

**Aspects of the Ainu Spiritual Belief Systems:
An Examination of the Literary and Artistic Representations of the Owl God**

by

Yuko Kameda
B.A., University of Victoria, 2009

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

© Yuko Kameda, 2011
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

**Aspects of the Ainu Spiritual Belief Systems:
An Examination of the Literary and Artistic Representations of the Owl God**

by

Yuko Kameda
B.A., University of Victoria, 2009

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Timothy Iles, Supervisor
(Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Dr. Cody Poulton, Departmental Member
(Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Timothy Iles, Supervisor
(Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Dr. Cody Poulton, Departmental Member
(Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

This study will examine the integral role of owls in Ainu spiritual belief systems through the means of Ainu oral literature and Ainu material arts. In the past, the indigenous people known as Ainu lived only in northern Japan, including Kurile Islands (“Kurile Ainu”), Sakhalin (“Sakhalin Ainu”), and Hokkaido (“Hokkaido Ainu”). Today, Ainu people live across Japan; however, Hokkaido is considered their spiritual homeland and the majority of the population lives in this northern prefecture. This paper will focus on the group of people called “Hokkaido Ainu”. Before a large number of Japanese migrated to Hokkaido during the Meiji era (1868-1912), Ainu people had lived close to nature through various activities such as fishing, hunting, and gathering. As a result of these daily activities involving nature, the Ainu developed their spiritual belief systems. For example, they believe that various spirits exist in natural phenomena such as plants, insects, and animals. Among these animals, the bear, killer whale and owl are considered in many Ainu societies as the highest-ranked animal *kamuy*, meaning gods or deities. The Owl God in particular, is believed to be the guardian of the village. In this project, the symbolic representation of the Owl God in four different Ainu traditional folklores and various forms of arts will be carefully examined. The goal of this study is to demonstrate that although the language and physical communities are under threat by Japanese migration and a modern industrial economy, the spiritual belief in the Owl God as the guardian of the village continues to exist in contemporary Ainu works of art. In addition, I will argue that the representation of the Owl God, *Kotan-kor-kamuy*, is an important symbolic expression of Ainu cultural identity.

Key Terms: Ainu; nature; religious tradition; cultural identity; owls

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures.....	vi
Translations of the Ainu Words	x
Acknowledgments	xi
Dedication	xii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Ainu Worldview	7
Ainu.....	7
Creation of Land in Ainu Mythology	12
Concept of <i>Kamuy</i>	14
Animal Spirit-Sending Ceremonies	16
Animal <i>Kamuy</i>	20
Blakiston’s Fish Owls—God of the Village—	22
Chapter Two: Traditional Ainu Oral Literature.....	27
Genres	27
<i>Kamuy Yukar</i> (Songs of Gods)	29
<i>Tusu-sinotcha</i> (A Female Shaman’s Sacred Verse).....	30
<i>Kasou Buyou Geki</i> (仮装舞踊劇) (A Costume Dance Play).....	32
Key Features of <i>Kamuy Yukar</i>	36
First Person Narrative	37
Use of <i>Sakehe</i>	41
Message from the God	45
Summary	46
Chapter Three: Ainu Material Arts.....	47
Traditional Ainu Material Arts	47
Ainu Tourism Arts	67
Tourism Arts to Contemporary Fine Arts	78
Summary	81
Chapter Four: Representation of the Owl God	83
Literary Analysis of the Owl God.....	83
4.1 “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’”	85
4.2 “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘ <i>Konkuwa</i> ’”	89
4.3 “Owl and Salmon”	92
4.4 “ <i>Kamuy Chikap</i> ”	93
Representations of the Owl God in the Selected Stories	98
Visual Analysis of the Owl God	102

Spiritual Dialogue between the Owl God and the Artist—Toko Nupuri —.....	120
Conclusion	127
Bibliography	131
Appendix 1	140
Appendix 2	144
Appendix 3	147
Appendix 4	151

List of Figures

Chapter One

- Figure 1 Traditional Ainu Settlement Areas 7
 Source: The Ainu Association of Hokkaido, *Brochure on the Ainu People*, under “Where, since when and how have the Ainu People existed?,” <http://www.ainuassn.or.jp/english/eabout01.html>.
- Figure 2 The Meaning and Classification of the category *Moshir* 12
 Source: Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 11.
- Figure 3 Owl Sending Ceremony 18
 Source: Shigeki Akino, “Spirit-Sending Ceremonies,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 255.
- Figure 4 “*Ainu Moshir, Kamuy Moshir*” (1984) 21
 Source: Masahiro Nomoto, “Home and Settlement: COTAN AND CHISE,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 227-233 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 227.
- Figure 5 Land-Use Change from Meiji Period to Present 25
 Source: Yugo Ono, “Ainu Homelands: Natural History from Ice Age to Modern Times,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 32-38 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 38.

Chapter Two

- Figure 6 Examples of Genres in *Sa-ko-yo* 28
 Source: Based on Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 2:122.; Itsuhiko Kubodera, アイヌの文学 [Literature of Ainu] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), 198.

Chapter Three

- Figure 7 *chep-keri* 48
 Source: Shiro Kayano, “Who Owns the Salmon?,” in *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*, eds. Judith Roche and Meg McHutchison, trans. Jane Corddry Langill and Rie Taki, 40-45 (Seattle, Wash.: One Reel: University of Washington Press, c1998. 42), 42
- Figure 8 *cep-ur* 48
 Source: Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 288
- Figure 9 (Ainu) Taking Off the Elm Tree Bark 51
 Source: Mari Kodama, “Clothing and Ornamentation,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 314.

Figure 10 (Haida) Taking off the of Red-Cedar Bark.....	51
<i>Source:</i> Nancy J. Turner and Sandra Peacock, “Solving the Perennial Paradox: Ethnobotanical Evidence for Plant Resource Management on the Northwest Coast,” in <i>Keeping it Living: Traditions of Plant Use and Cultivation on the Northwest Coast of North America</i> , eds. Douglas Deur and Nancy J. Turner, 101-150 (Seattle: University of Washington Press; Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, c2005), 124.	
Figure 11 Drying Inner Bark.....	52
<i>Source:</i> Personal photos taken in a district of Nibutani, Hokkaido, 17 July 2009.	
Figure 12 Weaving.....	52
<i>Source:</i> Personal photos taken in a district of Nibutani, Hokkaido, 17 July 2009.	
Figure 13 The Cloth Made of Inner Bark of Elm Tree.....	53
<i>Source:</i> Personal photos taken in a district of Nibutani, Hokkaido, 17 July 2009.	
Figure 14 Garments Made from Tree Bark - <i>Attush</i> - by Yasuko Uetake in 2008.....	53
<i>Source:</i> Kouji Yamazaki, Katsumi Katou, and Amano Tetsuya, eds. <i>Teetasinrit Tekrukoci: 先人の手あと: 北大所蔵アイヌ資料-受け継ぐ技-[Senjin no Teato: Hokudai Shozo Ainu Shiryou-Uketsugu Waza-]</i> (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies; Hokkaido University Museum, 2009), 48-49	
Figure 15 Traditional Ainu Designs.....	55
<i>Source:</i> Ainu Museum. <i>アイヌ文化の基礎知識 [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture]</i> (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 90.	
Figure 16 Cotton Garment – <i>runpe</i> : ceremonial garments– by Eiko Ota in 2008.....	56
<i>Source:</i> Kouji Yamazaki, Katsumi Katou, and Amano Tetsuya, eds. <i>Teetasinrit Tekrukoci: 先人の手あと: 北大所蔵アイヌ資料-受け継ぐ技-[Senjin no Teato: Hokudai Shozo Ainu Shiryou-Uketsugu Waza-]</i> (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies; Hokkaido University Museum, 2009), 52-53.	
Figure 17 Illustration of a Man Using <i>Ikupasuy</i>	59
<i>Source:</i> Fosco Maraini, <i>Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu / アイヌのイクパスイ [Ainu Ikupasuy]</i> (Hokkaido: Ainu Museum, 1994), 12.	
Figure 18 Prayer.....	60
<i>Source:</i> Post card sold between 1989-1994 (Private Collection).	
Figure 19 <i>Ikupasuy</i>	61
<i>Source:</i> Fosco Maraini, <i>Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu / アイヌのイクパスイ [Ainu Ikupasuy]</i> (Hokkaido: Ainu Museum, 1994), 25.	
Figure 20 Some Examples of <i>Ikupasuy</i> with Animal Motifs.....	61-62
<i>Source:</i> Fosco Maraini, <i>Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu / アイヌのイクパスイ [Ainu Ikupasuy]</i> (Hokkaido: Ainu Museum, 1994), 54&57.	
Figure 21 <i>Sapaunpe</i>	63

Source: Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 295.

