "Why did you come to see an Ainu?" She had very deep and striking eyes, not intimidating but the eyes of a very experienced counsellor. She asked me how many children I had, and I said two. She responded, "Why did you lose one, idiot?" I said, "Well, that was a miscarriage, and it couldn't be avoided." She said, "You will have one more. I see three." She continued, "I have a tumor in my head and there is a noise inside my head all the time and I can't sleep. I cannot see very well, I cannot hear very well, I cannot walk very well, and my body aches here and there. I'm carrying so many pains and illnesses in my body and I still can't die. What do you want from me?" I said, "I came here because Nibutani is crying. Something has gone wrong with this place. I wanted to come here but something has been trying to push me away."

Aiko listened and nodded, and she asked me casually to show her my palm. I extended my left hand, and she held it for a long time. Then she said, "Your hand is just like mine. All my pain is going into your hand, poor woman. My head is getting lighter now." She added, "You are my soul friend, *tamashii no tomodachi*, and you have come

to send me off. You have gone through a lot to get here. Your health isn't so good either." Still holding my hand, and concentrating, she said, "Oh, it's horrible (*waruina*). I have to do a ***kamuy nomi*** for you, I have to pray to your guiding spirit." Her daughter Itsuko sighed and said, "*Okkanai*!" ("Terrible!")

Aiko passed me a cigarette and asked me to smoke, and we shared the smoke. She poured ***saké*** and asked me to drink some, praying in Ainu all this time. After she began praying she said "You are going to have all kinds of sickness like me, sick people and hopeless people will come to you and you are going to be troubled and in pain like me. Do you still want to get into this?" I said, "But do I have a choice?" She just continued to pray.

There was no hearth in her house, not even a modern one, much less the traditional Ainu hearth to which one used to offer saké and pray. Instead there was only a gas stove at the corner of the house on the side nearest Aiko's head. So she offered ***saké*** there to the fire goddess, ***appe fuchi kamuy***. She asked me to open the window a little bit when she was praying, and then when she was finished, she asked me to open it wider and told me to offer ***saké*** out there. I didn't know exactly how, and she didn't seem to care, so I just tossed it out. She said, "That's fine."

Everything was quiet except for the birds on the roof, who all flew away at the same time at one point during her prayer. It took only a few minutes. In contrast to the other public ceremonial services that I had attended conducted by male Ainu, who offered ***kamuy nomi*** in full traditional regalia using elaborate ritual utensils, and followed a very rigid ceremonial structure in their sequential and physical arrangements, I found Aiko's ***kamuy nomi*** almost too easy to be true. It was part of her everyday life, so mundane,

and so natural. But then again, it seemed strangely familiar to me. There was no special place to meet the dead, and no special church to find a god. I liked Aiko. She reminded me a bit of my own grandmother from Kiraichi.

Having finished, she told me that this would help me see things more clearly, that it would make me able to see things like her. I thought she was using the word "see" in a diagnostic sense, to see people's problems and thoughts, both dead and alive, which is an essential ability for a healer, which I did not mind becoming, or had always felt I should be. She also added that it would be up to me to cultivate the ability, that it was all in me, but that her prayer would help.

I stayed in Aiko's house for a couple of hours that afternoon, and felt very much at home. Sometime before I left, I gave Aiko my earrings made of Oregon thunder egg, a natural stone from Oregon. She thanked me and said, "A perfect accompaniment for me. I'm part *fure shtsam* ("red" skinned neighbors = white person). I've got Russian blood. I will take these with me to another world." Opening her dark little jewelry bag, she took out a necklace made of small beads. She gave it to me, saying that it was an Indian necklace from North America. She added, "I'm feeling better now, all the bad things are going to you."

I had a chance to talk with Aiko's daughter Itsuko, who accompanied me to her sister's house, about five minutes' walk from Aiko's home. She said that she had a health problem, and was taking medication; I had seen her checking her blood pressure regularly during my visit. However, she was very friendly and witty. She indicated here and there that she had inherited some of Aiko's ability, such as a strong intuition, and that she could understand things by feeling, without having to talk to a person. But the first thing

she said to me when she started to talk was that when she saw me at the door, she felt as if she knew me, as if someone had come home from a long journey, that it calmed her and made her feel peaceful. I was delighted to learn that I was not the only one with the feeling of familiarity with her and her family.

She invited me to stay in her sister's house, and took me to her souvenir shop across from the house to introduce me. She has free tea in her shop, and invites passers-by to have a drink. Sometimes she goes on to feed them as well. People in Nibutani are very hospitable; if they find you are a traveller they will invite you to their homes and try to feed you more than you should really eat.

The next day I went to meet with Yasuko Yamamichi, who was voluntarily looking after Aiko, providing transportation to hospital and the like. Aiko had suggested that I visit her. She is a shamaness in her own right, the most prominent Ainu woman of the younger generation in Nibutani, a language educator, and head of the Yamamichi Free School for troubled children. I had mixed feelings about meeting her, though, since her prominence has attracted a great deal of jealousy and rumors on the part of my male colleagues, to the point that some had advised me not to see her at all, without saying exactly why. Moreover, it was difficult to visit her on the quiet, since to get to her house I had to pass the residences of some of these colleagues.