Figure 22 Representations of Animals Attached to *Sapaunpe* 64
Source: Sueo Sugiyama, *北の工芸* [Crafts of North] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 1934), 104.

Figure 23 Picture of People Carving Bears (Ito in centre)..... 71
Source: “八雲の木彫熊 [Wooden Carved Bear in Yakumo],” Hokkaido: Yakumo-cho Kyodo Shiryokan, <http://www.yappe.net/yakumo/kuma/index.htm#rekisi> (accessed January 18, 2011).

Figure 24 Pig Bear or Alligator Bear.....71
Source: Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington:University of Washington Press, 1999), 337.

Figure 25 Wooden Carved Bear by Matsui Umetaro 74
Source: Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington:University of Washington Press, 1999), 337.

Figure 26 Men Carving a Wooden Bear..... 76
Source: Post card sold between 1989-1994 (Private Collection).

Chapter Four

Figure 27 *Inaw* for the Owl..... 105
Source (Fig.26): Shigeki Akino, “Spirit-Sending Ceremonies,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 255.

Figure 28 *Kotan-koro Kamui* 106
Source : Neil Gordon Munro, *Ainu Creed and Cult* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, c1962), 30-31.

Figure 29 Traditional Ainu Design “*Morew*” 107
Source: Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 90.

Figure 30 Owl Eye 108
Source: Kiyoshi Yamaura and Hiroshi Ushiro, “Prehistoric Hokkaido and Ainu Origins,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 39-46 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 42.

Figure 31 God Eye 108
Source: Tetsuo Iino, *フクロウの文化誌-イメージの変貌-* [Cultural Description of Owls: Transfiguration of the Images] (Tokyo: Chuoukouronsha, 1991), 23.

Figure 32 Cotton garment: embroidery.....109
Source: Kichiemon Okamura, *アイヌの衣装* [The Clothes of the Ainu People] (Kyoto: Kyoto Shoin, 1993), 26.

- Figure 33 Striped cotton garment: colored appliqué and embroidery 109
 Source: Kichiemon Okamura, *アイヌの衣装* [The Clothes of the Ainu People] (Kyoto: Kyoto Shoin, 1993), 42.
- Figure 34 Miniature Ainu Totem Pole.....111
 Source: Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 338.
- Figure 35 Ainu Totem Pole (1979)..... 111
 Source: Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 342.
- Figure 36 Owl Statue at the Gate to Ainu *Kotan*, Akan 113
 Source: Personal photos taken in a district of Akan, Hokkaido, 10 May 2010.
- Figure 37 シマフクロウ [Blakiston’s Fish Owl] (2000)..... 116
 Source: Masamitsu Takiguchi, *樹のなかの音* [Sounds Insides the Trees] (Tokyo: Henshu Group SURE, 2008), 30.
- Figure 38 コタン コロ カムイ–村を守る神–.....118
 [Kotan-kor-kamuy: Guardian of the Village] (1988)
 Source: Nupuri Toko, *床ヌプリ作品集* [Playground of the God] (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995), 105.
- Figure 39 カムイ ミンタラ–神々の遊びの庭–..... 124
 [Kamui Mintara: A Playground of the Gods] (1990)
 Source: Nupuri Toko, *床ヌプリ作品集* [Playground of the God] (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995), 80-81.
- Figure 40 The Artist, Toko Nupuri..... 125
 Source: Nupuri Toko, *床ヌプリ作品集* [Playground of the God] (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995), 120.

Translations of the Ainu Words

Ainu	English Translation
<i>Ainu</i>	Human
<i>Ainu Moshir</i>	the Human World
<i>Atuy-kor Kamui (or Repun-kamuy)</i>	God of Sea (Killer Whale God)
<i>Hayokpe</i>	an armour
<i>ikupasuy (or ikupasui)</i>	a prayer's stick
<i>inaw</i>	whittled pieces of willow which are offerings to the god
<i>iyomante (or i-oman-te)</i>	animal spirit-sending ceremonies
<i>kamuy (or kamui)</i>	god(s); deities
<i>Kamuy Moshir</i>	the Divine World
<i>Kamuy Yukar</i>	Songs of Gods; Songs of Nature Gods
<i>Kotan</i>	Village
<i>Kotan-kor-kamuy</i>	God of Creation; God of the Village (Owl God)
<i>tusu-sinotcha</i>	female shaman's sacred verse
<i>Nupuri-kor Kamui (or Kimun-kamui)</i>	God of Mountain (Bear God)
<i>Morew</i>	one of the popular traditional Ainu designs
<i>Moshir</i>	world; land; island
<i>Sakehe</i>	refrain
<i>Sapaunpe</i>	a ceremonial headdress

*There are regional variations in the Ainu terms and expressions. The Ainu names above are commonly used among the scholars.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deep gratitude to many people in Canada and Japan who have supported me throughout my thesis-writing period. This thesis would not have been possible without their sincere support.

Foremost, I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Timothy Iles, for all his encouragement. He is certainly the best teacher that I have ever had in my life. He has made available his support in a number of ways. His instructions were always very clear and guided me in the right direction in my research. Besides my supervisor, I would also like to thank Dr. Cody Poulton, who always gave me positive feedback with his friendly smile. Both professors created a supportive environment for my research. I also appreciate the funding I received from the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies.

I wish to thank my best friends in Canada, Akari Matsuki, Crea Zhang, Kaori Shoji, Mayuko Otsuki and Yuko Sakima, for their friendship and caring. They helped me get through the difficult times by taking me out to have fun. Also, I would like to thank my English tutor, Angie Whiting, who has helped me with editing my essays since I was in the undergraduate program. She has always been cheerful and guided me to think in a positive way. I also appreciate Shu-min Huang Burnside for encouraging and helping me through the Writing Centre.

I wish to thank Dr. Naohiro Nakamura who introduced me people in Hokkaido who are working closely with the promotion and preservation of the Ainu culture. I am indebted to many people that I met in both the Districts of Nibutani and Akan, in Hokkaido. Especially, I am very grateful to the artist, Toko Nupuri. He inspired me in many ways and allowed me to bring a sense of reality into my thesis. I wish to thank him for his patient understanding of my research and doing an interview.

I also would like to thank my best friends in Japan, Kyoko Hirayama and Reona Shimizu, who sent me many goodies from Japan. I also appreciate the letters of encouragement sent by my former high school teacher, Mr. Osamu Shiono. Thanks also to my flower arrangement teacher, Mrs. Hisayo Kurimoto, private tutor, Momoko Morishima and home doctor, Dr. Sueya Uemura, who always received me warmly when I came home.

Finally, I wish to thank my family. I have never forgotten my dearest dog, Runa, who always watched over me and stayed with me in spirit. I am sincerely grateful to my grandparents who have given me the opportunity of education both in Japan and Canada. And, I cannot find words to express my gratitude to my mom. I just want to say, thank you so much for being my mom and all your caring and support throughout my life.

Thank you Gracias 多謝 ありがとう

Dedication

To my mom and grandparents

Introduction

In May 2010, I was in a small town called Akan located in Akan District, Kushiro City of Hokkaido in Japan. This small town is located besides the Lake Akan. From the lake I could see the mountains surrounding us, which made the town look like a miniature garden at the foot of mountain. Although it was in May, I could see some snow covering the top of the mountains, and it was very chilly. Although the town is a famous tourist site for hot springs, marimo (moss balls), and Ainu *kotan* (a permanent Ainu tourism site), it was still early for the tourism season and there were not many tourists visiting at the time I was there. The town was very quiet. Only the main street, where there were many souvenir stores lining both sides of the street, created a lively atmosphere. Many stores sold Ainu folk crafts goods. They opened quite late at night and the lights of the shops produced a cozy atmosphere along the street, welcoming visitors.

The reason why I visited this small town was to meet the well-known Ainu carver, Toko Nupuri. When I saw one of his masterpieces, a massive monument consisting of a group of Ainu totem poles located in Burnaby Mountain Park in British Columbia, Canada, I was very impressed by his artistic creativity. Although it made me wonder why the Ainu totem poles are displayed in Canada,¹ I was more interested in the artist himself. This group of totem poles was titled “*Kamui Mintara—A Playground of the Gods.*” I sent a formal letter to the store that he owns in Akan and asked him if I would be able to interview him in person. Then a couple weeks later I phoned them and was able to get in touch with his wife. She kindly told me that he was willing to see me.