Another thing was that it had started to rain quite heavily that night. I had first thought that I would go back immediately, but the rain was so bad that I felt I should stay in Nibutani until it eased. It was useful, however, since I borrowed a huge umbrella to go to Yasuko's place, and someone staying there walked with me. This gave me the cover I needed to make the passage there.

When I arrived at Yasuko's, it proved to be a very open place, since she runs a free school and visitors stay there casually. It's almost like a refugee camp or commune, but not sixties-style — people build houses in the old Ainu style, and there are several of these now for her visitors. They have their own farm, where they grow millet and vegetables and raise chickens, trying to reduce their dependence on cash and be as self-sufficient as possible.

When I met her, Yasuko proved to be a solidly-built woman in her late 40's, with a round face, markedly Ainu or "exotic" facial features, with large eyes and a large nose, which gave her a resemblance to a gypsy. She looked like a cheerful, friendly, but tough mother, not the abusive weirdo some people had depicted. Yasuko invited me to her office, where she does most of her paperwork. As soon as she sat down, she said "I can hear something. Eh, you're saying something to me. You said you've come a long way home. You were an *ttako* and that's your true profession." Of course, all this time I was quiet. However, strange things began to happen almost immediately after. I began to feel a strong heat all around me.

It was late May, and in Hokkaidô summer does not start until late June or early July. But I felt such a heat and burning sensation that I could no longer engage myself comfortably in a normal conversation. I began to see orange flames inside my eyes and around my head, and I closed my eyes to concentrate on the images which were coming to me. Yasuko asked me, curiously but warmly, what I could see. I told her that I saw a young girl with a small child, running through the fire, helpless and apparently injured. She asked, "What else?" I then saw tombs of many shapes, some the familiar Japanese pattern, some with unfamiliar shapes, and even a cross. Yasuko said, "It's me and my

brother, when we escaped from the big fire. I lost my family members in that fire. Our family burial ground is on the mountain, the Nibutani common burial ground for both Ainu and Japanese, and even for foreigners like Dr. Munro whose tomb is marked with a cross."

This vision was not something within my complete control; it was as if I had been seized by a greater power to deliver a message, and until the message was completed I was not released from it. But it was not entirely "ecstatic" to an extent that I have no awareness or recollection of what goes on — I knew where I was and what was happening to myself. I kept saying, "hot, I'm so hot." Then a couple of children ran into Yasuko's office playing and laughing loudly, and went around me and exited; I felt the power was gone and I was free once more. I sighed deeply and Yasuko said, "Oh, it's finally gone."

Yasuko told me that she was preparing to have an *icharupa*, an Ainu-style service for the dead, in an old Ainu burial ground in Biratori which was to be bulldozed by the town for a publicly funded development project. Yasuko was of course against the town's initiative and she wanted to assert the rights of the Ainu people to their own sacred sites. She invited me to come to see the burial ground with her, as well as the Nibutani burial ground which I saw and have described. I asked Yasuko where Mr. Kaizawa Tadashi's tomb was, and she said it was in the Nibutani public cemetery, on a hill across from the farm run by his son's family. Yasuko offered to give me a lift, because she said she felt that I should visit these places. I told her how I felt about coming to Nibutani, and I saw the broken clocks and so on; that I felt I had been opposed by some dark and stormy force rejecting my arrival in Nibutani. She replied that she thought I had come at a good

time for the services, and that she understood why I felt that way, because of all the unpleasant things happening there.

When she decides something, Yasuko is quick to act on it, and she is also a very organized person. She drove me first to the public cemetery, in her van. On our way to the cemetery, we saw an elderly woman chasing two horses; in spite of all her efforts to coax the horses down, they persisted in running in an uphill direction. As we approached her, she waved her hand at Yasuko and Yasuko stopped the car. She asked where we were going, and we said, to the cemetery. The woman then politely asked Yasuko to give her a ride to the cemetery, since she had to bring the horses down. I recognized her voice and face, and realized that she was the wife of the late Kaizawa Tadashi. As it turned out, we had to go over the Kaizawa family's private land to get to the cemetery, but this way we would not be rude in doing so. I thought I was fortunate, and again I was thankful for my invisible guide.

When I got to the burial ground, Yasuko showed me the tombs that I had seen and described to her, and she showed me Mr. Kaizawa's, which was quite a modest structure, marked by a wooden Ainu grave post. I knelt in front of the tomb and offered smoke. I sensed the same deep silence that I had felt in my dream, and I felt the pain, but I did not know what to say to him personally. Yasuko said that when he was alive, she had been helped by him as well, and she used to go to visit him. She said that she felt he must have some residual feeling about the Ainu people and about Nibutani. There was a tomb for the anonymous dead, and when I stood in front of it, I heard a voice saying "When it snows, come again." I told Yasuko what I heard, and she said, "Maybe you'll be back here one winter."

On our way back from the cemetery, we saw a truck coming from the other direction. When it came close enough, I recognized the driver. It was Koichi Kaizawa, a colleague of mine, the son of Kaizawa Tadashi. I thought ruefully, "This is what happens when you try to avoid people." Yasuko stopped the car to say hello to him, since after all we were on his land, and she told him that we were on our way back from the cemetery. He looked at me and opened his eyes wide, but didn't say anything. I stared at him and smiled, and remained silent. And so we drove away.

After that, Yasuko drove to the traditional Ainu burial ground that was being destroyed by the redevelopment. On our way, Yasuko had to pick up a girl to give her a ride somewhere; the girl was very polite and well behaved. So the three of us went there, and visited the burial ground, a relatively small piece of land seized by Biratori township. It was adjacent to some farmland, and unless you were told you would not recognize it as anything special, since it appears to be nothing more than a patch of unused land covered with wild grass, in places as high as your waist. As we walked through the burial ground, Yasuko was pulling out the artificial sticks placed by the town officials which marked the Ainu tombs, saying "We don't need these." Before we went in, she found moxa and gave it to me to ward off evil. I lit my cigarette as well, and Yasuko said, "That too works against evil."

Yasuko said that she was going to set up an Ainu altar in a few days and offer *tnaw* and *saké*, in the hope that this would change the planned fate of the place. She said that she was also bringing in a couple of reporters from the television stations in Sapporo. As Yasuko pointed to a couple of old wooden Ainu tomb markers, still visible in the ground but covered by weeds, she said "There used to be more of these here but people pulled

them out. Perhaps they mistook them for rotten old sticks." As she spoke, I heard a scream from the edge of the burial ground, close to the farm. It was an old man's voice, full of anger and despair. The voice said, "Leave us alone!" (***hottotte kure***). I told Yasuko about it, and she said, "Where?" I pointed in the direction of the voice, and she grunted.

That night, I stayed in one of the Ainu-style bungalows in Yasuko's settlement. It had a hearth in the center of the building. I made a fire in the hearth and took out the piece of paper I had brought with me. I read the poem to ***Abe fuchi kamuy*** in front of me, and when I had finished, I offered ***saké*** to it and threw the paper into the fire. The fire flared up brightly, and the paper crackled; the whole bungalow was lit up. The fire settled down after a while and I felt that the air was "full." It was nearly completely dark inside the bungalow, and I saw the air moving in a spiral, as if it were the birth of a small constellation.

This fire was the fire I had come to towards the end of this journey. A hearth at the center of the house. A warm, thoughtful, sparkling, wise but temperamental goddess. She can destroy or protect her children. We, her children, seek her flames endlessly but she is everywhere, and no one's fool. The fire kept me in her cradle, put me to sleep, at peace. The smell of burning wood. The crackling sound.

That night, I had a dream in which an old tree trunk stood in front of me and said to me, "Do you know the meaning of this?" I thought it was an old Ainu tomb marker, but it was not distinguishable from a dead tree. Then I saw hundreds of Japanese-style burial tablets, all brand new, piled against each other and still moving, as if they had just been thrown together. The next morning, when I woke up, I went to tell Yasuko about my dream. However, even before I had a chance to speak, she asked me if I had had a dream.

I said, "Yes," and she replied, "Me too." She asked me what my dream was, and I told her about both of them. She then said that her own dream had been of a large rectangular Ainu house, a type of Ainu house that she had never seen in her life. She had the impression that a long time ago, the Ainu people had such houses, and the dream was to tell her that. It had some ceremonial function, and she thought the dream was a good sign, as if it was all ready to accommodate people. She connected it with her planned service for the dead, that it signified they were all waiting for us. She also said that my dream meant that the ancestors did not want the tablets or any other artificial funeral arrangements the township officials might prepare for them. I thanked her and she thanked me, and she asked me if I wanted to stay to attend the ceremony. I had to go back, but I felt I had fulfilled whatever role I had needed to play.

That afternoon I returned to Aiko's place once more to say good-bye. The weather was much better by then, and I had been in Nibutani for several days already. Aiko said to me, "What did you give to the fire god?" I said, "A prayer." She said that I could stay in her place that night and go back the next day. I spent a pleasant afternoon and evening with Aiko's daughters, three of them. We had a little feast and were drinking, after Aiko and her husband went to sleep in their bedroom. Before she went to bed, Aiko gave me a grey cardigan that someone had given to her, that only she had worn, and only once, saying that I should wear it when it is cold.

The next morning, Aiko told me that for the first time in many months, she slept really well: "Because you came, I was able to sleep so well last night." She offered millet rice and deer meat soup for me to eat before I left, which had been prepared by one of her daughters. When I was leaving the house, I felt that I really shouldn't leave at all, but

if I left I should come back again soon. I told Aiko that I would be back to see her again, but she said, "No, you will not see me." As I left, she came stumbling to the entrance door, as there was no-one inside the house to help her, and leaning against it, she started praying in Ainu. I sensed the importance of the message she was delivering to higher beings, and I stood there not wanting to leave. But after the prayer was over, she told me to go. So I waved and bowed, and started walking. Aiko stood there for a while, looking at me. I felt that she had done more than I deserved and I wasn't sure why I deserved a special send-off.