¹ City of Burnaby and Kushiro are sisters cities. In 1990, Toko was chosen to create this group of Ainu totem poles as a symbol which represents the friendship between the two cities.

In May 2010, I was grateful to meet Toko, and we had a conversation for almost three hours. This opportunity to talk with him allowed me to actually feel the Ainu spiritual beliefs through the eyes of the artist, especially the relationship between the Ainu people and the Owl God. I had a strong feeling that Ainu traditional beliefs are kept alive in his works.

Previously, in 2009, I visited various places in Hokkaido and had great opportunities to meet artists, museum staff, local community members and university scholars. However, my interview with Toko was the most meaningful throughout my field research. It was because his work, a group of Ainu totem poles, guided me to think of ways in which we are able to preserve the intangible cultural heritage—Ainu spiritual beliefs—in a form of visual art. From my opportunity to meet Toko, I received a tremendous inspiration to carry on with my MA project, which has evolved over the past two years into this thesis. The purpose of this project is to talk about the Ainu and the continuity of their tradition from past to present. Analyzing the representation of the Owl God as a case study, I will demonstrate how the belief in this particular god as God of the Village has been kept alive.

The Ainu, meaning human in their language, are the indigenous people of Japan. Traditionally, their land, which the Japanese call Hokkaido today, was rich in nature with abundant forests. Ainu people lived in harmony with nature. By interacting with nature through hunting, fishing and gathering, they developed spiritual belief systems. Spiritual belief systems became a foundation for traditional Ainu culture including ritual and ceremonial activities, traditional oral literature and material arts. The rituals and ceremonies were the occasions where people gathered. By joining in these spiritual

activities, people experienced and shared their beliefs in their communities. Traditional oral literature also has strong connection to the spiritual belief systems: stories in Ainu oral literature were greatly influenced by traditional beliefs. Through these stories, Ainu people transmitted their beliefs from generation to generation. In addition, traditional Ainu material culture was developed and governed by the cultural rules that were derived from the spiritual belief systems.

However, these traditional cultures, which once played a significant part of the Ainu societies, no longer serve a central role in lives of the contemporary Ainu. Many drastic changes occurred in Ainu societies followed by the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The Ainu gradually lost their traditional ways of life by the expansion of Japanese control over their land. This was a time when changing lifestyles gradually distanced the Ainu people from their traditional beliefs and practices. In order to assimilate the Ainu into mainstream Japanese society, the Japanese government banned traditional customs and ritual activities and forced the Ainu to speak Japanese. At the same time, the Japanese government distinguished the Ainu from Japanese by calling them ‘旧土人’(former aborigines). As a result, today the Ainu language is endangered. The principal goal of this thesis is to explore the ways in which the Ainu artists maintain their traditions in response to these historical forces and conditions.

In Chapter 1, I will describe the Ainu, the creation of land in Ainu mythology, the concept of *kamuy*, animal spirit-sending ceremonies, the animal *kamuy*, and the blakiston’s fish owls as the God of the Village. Ainu are the people who mainly lived in the northern part of Japan for thousands of years. As mentioned, the Ainu believe in nature spirits. Among those spirits some were considered as a *kamuy*, meaning gods or

deities. For instance, in terms of the dominance and strength of animals, a bear (God of the Mountain), killer whale (God of the Sea), and blakiston's fish owl (God of the Village) were highly respected in many Ainu communities. Physical interactions between the humans and *kamuy* illustrate the animal spirit-sending ceremony. For instance, at the owl spirit-sending ceremony, the spirit of the blakiston's fish owl was sent back to his homeland, *Kamuy Moshir*. The purpose of this ceremony is to send the spirit of *kamuy* visiting the *Ainu Moshir* back to their homeland, *Kamuy Moshir*. Through their involvement in the ceremony, the Ainu were actually able to experience and to feel the existence of the two realms, *Kamuy Moshir* (the World of Gods) and *Ainu Moshir* (the World of Humans).

In Chapter 2, I will discuss the development of the genre *Kamuy Yukar*, meaning Songs of Gods, in Ainu traditional oral literature. In the stories in *Kamuy Yukar*, animal gods speak their own experiences using the subject of "I" as a message to the Ainu. I will also explore two possible origins of *Kamuy Yukar*: *tusu-sinotcha* (a female shaman's sacred verse) and *kasou buyou geki* (仮装舞踊劇) (a costume dance play) as well as the key features of *Kamuy Yukar*: first person narrative, use of *sakehe*, and message from gods through stories. I will analyze how this particular genre was formed and structured. I will also explore how the structures of this particular genre corresponded to the beliefs that animal gods wear the armor of animals to visit the *Ainu Moshir*. Using the visual representation of wild animals was traditionally prohibited. Therefore, the stories in *Kamuy Yukar* are a significant tool to analyze how the ancient Ainu perceived wild animals and how they visualized the animal gods in their minds.

Chapter 3 explores traditional material arts, tourism arts, and contemporary fine arts. In this chapter, I will explore how Ainu material arts have changed over time. Traditional material arts, in particular, were governed by the Ainu spiritual belief systems. For instance, representations of wild animals were traditionally prohibited. However, government promotion of tourism in Hokkaido during the Meiji Period became a trigger to produce new genres in Ainu material arts. I call these tourism arts. This was a time when changing lifestyles gradually distanced the Ainu people from their traditional beliefs and practices. One of the major changes was to use the representations of wild animals for the materials. Contemporary Ainu arts are derived from traditional and tourism arts, and I will trace the elements of the Ainu traditions in the works of several artists.

The core of my thesis is in Chapter 4 where I examine the literary and artistic representations of the Owl God, often called *Kotan-kor-kamuy* or God of the Village. I will demonstrate how the beliefs in the Owl God have been embedded in the traditional oral literature. I selected four different stories about the Owl God: “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’”, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’”, “Owl and Salmon,” and “Kamuy Chikap.” Because the stories were transmitted orally, there is a possibility that these stories have changed over time. Thus, these stories may not be the original; however, this is the only way we can explore the beliefs in the Owl God in Ainu traditional culture. For the visual analysis, I will discuss the representation of the Owl God in traditional and contemporary fine arts. I focused on how the Ainu traditions are transformed in the contemporary fine arts through the work of Takiguchi Masamitsu (シマフクロウ [Blakiston’s Fish Owl](2000)) and two works of

Toko Nupuri (コタンコロカムイ—村を守る神— [*Kotan-kor-kamuy*: Guardian of the Village](1988) and カムイミンタラ—神々の遊びの庭— [*Kamui Mintara*: A Playground of the Gods](1990)). Then, I will discuss the spiritual dialogue between Toko and the Owl God based on the interview.

The primary objective of this thesis is to explore Ainu maintain and evolve their relationships to their traditional arts and cultural identities. This thesis uses the Owl God as a case study of the evolving spiritual belief systems in Ainu culture, arguing that changes in representation of the Owl God in Ainu oral and material arts correspond to changes in the Ainu historical situation. Thus, while this thesis concerns historical and social situations of the Ainu, it is centrally concerned with issues of representation. Throughout, I will situate the Ainu within their historical contexts, the better to the nature and substance of Ainu oral and material artistic representations. The goal of my thesis is to demonstrate that the representations of the Owl God have changed as time has passed; however, it is still important in contemporary Ainu societies. Representations of the Blakiston's fish owl play a symbolic expression of Ainu culture.

Chapter One: Ainu Worldview

Ainu

Ainu people settled in three different locations and were divided into: “Sakhalin Ainu,” “Kurile Ainu,” and “Hokkaido Ainu” (Figure 1). In this paper, I will mainly talk about the group of people called “Hokkaido Ainu.”



Figure 1 Traditional Ainu Settlement Areas

Source: The Ainu Association of Hokkaido, *Brochure on the Ainu People*, under “Where, since when and how have the Ainu People existed?,” <http://www.ainuassn.or.jp/english/eabout01.html>.

Today, most Ainu live in Hokkaido, a prefecture in northern Japan, which is also considered their spiritual homeland. According to the government survey taken in 2006, the number of Ainu people living in Hokkaido was 23,782; therefore, 0.4 % of the total

population of Hokkaido is of Ainu heritage.² However, it is important to be aware that there may be more people who are descendants of Ainu ethnicity. A long history of Japanese discrimination towards Ainu prevents them from expressing their cultural identities.

About 25,000 years ago, the land of Hokkaido was connected with Sakhalin.³ Although Sakhalin is an island today, it was a part of the continent. The temperature was believed to be much colder than today and the sea level was also lower. Large animals moved down to the south and people followed the animals and started to settle in Hokkaido.⁴ As a result of sea surface elevation caused by global warming, around 12,000 years ago, Hokkaido became an isolated island as it is shown on the map today. Around the same time, the earthenware that was created in mainland Japan was referred to as the Jomon Period.⁵ Hokkaido entered the Jomon Period about 1,000 years later. *Jomon* meaning “cord-patterned” in Japanese is a feature of the pottery style that was frequently made during this period.

During the Jomon Period, people settled in Hokkaido sustaining their livelihood by hunting animals including deer and bear, fishing salmon and trout, and gathering edible nuts and acorns.⁶ Introduction of rice farming and a metal from the Korean Peninsula opened a new era known as the Yayoi Period in mainland Japan 2,300 years ago.⁷ Regardless, the Jomon Period continued in Hokkaido. In Hokkaido, although the

² The Ainu Association of Hokkaido, *Brochure on the Ainu People*, under “Actual Living Conditions of the Hokkaido Ainu,” <http://www.ainu-assn.or.jp/english/eabout03.html>.

³ アイヌ文化振興研究推進機構 [The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture], *アイヌ民族:歴史と現在* [Ainu Ethnicity: Past and Present] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2008), 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Kimio Kumagai, *蝦夷の地と古代国家* [Land of Ezo and Ancient Country] (Tokyo: Yamakawa, 2004), 2.

metal was introduced, rice farming was not propagated due to its severe weather conditions.⁸ As a result, Hokkaido and mainland Japan pursued different periods along with different cultures and societies. I will focus on Hokkaido and explain how the Ainu culture was constructed from a historical point of view.

The Jomon Period continued in Hokkaido until the Satsumon Period started in the 7th century. However, between these periods, another culture developed known as the Okhotsk Period. In the 5th to 6th centuries, a group of people moved from Sakhalin to the northern part of Hokkaido.⁹ They fished and hunted the sea animals and also reared dogs and pigs. Around the 7th to 9th centuries, they settled in between the eastern part of Hokkaido and Kuril Islands. They produced the earthenware in their own style, which is called Okhotsk culture. However, the Okhotsk culture gradually integrated into Satsumon culture and it ended in the 9th century.¹⁰

In the 7th century, the Satsumon Period started. In the Jomon Period, the use of “cord-patterned” was common; however, in the Satsumon Period, this style vanished. Instead, people began to use a piece of wooden stick to smooth or make a simple line design on the surface of the earthenware.¹¹ People during this period continued to depend on fishing salmon and trout, hunting deer, and gathering. In addition, they also grew some crops such as foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*), proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum*), and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*).¹² The Satsumon Period ended in the late 12th to 13th centuries

⁸ アイヌ文化振興研究推進機構 [The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture], *アイヌ民族: 歴史と現在* [Ainu Ethnicity: Past and Present] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2008), 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Kimio Kumagai, *蝦夷の地と古代国家* [Land of Ezo and Ancient Country] (Tokyo: Yamakawa, 2004), 2.

¹² アイヌ文化振興研究推進機構 [The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture], *アイヌ*

and it was also the end of the long history of earthenware culture for entire island of Japan.

One of the hypotheses discusses that the Ainu culture emerged around the 13th century after the Satsumon Period.¹³ However, we have to consider that a culture is not built in a day so it must have gradually developed through different periods. Thus, although the people who lived in the Satsumon Period are considered ancestors of the Ainu, we also need to consider other cultures before Satsumon.¹⁴ For instance, at an archaeological site of Okhotsk culture,¹⁵ objects such as the bones of bears were found and possibly used for ritual purposes. There has been speculation that the bear rituals in Okhotsk culture might have some relationships to ritual ceremonies for the bears in Ainu culture.¹⁶

According to the one of the oldest Japanese history books, *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀) translated as *The Chronicles of Japan*, a group of people called *Emishi* (蝦夷) is documented in the 7th century. Because the Ainu culture was formed in the 13th century, there has been a debate among historians whether this group of people written as *Emishi* from 7th century was Ainu.¹⁷ Today, one of the popular hypotheses is that *Emishi*

民族:歴史と現在 [Ainu Ethnicity: Past and Present] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2008), 8.

¹³ Kimio Kumagai, *蝦夷の地と古代国家* [Land of Ezo and Ancient Country] (Tokyo: Yamakawa, 2004), 4.

¹⁴ アイヌ文化振興研究推進機構 [The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture], *アイヌ民族:歴史と現在* [Ainu Ethnicity: Past and Present] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2008), 8.

¹⁵ The site is called (湧別町)川西遺跡 [Yubetsuchou Kawabetsu Iseki].

¹⁶ アイヌ文化振興研究推進機構 [The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture], *アイヌ民族:歴史と現在* [Ainu Ethnicity: Past and Present] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2008), 7.

¹⁷ Kimio Kumagai, *蝦夷の地と古代国家* [Land of Ezo and Ancient Country] (Tokyo: Yamakawa, 2004), 4.

referred to the people who were against the Imperial Court.¹⁸ However, within the group *Emishi*, the ancestors of Ainu were also included.¹⁹ Thereby, although Ainu culture was considered to have begun in the 13th century, there were ancestors of Ainu before this era. We could assume that Ainu culture was gradually formed by the interactions of people and cultures as time passed on.

There is a long history of interaction between Ainu people and non-Ainu, especially with the Japanese, for trading purposes. Trading between the Hokkaido Ainu and Japanese became more frequent in the 13th to 16th centuries. As a result of the frequent trading between the Ainu and Japanese, sometimes there were battles between them. In the 17th century, the Matsumae clan was given permission from Tokugawa Shogunate to govern the entire trade between Ainu and Japanese. He divided Hokkaido into the settlement of *Wajin* (Japanese)²⁰ and settlement of Ainu known as *Ezochi* and strictly governed the exchanges between the settlements.²¹ Thereby, the Ainu gradually lost freedom in their trade.

In the 18th century, the Japanese started to exploit Ainu for labour and forced them to work at the fisheries. Men were taken to the fisheries so that women and elders were left in the settlements. As a result, many Ainu settlements were no longer able to maintain their livelihood.²² Ainu gradually lost their traditional way of life by the expansion of Japanese control over their land. In 1868, following the Meiji Restoration, the government renamed the land “Hokkaido,” and initiated a large influx of Japanese

¹⁸ アイヌ文化振興研究推進機構 [The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture], *アイヌ民族:歴史と現在* [Ainu Ethnicity: Past and Present] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2008), 9.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ The word *Wajin* was started to use by Japanese to distinguished themselves from Ainu. It is a historical term which is still used by the scholars in historical contexts.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²² *Ibid.*, 18.

migration. The population of Ainu people began to decline rapidly. Discrimination towards Ainu people was widespread in the 1860s, and the Japanese government was also ignorant of the Ainu and their ethnicity for a long time. Indeed, it was just in 2008 that the Japanese government officially recognized the Ainu people as an indigenous group in Japan.

Creation of Land in Ainu Mythology

The word *moshir* in the Ainu language refers to the “world,” a “country” or an “island.”²³ In Ainu spiritual belief systems, *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World) and *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World) have a parallel existence (Figure 2).

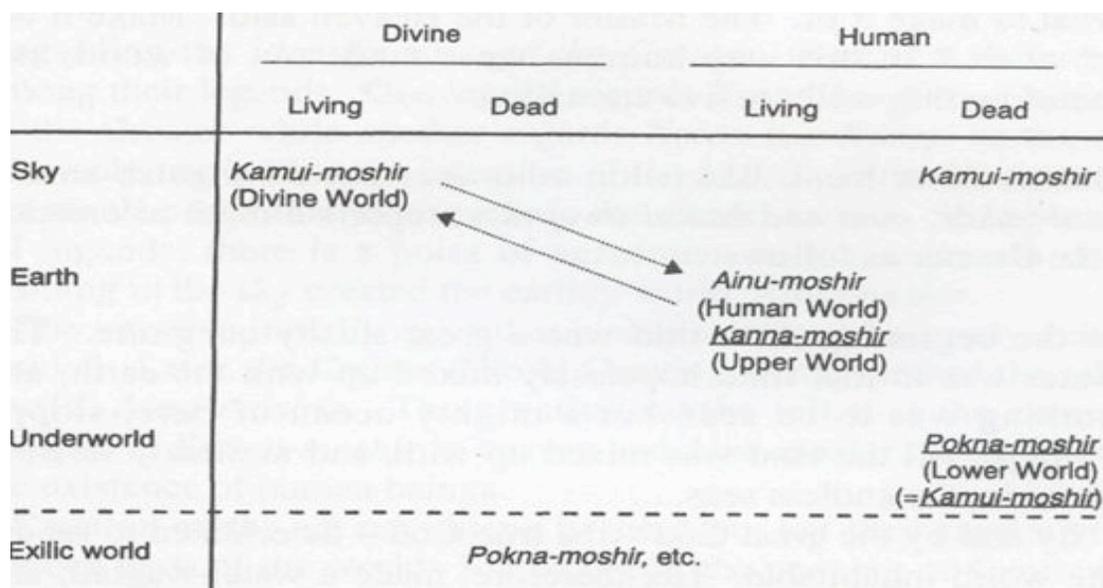


Figure 2 The Meaning and Classification of the category *Moshir*

Source: Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 11.