Aiko died in October of that year. Koichi Kaizawa informed me over the telephone in November about her death, but I knew about it through a dream in early November, before his call. Aiko appeared in my dream, standing right beside me. I stood on earth, with my feet slightly apart, and all my blood, dark not red, was going down into the earth. I was frightened of the amount of blood flowing down, because it seemed endless. And then Aiko said, "Is it all out?" I didn't know, and she said, "If it's all out, that's fine." She seemed very concerned about me, and then told me, "Don't feed your kids junk food. What you take in is very important." After that, I saw a small white feather or something cotton-like, falling from the heavens. It fell into a green *futon*, folded and packed away onto a shelf, and seemed to dissolve into it.

I was never able to see Aiko again before she died, but the dream assured me that what she had done to me and said about me when I met her would continue to be true, and that I am, in some way, carrying on Aiko's life.

III. A journey with Aterui

A lot has happened since then. Some good things, and some not so good. Yet in retrospect, they have all had their own rightful places in my life, and they all needed to happen, to mark a transition in my life, and to bring my story, my dissertation to its fruition. I don't want to boast too much about myself since I have done enough of that already. Thus, I will mention only events and things that concern not only me but other individuals, particularly my close relations.

The peace programmes we produced in Vancouver in the summer of 1995 were a great success in every way, though my health suffered afterwards because of the overwork and the stress in dealing with fundraising and the hostile emotions expressed by many individuals. But on balance there was far more support from communities and public bodies than we ever expected, including First Nations organizations, groups, and individuals, elders in particular. Yasui Sachiko, the storyteller from Nagasaki, received great attention from First Nations peoples and spiritual leaders. I accompanied her as her interpreter everywhere she was invited, including a sacred healing circle in Mission, British Columbia, where a very special ceremony was conducted in private. She received a standing ovation after her speech on August the ninth at the Plaza of Nations, and I saw from inside the simultaneous translators' booth that the first persons to stand up in the audience were the representatives of the National Aboriginal Veteran's Association.

To my surprise, and in a way, to my relief, one of the First Nations elders who helped me with the programme had told me afterwards that there was a reason why the programme was important to First Nations peoples. He said that there was a prophecy trans-

mitted among many First Nations peoples in America that towards the end of our time circle, two cities would turn to ashes. Within fifty years, a storyteller would have to arise from these ashes; and if the storyteller did not come, then another city would turn into ashes within three years. But the storyteller came, and spoke, and so the prophecy was fulfilled. Ms. Yasui was born with a special soul, he said, and she would be honored by his people.

I also learned that the United Nations had designated August the ninth as World Indigenous Peoples' Day, beginning that year. So finally, the riddle of seven-eight-nine, from Atoroi's victory in 789, Kunashiri-Menashi's rebellion in 1789, my father's birthday on Shôwa 7 August the eighth, and the fiftieth anniversary of Nagasaki Day, Heisai 7 August the ninth, came together, as the UN, without knowing any of these things, designated this particular day to remember all the silenced peoples and their buried histories. In some way, Nagasaki, too, tends to be forgotten or overshadowed by Hiroshima, which had been the first victim of nuclear weapons, only two days before.

My health remained uncertain for a while, until on the seventeenth of December, 1996, I slipped on the wet floor of a restaurant, fell down, broke my leg, and ended up in the emergency ward. As it turned out, the fracture was not due so much to my clumsiness as to a large yet benign tumor which had destroyed three inches of my thigh bone right above the knee. I had to undergo seven hours of surgery, and three weeks in hospital, while outside the hospital Vancouver was buried by the worst snowstorm in forty years. My leg had been repaired with bone from my pelvis and a generous helping of stainless steel, in a formation nicknamed an "Eiffel Tower" from the appearance it pre-

sented on my X-rays. The surgeon was very proud of himself, but for the rest of my life I will be setting off the metal detectors at airport security checks.

I have recovered completely from my injury and surgery, which confined me to a wheelchair for several months after leaving the hospital. I was placed in a challenging rehabilitation programme guided by ever-smiling physiotherapists whose job, from my viewpoint, was mainly to inflict pain upon their patients. But I am very thankful to them, for I had a definite reason to try for a speedy recovery. I was expecting a child in the spring of 1997 — pregnancy, wheelchair, crutches and canes, and bits and pieces of my life, all were "rehabilitated" that year. And my son, my third child, was born on the twenty-third of April, exactly one year after the departure of my grandfather on my mother's side, a successful entrepreneur from the southern island of Shikoku. In my family, the death-dates and the birth-dates of the grandparents and their grandchildren tend to coincide — my other grandfather, the one from Aomori, died on my birthday as well.

My son's birth contained one serious element of disappointment, at least for me. I had hoped to have a girl, and I had a name I always wanted to give to my daughter, Laila. I thus refused to take any advice on "what if" I had another boy, which would make me a mother of three boys and stepmother of one more — two from my previous marriage and one from my partner's previous marriage. But I was betrayed. A couple of months before the due date I had to go through a detailed ultra-sound after a false alarm from a genetic test. "Looks like HE is doing fine there, all his fingers are moving and he is already seriously playing with his toes!" The cheerful sound of a gynecologist. Alas! I almost fainted. My Laila was gone.