²³ Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 10.

According to Ainu spiritual belief systems, *Kamuy Moshir* is located above *Ainu Moshir*. Other *moshir* such as *Ponka Moshir* (the Lower World) is also known and appears in their oral literature.²⁴

People believe that *Ainu Moshir* was created by the *kamuy*, meaning “god” or “deity,” known as *Kotan-kor-kamuy* (the God of Creation) who descended from the sky. A variety of stories on the subject matter of the creation of land relating to *Kotan-kor-kamuy* is found in different regions. For instance, the myth of creation from the Saru River region explains:

In the long, long ago, before this world was made, only the top of Mt. Yae could be seen above the ocean. Kotan-Koro-Kamui, the god of creation, descended upon Mt. Yae from heaven accompanied by a goddess, his younger sister, filling the ocean with clouds. Black clouds became rocks, yellow clouds became soil, and other clouds became mountains, rivers, and various islands and countries. Therefore, even today, clouds drift over the summit of the mountains.²⁵

Another story offers a different version on the subject of world creation; *Kotan-kor-kamuy* had mistakenly formed the land on the back of a big fish.²⁶ This is similar to the myth of Native Americans such as the Iroquois, Northeast, and Plains in which they believe that the land they live in is the shell of a large turtle, whereby these people call their land “Turtle Island.”²⁷

Similar to the creation of the land, the origin of human beings is also vague in the Ainu belief systems. For instance, one of the stories explains that *Kotan-kor-kamuy* created human beings from the elm tree being advised from the Master of Heaven.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁵ Carl Etter, *Ainu Folklore: Traditions and Culture of the Vanishing Aborigines of Japan* (Chicago: Wilcox & Follett Co., 1949), 22.

²⁶ Shinko Ogihara, “Mythology and Animal Tales,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 274-277 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 275.

²⁷ Diana Ferguson, *Native American Myths* (London : Collins & Brown, 2001), 32.

Another text suggests that the Ainu are descended from the woman who married a dog.²⁸

Yamada Takako analyzes these ambiguities in the creation of land and human beings

referring to Ainu oral literature:

Regarding the identification of the Creator, there is a difference among their legends. One legend regards *Kotan-kor Kamui* himself as the Creator while another regards *Kotan-kor Kamui* as the one who only carried out the intention of the Master of the Heaven and yet another tells that the creator is the divine *Aeoina*. However, in all legends, there is a point of agreement in that a certain deity residing in the sky created the earthly world, *Ainu-moshir*.²⁹

Although the creation of the land and the origin of human beings are vague, existence of the realms called *moshir* is common belief among the Ainu. Parallel to *Ainu Moshir*, Ainu people believe in the existence of *Kamuy Moshir*, where various deities live in human forms. Again, this world of deities is considered to be located above *Ainu Moshir*. *Kamuy* (or gods) sometimes visit *Ainu Moshir*, changing their forms into animals (and plants) which are called *hayokpe* meaning “armor” in the Ainu language and their spirits literally sit between the ears.³⁰ This is why Ainu people believe that animals and plants are sent from *kamuy* as a gift. Indeed, people think of hunting as a passive act; animals intend to be captured by humans.

Concept of *Kamuy*

The concept of *kamuy* is an important aspect in the Ainu spiritual belief systems.

Ainu people used to live close to nature. They believe that a spirit (or soul) exists not

²⁸ Shinko Ogihara, “Mythology and Animal Tales,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 274-277 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 275.

²⁹ Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 13.

³⁰ Donald L. Philippi, *Songs of Gods, Songs of Humans: the Epic Tradition of the Ainu*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 63.

only in human beings, but also in other living things including: animals, plants, fish and natural phenomena such as thunder, earthquakes, and tsunamis; and inanimate things such as boats or grave posts.³¹ Thus, the various spirits, which are believed to be sent from *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World), surround Ainu people.³² “The spirit is also believed to be the source that determines species, gender, character, and ability (spiritual power) in a particular being. The spirit, in the form of a human life, grows and ages.”³³

Only certain spirits are considered *kamuy* (or *kamui*) in their language, meaning “god” or “deity.” The spirits that are more likely to be considered *kamuy* are those who contribute to or are necessary for peoples’ daily life such as fire (“*Ape-huchi-kamui*”)³⁴ and water (“*Wakka-ush-kamui*”)³⁵ and also things that they are unable to change or prevent including natural disasters and epidemics.³⁶ In other words, people were able to judge the spirits and only high-ranked spirits are referred to as *kamuy*. Watanabe Hitoshi states:

Every natural phenomenon has its activity and these activities are interconnected with each other in relation to time and space. Thus, the earth’s surface, which is seen to our eyes as the carpet of fauna and flora, was seen by the Ainu as the carpet of *kamui* groups in their temporary guises.³⁷

³¹ Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 138-9. ; Shinko Ogihara, “Mythology and Animal Tales,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 274-277 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 274.

³² Ainu Museum., 138-9.

³³ Hisakazu Fujimura, “Kamuy: Gods You Can Argue With,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 193-197 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 194.

³⁴ Kyosuke Kindaichi, *金田一京助全集* [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke] (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1993), 12: 221.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 218.

³⁶ Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 140.

³⁷ Hitoshi Watanabe. *The Ainu Ecosystem: Environment and Group Structure* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, c1972), 69.

As he describes, the concept of *kamuy* is embodied or derived from nature. Ainu people do not perceive animals or plants as species, but rather as a temporary guise of *kamuy*, a gift sent from the divine world or *Kamuy Moshir* in the Ainu language.

Animal Spirit-Sending Ceremonies

The ritual activity known as *iyomante* or *i-oman-te*, or spirit-sending ceremony, is a concrete illustration of the Ainu views of nature. As mentioned previously, Ainu people perceive animals as a gift sent by the gods from *Kamuy Moshir*: animals are the temporary disguise of the *kamuy*. Ainu people view animals (*kamuy*) as visitors to their world, *Ainu Moshir*. Therefore Ainu people do not consider this ceremony as killing but rather they host animals and sent the spirits of *kamuy* (animals) back to their home land, *Kamuy Moshir*. Although the ceremonies are no longer held in contemporary Ainu societies, it once took several days to go through this ceremony:

Preparation begins about two weeks before the event with firewood being collected and men making sacred shaved sticks (*inaw*), prayer sticks (*ikupasuy*), and bundles of mugwort or bamboo grass (*takusa*) to burn for purification; at the same time, women begin preparing rice wine and food offerings. As the time approaches, messengers travel to neighbouring villages to invite people to the festival.³⁸

This passage suggests that the ceremony was an occasion where the communities gathered and united. Animal spirit-sending ceremonies are generally called as *iyomante* in the Ainu language but in many cases the word refers specifically to the bear spirit-sending ceremonies. The Ainu had two major processes for bear sending ceremonies: one to send the spirits of bears captured at the mountain and the other to capture the bear cubs

³⁸ Shigeki Akino, "Spirit-Sending Ceremonies," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 248.

then send their spirits after rearing for one to two years.³⁹ In both cases, people shot the bears by arrow or gun and dismembered the body. Through this process people believe the spirit of the *kamuy* was released:

(...) several men shoot blunt ceremonial arrows (*heper-ay*) toward *kimun-kamuy* [the bear god] and then strangle him between two logs. While he is “sleeping,” the bear is skinned and the head is severed to separate the spirit from the body. The skin is then folded neatly and the spirit of the bear whose head has been enshrined on top of the folded skin is invited into the room through the god’s window (*kamuy-puyar*) located in the east wall of the house.⁴⁰

People invited the spirit to their homes in *kotan* (or village) and hosted him as a guest.

Then they offered rice wine and food for the spirit of the bear, singing and dancing until midnight on the first day.

On the second day of the ceremony, men decorate the head of *kimun-kamuy* [the Bear God] with *inaw-kike* (sacred wood shavings). This is the last and best form in which it is displayed to the participants before its journey to the god world. In the evening, a final feast is held. As before, food and rice wine are consumed with the bear, and people dance and sing. At the conclusion of the evening ancient Ainu *yukar* (tales of heroes) are recounted by an old woman, to which those present listen intently, holding their breath in anticipation of the final climax. The story telling is abruptly terminated just as the final episode begins in order to encourage the *kimun-kamuy* to return next year to hear the end of the story.⁴¹

Ainu people believe that depending on how well people had treated the bear; they would have more or less visits from *kamuy*. Frequency in *kamuy* visits to *Ainu Moshir* directly influenced their livelihoods in terms of food and material supplies. This belief is similar to a concept of “*ongaeshi*,” which means, “returning a favour (or gratitude)” by the non-

³⁹ Ainu Museum. アイヌ文化の基礎知識 [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 160.

⁴⁰ Shigeki Akino, “Spirit-Sending Ceremonies,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 248.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

human animals in Japanese Buddhist animal tales.⁴² In these stories, animals that in many cases were injured or captured by bad people were then rescued by humans with good spirits, and these animals would later bring a gift of their gratitude.

Although the bears are well known for *iyomante*, other animals such as wolf, eagle, fox and the Blakiston's fish owl sending ceremonies were also held in ancient Ainu societies. For instance, although there are only limited sources on the owl sending ceremony, the picture below depicted the scene from the owl sending ceremony:



Figure 3 Owl Sending Ceremony

Source: Shigeki Akino, "Spirit-Sending Ceremonies," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255 (Washington:University of Washington Press, 1999), 255.

This picture was depicted by Nishikawa Hokuyou (西川 北洋) in the late 19th century (Figure 3).⁴³ It was collected in *Ainu Fuzoku Emaki* (アイヌ風俗絵巻) (Picture Scroll: Ainu Manners and Customs)⁴⁴ and is the only known illustration describing the owl

⁴² Gregory M. Pflugfelder and Brett L. Walker, eds., *JAPANimals: History and Culture in Japan's Animal Life* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2005), 27.

⁴³ Genzou Sarashina, *コタン生物記: 野鳥/水鳥/昆虫篇* [Kotan Record of Animals III Wild Birds, Water Birds and Insects] (Tokyo: Housei University Press, 1977), 550-551.

⁴⁴ Shigeki Akino, "Spirit-Sending Ceremonies," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255 (Washington:University of Washington Press, 1999), 255.

sending ceremony. This picture belongs to one of the art genres called *Ainu-e* (or Ainu-print) in which Japanese artists depicted Ainu daily lives during the Edo Period.⁴⁵

Although the owl sending ceremony took place widely in Hokkaido, there were regional variations.⁴⁶ Sarashina Genzo wrote that in Kushiro the owl sending ceremony was only held by the elders who were knowledgeable about customs and rituals. Females and children were not allowed to be near the place where the ceremony was taken place.⁴⁷ Whereas, in the picture above, we are able to find Ainu female surrounding the Owl God clapping their hands and singing.⁴⁸ Although the place where this painting was depicted is unknown, we might be able to conclude this was not from Kushiro. Ainu people in Kushiro believed because the owl (the Owl God) is the guardian of the village and the highest-ranked *kamuy* in this region,⁴⁹ after the owl sending ceremony, bears hesitated to appear in front of people.⁵⁰ Thus, they did not go hunting for bears for a year after the owl sending ceremonies.

The purpose of this ritual is to send souls of particular animals such as bears, owls, foxes, and eagles back to their land, *Kamuy Moshir*. Although the way of choosing these animals are unknown, bears (the God of Mountain) and owls (the God of Village) are the important *kamuy* in Ainu spiritual belief systems. The two worlds of *Ainu Moshir* and

⁴⁵ During and after Edo era, paintings that portrayed Ainu daily lives and customs became very popular in Japanese societies. The popularity in *Ainu-e* gradually faded after the early Meiji era (around 1876). The importance of *Ainu-e* comes from its role as a visual record of a traditional Ainu way of life.

⁴⁶ Genzo Sarashina, シマフクロウ-神鳥コタンコルカムイ- [Blakiston's Fish Owl: God of Bird Kotankor-kamuy] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984), 6.

⁴⁷ Genzou Sarashina, コタン生物記:野鳥/水鳥/昆虫篇 [Kotan Record of Animals III Wild Birds, Water Birds and Insects] (Tokyo: Housei University Press, 1977), 547-551.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 551.

⁴⁹ The Owl God was often respected as the highest ranked *kamuy* in the region where people engaged in river fishing. People who relied on ocean fishing, on the other hand, tended to admire the Killer Whale God, who was believed to be the God of Sea, and considered him as the highest ranked *kamuy*.

⁵⁰ Genzou Sarashina, コタン生物記:野鳥/水鳥/昆虫篇 [Kotan Record of Animals III Wild Birds, Water Birds and Insects] (Tokyo: Housei University Press, 1977), 548.

Kamuy Moshir are set apart in terms of their locations; however, there is communication between the two realms through rituals such as *iyomante*.

Animal *Kamuy*

Ainu people selected particular animals with symbolic meanings and worshiped them as a *kamuy* (or deity). These animals can be classified into categories. For example, there are the categories of “fish”, “beast” and “bird.”⁵¹ In terms of their strength and dominance, “killer whale” (the fish category), “bear” (the beast category), and “owl” (the bird category) are high-ranked animals within each category.⁵² These three animals are depicted in the painting, *Ainu Moshir, Kamuy Moshir* (1984) by Kitaichi Tetsuo (Figure 4). He visualized the Ainu worldview and depicted the two worlds, *Ainu Moshir* and *Kamuy Moshir*, on the same canvas to emphasize the communication between the two worlds.

⁵¹ Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 147.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 149.



Figure 4 “Ainu Moshir, Kamuy Moshir” (1984)

Source: Masahiro Nomoto, “Home and Settlement: COTAN AND CHISE,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 227-233 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 227.

As discussed previously, the *Kamuy Moshir* is depicted above the *Ainu Moshir*. In the painting, the viewers would see the *kamuy* in the *Kamuy Moshir* in the form of human beings. There is also a god depicted in the middle who sends salmon to the river in *Ainu Moshir*, and here it clearly suggests that the animals, as well as other natural resources, are sent from the *kamuy* as a gift. In addition, in the upper corner and upper middle of the painting of *Kamuy Moshir*, some birds are depicted. The “bird” is linked with the sky in terms of the ability to fly. In the same manner, the “beast” category refers to land, and the “fish” category links with the sea. Although the painting itself is a single dimension, the special categories of animals make the painting three-dimensional, in an imaginative way.

Three animals, the killer whale, bear and owl, can be found in his painting. The killer whale on the left is believed to be the “Master of the Sea” known as *Atuy-kor*

Kamui or *Repun-kamuy*. It is at the top of the food chain in the fish category. The bear sending ceremony, *iyomante*, is depicted on the right. Here, observers will see the spirit of the bear returning to the world of *kamuy*, *Kamuy Moshir*. The beast category includes both sea and land animals and the Steller's sea lion and brown bear are the largest in size in each category. However, people believe the land animals are superior to the sea animals, thus the bear is high-ranked in the beast category. Bears are known as a *Nupuri-kor Kamui* or *Kimun-kamui* meaning the "Master of the Mountain."

The owl can be found near the centre of the painting and represents the "Master of the Country or Village." It is depicted much larger than the other animals, even humans. Indeed, the depiction of the owl is the largest figure in this painting. The Blakiston's fish-owl is the largest owl in Japan, which has a length around 65 to 70 cm. Thus, the painter might want to emphasize its physical characteristics. However, since they are depicted much larger than human beings, bears and killer whales, here I would suggest the painter Kitaichi wanted to emphasize the important role of the owl in *Ainu Moshir*.