My partner bought a book on names, and we spent days looking at it. Since he has Irish ancestry, he wanted to choose a Celtic name. We came across several Celtic names for boys, and one we finally agreed on was Aidan, which means "light." We also learned that the other name, Laila, has a contrasting association with "darkness." Into the light, the baby came, choosing the very best day to announce his arrival. Well, I believe he is very happy with his name, since the name of the grandfather who died precisely one year before Aidan's birthday was Teruaki, which also means "shining light."

All of these events slowed down my research, but in return they did me one enormous favor. I was finally ready to break the taboo, and to visit Kiraichi, without even telling my father, who I thought would lose his temper once he found out. I was not sure if I would have a second chance in my life, or that I should just wait for it to come to me. I had to go and get "it" by myself, jump in and dive down.

So, in the spring of 1998, I walked and biked around northern Tsugaru, near the town of Kanagi. I had been there several times in my life already. First, as a small child, I had accompanied my grandparents on my father's side on their summer visit to Kiraichi, of which I have memories of mountain green, rice farms, and firebugs. My second trip was only to Kanagi, a personal ramble in northern Honshû in my late teens. This time, I was not a tourist or a vacationer. I wanted to begin to make Tsugaru part of my home again. I wanted to remove the walls build inside me, even though I was not responsible for them being there.

I realized that I had not completely understood my father's struggle all these years. It must have been difficult for a person who has a public persona to accept and put up with a "negative" background and a politicized identity. Besides, my grandparents on my

mother's side, a wealthy family whose success in northern Hokkaidô was partly based on extraction of indigenous forestry resources, had never fully accepted my father as a member of their family — they never fully comprehended why my mother was willing to endure many things she never encountered in her life until she married my father. I have seen more than enough family disputes and suicide attempts in my childhood, and had not understood why. Only after most of my grandparents were dead did things begin to change in my father, and he became somewhat lighter.

My father began to speak more about his parents, and grandparents from Aomori, after my visit to northern Tsugaru. Something which had bothered him intensely before was gone. I had said to him, one day, that the Ainu language was evidently spoken by some elders in Tsugaru until a few decades ago. Then he looked at me, and without much emotion, said, "Why not, my mother was speaking Ainu. When I was small, she used to tell me how to do a *charanke* in Ainu. She called it the Ainu's trial. " I could not believe what he had said. A joke? An invention to please me? Not possible, he's a bit of a researcher himself. Maybe he had forgotten that he had never told this to me before, so I reminded him, "Dad, why didn't you tell me before! That's amazing!"

He paused for a moment, and mumbled something. He said that there was more that my grandmother knew about the Ainu, but he could not "remember." She told him when he was very young that the Ainu were a backward people, and their customs useless. But she went on telling him what these "savage" people did. He only remembered the last phrase of this Ainu oratory, which began with the word *eraman*, whose precise meaning he said, of course, he did not "remember."

It took me a while to find out its meaning, and the appropriateness of its use in the ending part of a *charanke*, for I had to consult Kayano Shigeru and seek his approval. It is not a colloquial expression in Ainu, so I could not find its usage in Ainu language text books. But Kayano smiled at me, and told me that the kind of *charanke* which uses that kind of ending would be an *uko-charanke*, a shorter dispute. *Eraman* designates, "*Omoishittaka*!" ("understand!") uttered to the one who had committed a crime.

So it goes, on and on and on. Now my aunts, my cousins, even my mother collect bits and pieces of their memories. Apparently, my great-grandmother in Kiraichi, whom I never met, was constantly code-switching from Ainu to Tsugaru vernacular, especially when she was angry at someone. Her poor daughter-in-law from outside the village could not comprehend what her angry mother-in-law was saying to her, and often complained about the nature of her strange language and my great-grandmother's "questionable" mental state. I told these stories to my only sibling, my younger brother, a cardiologist and immunologist practicing in Tokyo, and his response was simply "*Yappari*" ("I thought so").

It is truly amazing how much silence people endure, because either things are tabooed and politicized, or no-one bothered to ask them what they knew. Yet what is truly praiseworthy is the persistence of what has been silenced, which often comes back after many generations, to express itself in the end. Much of what I looked for in books and writings, I had right at home within my family, and yet we did not even know how to begin to talk about it. So many have left this world without telling or even knowing about their hidden identity, which once brought into the light, is nothing to be ashamed of.

I have travelled with my invisible guide, and I will continue to do so, as we all do whether or not we know it. But now I have real guides in my life as well, who laugh at my limits, stick their tongues out at all the idiocy of the boundary-making games that hoodwinked their ancestors, and go flying into the stars, in their spaceships and Nintendô. The youngest, and the most unrestrained of them all, is Aidan, whose middle name is Aterui, and he will be three this spring.