Blakiston's Fish Owls—God of the Village—

Owls, specifically the Blakiston's fish-owl (*Ketupa blakistoni*),⁵³ are in a superior position in the bird category:

Owls generally have the eyes set forward in flat, round faces, which have human-like features, and are nocturnal. Thus, they are, in a manner of speaking, anomalous among birds. It can be said that the background for choosing the Blakiston's fish-owl, a species of owl, as a symbolic expression among birds of prey is somewhat related to such anomalous qualities. In any case, the Blakiston's fish-owl links with the

⁵³ Blakiston's fish owl is known as *Shimahukurou* in Japanese.

salmon, a major food for the Ainu, and is one of the strongest in the ‘bird’ category.⁵⁴

Indeed, the features of owls are unique because their eyes are positioned in a similar way to that of humans. In addition, the flexibility of his neck is a metaphorical representation of a lighthouse, which lights up the surrounding sea for the safety of ships. Owls are able to see in the dark and, therefore, are able to watch over the village day and night.

Blakiston’s fish-owl is a symbol of *kotan* (or village) or *moshir* (or land), and is generally known as the “God of the Village.” The Owl God has a regional variation in his name and some examples are: *Kamuycikap* (Deity Bird), *Kamuy cikappo*, (Respectful Bird), *Kotan-kot-cikap* (Village-owning-bird), *Kotan-kor-kamuy* (Village-owning-bird), *Mosir-kor-kamuy* (Land-owning-bird), *Niyas-kor-kamuy* (Tree-processing-deity).⁵⁵ In this project, I will use the name *Kotan-kor-kamuy* (God of the Village) as referring to the Owl God.

The Owl God is believed to watch over the village and protect people from starvation. One of the reasons why the owls began to be highly respected by Ainu people is that they ate the rats and mice and protected the storage of foods for people in the *kotan* (or village). Indeed, the owls are also important in other regions: “[b]arn owls, which occur in Europe and other areas in addition to North America, are probably the most beneficial. They feed primarily on rats, mice, and other harmful rodents...Owls are better mousers and ratters than the usual domestic cat.”⁵⁶ However, extermination of harmful animals is not the only reason why Ainu people respect the owls.

⁵⁴ Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 149.

⁵⁵ Mashiho Chiri, 分類アイヌ語辞典第二巻:動物編 [Classification of Ainu Language Dictionary Second Volume: Animals] (Tokyo: Nihon Jomin Bunka Kenkyu-sho, 1953-62), 2: 196.

⁵⁶ George. A. Dorsey and Alfred L. Kroeber, *Traditions of the Arapaho* (Lincoln : University of Nebraska

Interestingly, the Owl God has the same name as the god of creation, *Kotan-kor-kamuy*. In many areas such as Horobetsu, Saru, Kusharo, and Bihoro in Hokkaido, the Owl God is called *Kotan-kor-kamuy*.⁵⁷ Kayano Shigeru wrote the sequel of the creation of the world told by one of the elders from the Saru River region. After the *Kotan-kor-kamuy* created the world, the Owl God was commissioned by him to plant the seeds of trees, grasses, plants such as Japanese barnyard grass (*Echinochloa esculenta*) and foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*) around the world.⁵⁸ The Owl God came down from *Kamuy Moshir* and flew over the land day and night and planted them around the world. Thus, people today do not have to worry about the food supply.⁵⁹ For this reason, people began to worship the Owl God as *Kotan-kor-kamuy* (the Guardian of Village) with great appreciation and respect.

Toko Nupuri, an Ainu artist who lives in Akan, Hokkaido, told me a similar story of world creation. According to Nupuri, when the Land Creator God came down from the sky, he took the Dog God and Owl God as attendants. When he finished creating the land for humans where we live now, *Ainu Moshir*, the Dog God went back to *Kamuy Moshir* with the Land Creator God. However, the Owl God did not return to his homeland and told them he is going to stay in *Ainu Moshir* to watch over people. Thus, today people highly respect the Owl God because he decided to stay for humans.⁶⁰

Although the Blakiston's fish owl is the most popular in Ainu culture as the God of the Village, it is not the only owl species that inhabits Hokkaido. For instance,

Press, 1997), 156.

⁵⁷ Mashiho Chiri, 分類アイヌ語辞典第二巻:動物編 [Classification of Ainu Language Dictionary Second Volume: Animals] (Tokyo: Nihon Jomin Bunka Kenkyu-sho, 1953-62), 2: 196.

⁵⁸ Japanese barnyard grass is known as *hie* and foxtail millet is known as *awa* in Japanese.

⁵⁹ Shigeru Kayano, カムイユカラと昔話 -kamuiyukar tura uwepekere- [Kamuy Yukar and Legends] (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1988), 323.

⁶⁰ Toko Nupuri, interview by author, Akan, Hokkaido, May 11, 2010.

examples of other owls that inhabit in the area are Ural Owl (*Strix ualensis japonica*), Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*), Eurasian Scops-owl (*Otus scops japonicus*) and Oriental Hawk Owl (*Ninox scutulata japonica*).⁶¹ Some of them are represented as *kamuy*, but none of them have a name, which indicates a guardian of the village. Indeed, the strength of dominance of Blakinston’s fish owl is highest in the “bird” category. Thus, it is natural to think that because of the strength and dominance of this particular kind of owl it was chosen as a guardian of the village.

Although Blakiston’s fish owl has inhabited Hokkaido for thousands of years, its numbers are declining due to environmental degradation such as logging and construction of dams in Hokkaido, and it raises the issue of loss of habitat and shortage of food such as salmon. The following maps illustrate the environmental changes in Hokkaido from the Meiji period (1868) to the present (Figure 5).

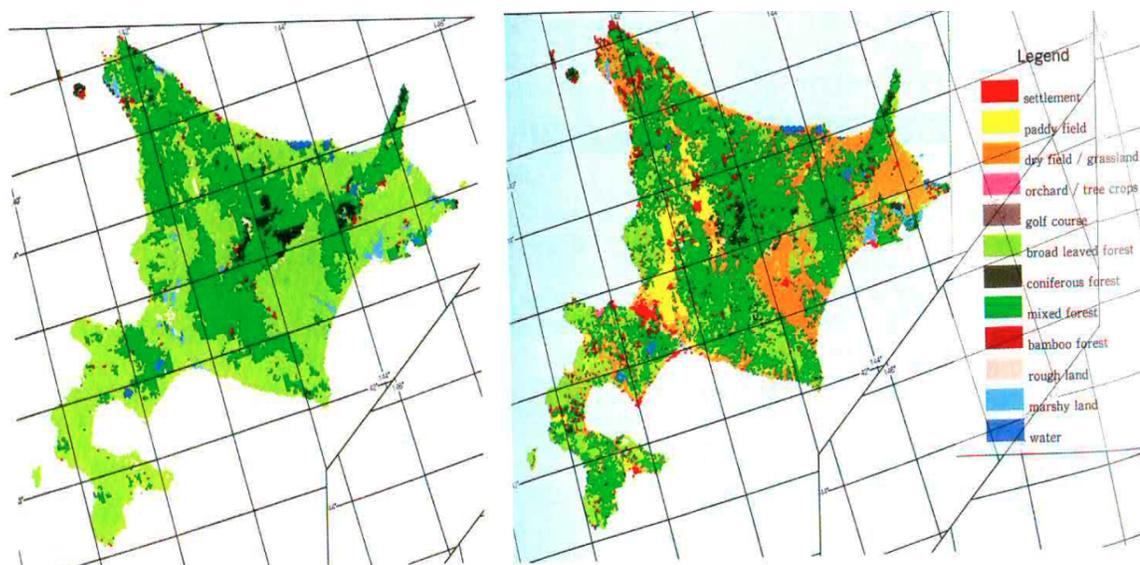


Figure 5 Land-Use Change from Meiji Period to Present

⁶¹ Ural Owl is known as *Ezo Fukurou*, Snowy Owl is named as *Shiro Fukurou*, Eurasian Scops-owl is *Konohazuku* and Oriental Hawk Owl is called as *Aobazuku* in Japanese.

Source: Yugo Ono, “Ainu Homelands: Natural History from Ice Age to Modern Times,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 32-38 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 38.

As we see in these maps, some areas of broad-leaved forest (light green) and of mixed forest (green) in the map on the left changed into dry field (orange), paddy field (yellow), and settlement (red) in the present. The numbers of Blakiston’s fish owl is currently around 120 in Hokkaido.⁶² They are 65 to 70 cm in size and the biggest owls in Japan. Blakiston’s fish owl plays a significant role as an animal deity, which symbolizes the guardian of the village in Ainu spiritual belief systems. However, the decline in the numbers of the owl, a lack of actual physical representation of the Owl God, may lead to a discontinuity of this belief. This project will pay specific attention to this deity since the role of the Owl God is deeply connected to peoples’ lives which are often reflected in Ainu oral literature.