APPENDIX I

THE AINU WRITING SYSTEM

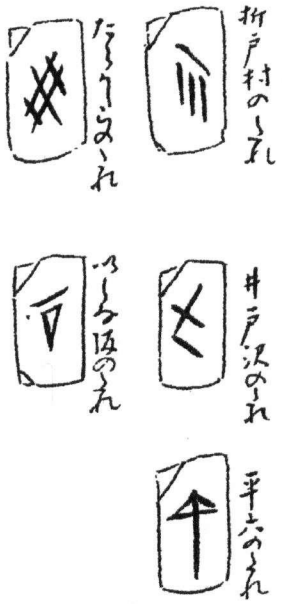


Figure 6.1: *Yamago* numbers

Here, I wish to reproduce some of the examples of ancient and indigenous writing in northern Japan given in Sasaki 1990: 139-149. The usual "explanation" for these is that all are late and highly imitative developments, without much significance for indigenous history or local culture; but I believe that this dismissive opinion will have to be reconsidered in the future.

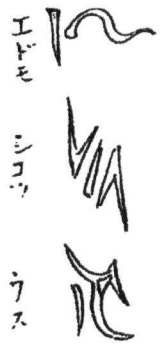


Figure 6.2: Ainu clan symbols

The first (Figure 6.1) is an example of the numbering system used by traditional loggers in Tsugaru, the *yamago*.

The second, at the upper right (Figure 6.2), are Ainu clan symbols.

The third illustration, to the left (Figure 6.3), shows some of the pictographs from "*Idako* no koto" ("About the *itako*") in the *Tsugaru soto sangunshi*. The fourth, to the right (Figure 6.4), is also from the *Tsugaru soto sangunshi,* a section entitled "Tosa sannô no meibun" ("The puzzling writings of the Tosa Mountain King").

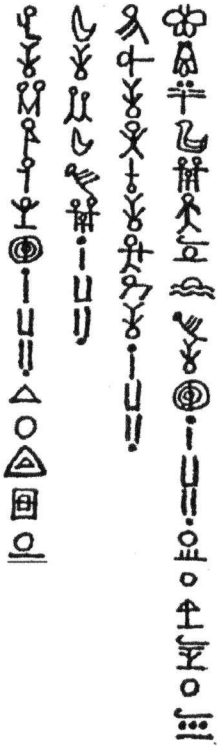


Figure 6.3: "*Itako*" writing

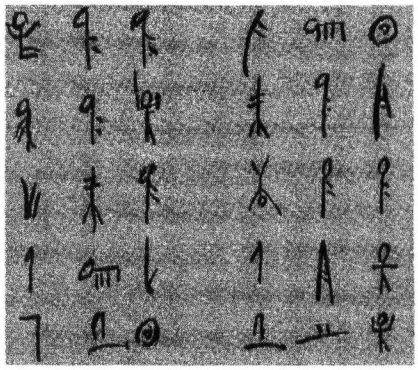


Figure 6.4: "Tosa Mountain King" writing

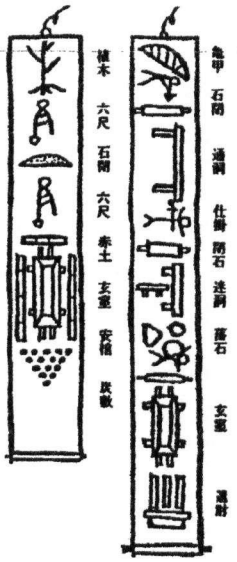


Figure 6.5:
"Ancient things"

The fifth illustration (Figure 6.5, on the left) is again from the *Tsugaru soto sangunshi*, the section entitled "Tsugaru koseki no koto" ("Ancient things in Tsugaru").

The picture to the right, Figure 6.6, shows an inscribed "Treasure seal" preserved by the Terui family.

Figure 6.6: "Treasure seal"

Figure 6.7 below, unfortunately somewhat unclear, shows a Nanbu picture calendar, of a type that was formerly in use among the peasants.

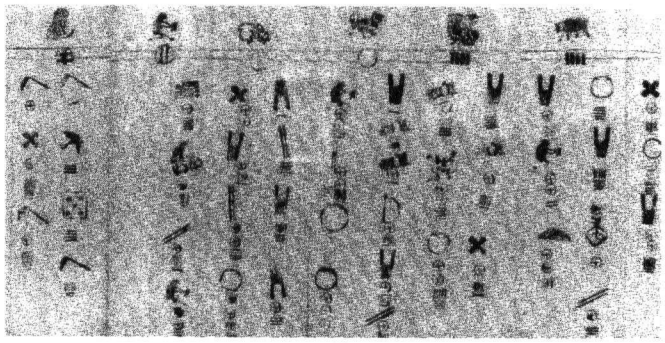


Figure 6.7: *Nanbu* peasant calendar

The final illustration, Figure 6.8 (next page), shows graphs said to have been transmitted in storytellers' villages: alphabetical, numerical, and pictographic.

Little serious study has ever been given to these and other examples of early indigenous writing in northern Japan. The general scholarly consensus, as I have said, is that they are all too late and too fake to be of much interest, especially anything mentioned in

the *Tsugaru soto sangunshi*. However, given the inaccuracy of the scholarly consensus regarding many other aspects of northern civilization and culture, I do not think we can afford to dismiss them so casually. For one thing, there seems to be too much consistency in many of the examples to be a product of chance — compare, for instance, Figure 6.3 above, the "itako" writing, 6.4, the writings of the "mountain king," and 6.8 to the right, the "storyteller's" graphs.

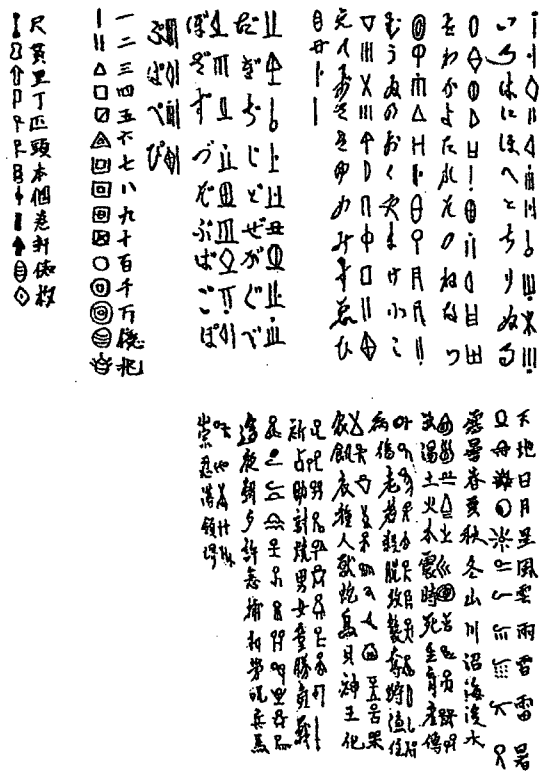


Figure 6.8: Storyteller's graphs

APPENDIX II

AIKO'S MIDWIFERY

In this appendix I will summarise the procedures and techniques of Aiko's midwifery as observed and described by Nagai, to show how elaborate and developed it was.

1) The initial sitting posture

Normally Aiko began by sitting at the feet of her patient, slightly to her right side, with her knees folded in Japanese style. Occasionally when the space is limited, she would bend one leg while keeping the other folded. The pregnant mother lay on her back, slightly bending her legs towards Aiko.

2) The foot as a tool

When the strong contractions in labour began, Aiko would cover the patient's anus with one of her feet, a piece of cloth in between. This would prevent the anus from getting damaged as well as assisting the patient to push. Aiko would use the toes, the great toe, or the front of the sole, depending on the situation. Once the labour began and the fetus began to appear, she would slip this foot underneath the patient's tail bone. She would insert her toe underneath the tail bone and push it upwards to make it easy for the pelvic bones to open. This process helped prevent difficult labour due to a narrow pelvis.

3) Finger techniques

In a normal labour, Aiko received the baby's head with her hands, keeping one of her legs under the patient's tail bone. She would put her thumbs lightly on the baby's head at the side of its crown, avoiding the fontanel, in preparation for some important finger techniques she would use on the baby's jaw.

There are three kinds of techniques with the pointing finger, their usage varying depending on the flexibility of the muscles of the birth canal. The first type is when she inserted both of her index fingers into the birth canal towards the baby's jaw, before its head came out of the canal. The second is the same except that she only used one finger. In the third, she placed her index fingers on the jaw as soon as the jaw appeared. The third type was used for normal deliveries, the second is for the most difficult cases.

The jaw has two parts which contain nerve endings, on the right and left sides respectively. Aiko placed her fingers on these parts of the baby's jaw during labour because she could thus stimulate the nerves and correct the alignment of the spine. Recieving the baby at the moment of birth requires special attention, since it has struggled its way through the narrow birth canal; if proper care is not given, the nerves remain dormant, hence the necessity for stimulation.

The "correction"of the alignment of the spine could be done by giving stimulation to the baby's jaw. The baby automatically responds to this by pulling the jaw back: this stimula is transmitted to the muscles of the entire face and the neck, which apparently ensures the proper alligment of the spine during the rotation. This finger technique also enabled Aiko to detect any abnormality, which could thus be treated immediately after the birth.

While placing her index fingers on both sides of the jaw, Aiko kept one of her ring fingers over the nape of the neck, in order to prevent abnormality in the cervical vertibrae. In this position, it takes only a slight motion of the finger to touch the seventh cervical vertibrae. The seventh cervical vertibrae is considered a nerve plexus, thus she moved her index finger to stimulate this at the same time detecting any abnormality, as the baby moves out from the birth canal. While she is doing this, she placed her other index finger under the number four thoracic vertibrae, for the same reasons. Aiko moved her fingers smoothly and continuously over the baby's body from the nape, to the the number seven cervical vertibrae, to the number three cervical vertibrae, the number four thoracic vertibrae, and the lumbar vertibrae. According to her, she could tell the possibility of having a stiff neck, and discern any mental illness which would manifest itself before the age eighteen, by touching these points.

4) Techniques for breech births

Aiko never failed when dealing with breech births. She needed no more time than for an ordinary birth, but her techniques differed somewhat.

First, she would place the exposed feet of the baby on top of each other, with her right index finger in between, manipulating the feet with the thumb and middle fingers. This technique stimulated the Achilles tendons, as well as easing labour by narrowing the width of the baby's thighs.

Aiko would then stimulate the baby's nerves by touching the back of the knee or the lower leg with her middle or ring finger, and then touching the anus with her middle finger. This technique is believed to stimulate the nerves and prevent bone misalignment. She then put her middle or ring finger on the lumbar vertebra while receiving the

spine, slipping the finger over to the thoractic vertebrae. From that point on, her finger procedure was the reverse of that used in normal labour.

The major difficulty caused by a breech birth is that the baby's jaws can get stuck in the cervical canal, leading not only to the suffocation and death of the baby but endangering the mother as well. Aiko released the baby's jaws from the cervical canal by pressing them (at the nerve point) with her index fingers; this made the baby pull in its jaws, enabling the head to come out easily. Aiko could feel the joy of the newborn baby when she touched its jaws this way: "all babies are born rejoicing."

Aiko received the baby in a different posture according to its gender: if it was a girl, the baby's face would be up, and if it was a boy, the face would be down. This is because when a drowned body is found, women are facing upwards and men are facing downwsrd. Assuming this to be a natural posture specific to gender, Aiko believed that receiving babies this way helped to fullfil their life spans.

5) Treatment of the umbilical cord

Aiko placed three fingers over the umbilical cord, begining at its root on the baby's stomach, and then tied the cord with a piece of thread just beyond her third finger. If the baby was weak, she used four fingers instead of three. She then squeezed and flattened the end part of the knot so that it could be folded and tied again, cut the edge of the knot with scissors, and disinfected it with diluted cresol. This dual tying appears to have been very effective in preventing infection. It was Aiko's own invention, as her mother's method was to tie once and cut the cord, then apply mugwort fiber cotton. Aiko also checked the liveliness of the umbilical cord before cutting, by slipping it between her thumb and index finger. If the baby was healthy, some

portion of the contents of the umbilical cord would be squeezed out before it was tied; if the baby was weak, nothing would be removed from it.

6) Resuscitation techniques

Most cases of resuscitation were as easy as putting the back of the baby in the pelvis area after the delivery. When the situation was slightly worse, she would bend the baby's head and legs inwards over the stomach, repeating this a few times. In seriously endangered cases, she would swing the baby in the air by its ankles and then apply the bend and stretch method. If the baby swallowed a large amount of fluid, she sucked it out with her mouth. If the baby's skin was pale and it was completely dead, then the resuscitation technique would not do any good, otherwise even in the worst cases the baby would be brought back to life. In these most serious cases Aiko prepared two pots of water, one cold and the other warm, and bathed the baby first in cold water and then in warm water after swinging it in the air, afterwards applying the bend and stretch method.

7) Follow-up examination.

After the baby was born, Aiko would examine it by first checking the flow of the blood and the heart, by touching the heart area lightly while observing the neck pulse. Then she repeated her examination by touch, from head to toe, three times. If she found any abnormality in tendons, muscles, and bone structure, she applied treatment immediately. Stiff neck, dislocated thigh bones, prolapsed intestines, worms in their stomach, and other illnesses and abnormalities which can manifest themselves within several months after the birth were treated and thus prevented at this stage, supplementing Aiko's finger techniques applied during labour, which had already had a preventative

function. The labour was completed by indicating to her guiding spirit by a gesture that she had received the soul of the child, and thanking both the child and uwarikamuy, the labour god, for the successful completion of the labour.

8) The midwife's kit

Both Aiko and her mother carried around a kit containg several of the following items: disinfecting fluid, ordinary cotton or mugwort cotton, thread, small hand scissors and a metallic pail to contain these.

The disinfection fluid was most commonly a cresol by Aiko's time, but her mother had used the tree fluid called rasupakap, made from the anoriutsugi tree. Rasupakap fluid is said to smooth the birth canal, but it also makes the fingers very slippery. The use of cresol required a good deal of attention so that the baby's eyes not be damaged, since some babies are born with their eyes open.

Mugwort cotton is used in the same manner as ordinary cotton. In old days. gathering mugwort to make cotton was a family labour; drying and producing cotton fibers by rubbing is tedious work. Nevertheless, Aiko noted that mugwort fibers are more effective in stopping bleeding than ordinary cotton.[1]

The thread was traditionally hand-made from the fibers of the staff tree, but it came to be replaced by cotton thread. Making thread was again tedious work, but Aiko's mother continued hand-making thread even after her retirement as a midwife.

Aiko put these tools and scissors in a *wappa*, a metal pail 20 cm in diameter and 10 cm deep, which could be used as a bucket. When she was on call, she carried this kit in her hand-woven bag, *saranip*.[2]

Endnotes

1 Mugwort is used for many purposes by the Ainu. The dried mugwort plants can be piled up and kept at one's pillow side to ward off evil, or carried around to protect oneself from evil spirits. Mugwort is also eaten, or used to make herbal tea, by both Japanese and Ainu. When dried, they can be made into moxa for moxabustion, as commonly used in Chinese medicine.

2 There are a number of other important techniques and skills Aiko inherited from her mother, including dealing with prolapsed wombs, and stopping bleeding during and after the delivery (Nagai 1983: 34-40, 122-128).

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