⁶² 生物多様性情報システム[Japan Integrated Biodiversity Information System].“フクロウ目フクロウ科絶滅危惧IA類,” Ministry of Environment, http://www.biodic.go.jp/rdb_fts/2000/73-009.html (accessed February 15, 2011).

Chapter Two: Traditional Ainu Oral Literature

In this chapter, I will briefly explain the genres in Ainu traditional oral literature. Storytelling was a popular daily activity for the Ainu and not only a ritual and ceremonial occasion. Thereby, various genres in Ainu oral literature were developed. In this project, I will discuss the genre, *Kamuy Yukar* (or Songs of Gods), and its potential origins: *tusu-sinotcha* meaning a female shaman's sacred verse and a ceremonial play known as *kasou buyou geki*. Ainu keep the messages from the gods conveyed through these rituals. The spiritual beliefs were greatly embedded in the stories belonging to *Kamuy Yukar*. I will describe three key features of *Kamuy Yukar*: first person narrative, use of *sakehe* (or refrain), and ideological aspects. Then, I will examine how the stories in *Kamuy Yukar* focalized, structured, and formed in general by giving examples from four different stories: "Song Sung by the Owl God 'Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around'" (Appendix 1); "Song Sung by the Owl God 'Konkuwa'" (Appendix 2); "Owl and Salmon" (Appendix 3); and "*Kamuy Chikap*" (Appendix 4). *Kamuy Yukar* developed from ritual and ceremonial activities and gradually became one of the popular genres in Ainu traditional oral literature. Through these stories, Ainu people shared and transmitted their beliefs from generation to generation.

Genres

Essentially, Ainu people categorized their traditional oral literature into two main categories: *sa-ko-yo* meaning "just singing or singing with tune," and *ru-cha-ye* referring

to “telling the stories in a singsong tone” or prose in English.⁶³ Although the first category, *sa-ko-yo*, translated as *shikyoku* (詞曲) in Japanese meaning “song or melody,” Ainu people focused more on the contents of the songs rather than on the melodies (or musical elements).⁶⁴ By degrees, *sa-ko-yo* gradually developed into *ru-cha-ye*.⁶⁵

Traditional Ainu oral literature is diverse in its genres and each category of *sa-ko-yo* and *ru-cha-ye* has various sub-categories of genres. For instance, the category of *sa-ko-yo*, is sub-divided into: *Kamuy Yukar* (Songs of Gods) and *Ainu Yukar* (Songs of Humans). *Kamuy Yukar* is further categorized into: *Kamuy Yukar* (Songs of Nature Gods) and *Oina* (Songs of Human Gods); and *Ainu Yukar* is divided into: *Yukar* (Songs of Heroes) and *Mat Yukar* or *Menoko Yukar* (Songs of Females) (Figure 6).⁶⁶

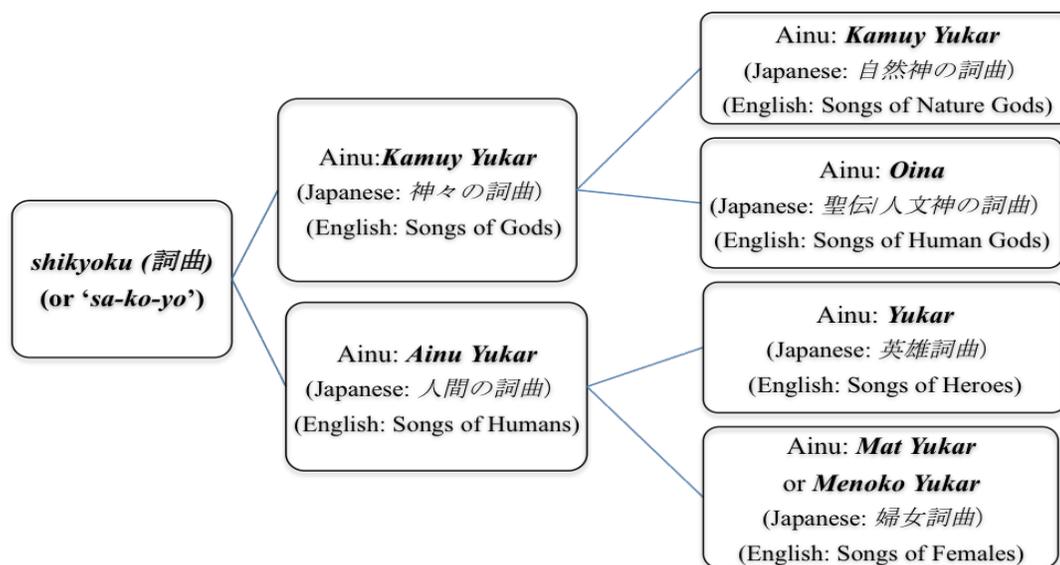


Figure 6 Examples of Genres in *Sa-ko-yo*

⁶³ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 2: page: 115.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*; Itsuhiko Kubodera, アイヌの文学 [Literature of Ainu](Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), 203.

⁶⁶ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 2: 122.; Itsuhiko Kubodera, アイヌの文学 [Literature of Ainu](Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), 198.

Source: Based on Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 2:122.; Itsuhiko Kubodera, アイヌの文学 [Literature of Ainu](Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), 198.

However, it is important to be aware that this is not an entire overview of traditional Ainu oral literature. Diversity in their oral literature suggests that in ancient times *Ainu Moshir*, the land now called Hokkaido, was covered in deep snow for almost half a year and storytelling became a form of entertainment for people. In the Ainu language ‘to enjoy story telling’ is expressed as *uwenewsar*.⁶⁷ People participated in *uwenewsar* not only at ceremonial occasions, but performed on a daily basis at home or at mountain lodges where hunters would stay for long periods of time.⁶⁸ *Uwenewsar* was very popular and people would gather around the fire all night long. It became a great form of entertainment for people in ancient Ainu societies. Its great popularity is one of the reasons why various genres in Ainu oral literature were created.⁶⁹

***Kamuy Yukar* (Songs of Gods)**

Kamuy Yukar, which can be translated as Songs of Gods in English, is one of the popular genres in traditional Ainu oral literature. In this genre, various gods, especially animal gods, appear and speak of their experiences with the use of “I” as a subject throughout the stories. The origins of *Kamuy Yukar* are numerous and are attributed to various sources such as the oracle in dreams and magic words.⁷⁰ In this project, I would

⁶⁷ Suzuko Tamura, アイヌ語辞典: 沙流方言 [Ainu Dictionary: Saru Liver Dialect](Tokyo: Souhukan, 1996), 807.

⁶⁸ Donald L. Philippi, *Songs of Gods, Songs of Humans: the Epic Tradition of the Ainu* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 26.

⁶⁹ Itsuhiko Kubodera, アイヌの文学 [Literature of Ainu](Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), 182.

⁷⁰ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 2: 210)

like to discuss two main hypotheses that explain how this particular genre emerged and constructed its form as one of the most popular genres in Ainu oral literature. I will argue that *Kamuy Yukar* developed from Ainu peoples' attempts to keep a record of their spiritual beliefs as well as the life teachings derived from the rituals and ceremonial activities.

***Tusu-sinotcha* (A Female Shaman's Sacred Verse)**

Kindaichi Kyosuke (金田一 京助) (1882-1971), an eminent Japanese linguist who was a pioneer of the Ainu language, advocated that the genre of *Kamuy Yukar* derives its origin from an Ainu shamanic activity. Kindaichi insisted that the *Kamuy Yukar* originated from the female shamans' sacred verses known as *tusu-sinotcha* (*tusu*: to hold a séance (v.) or a séance (n.), *sinot*: to play, *cha*: tone) in the Ainu language.⁷¹ In ancient Ainu societies, male shamans were responsible for offering the *inaw*,⁷² and giving a prayer to the god, which is the activity known as *inonno-itak*.⁷³ Indeed, females were not allowed to join the *inonno-itak* because females were thought to be corrupted; whereas, female shamans, called *tusu-menoko* (or *tusu-kur*), conducted *tusu*.

Tusu has two functions: first, to place a curse on somebody and second, to consult about good and bad fortune, and weal and woe.⁷⁴ Although male shamans also conducted

⁷¹ Suzuko Tamura, *アイヌ語辞典: 沙流方言* [Ainu Dictionary: Saru Liver Dialect](Tokyo: Souhukan, 1996), 743.; Kyosuke Kindaichi, *金田一京助全集* [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke] (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1992), 7: 86.

⁷² It is a “wittled pieces of willow etc. which are stuck in the ground as offerings to the gods” according to Suzuko Tamura, *アイヌ語辞典: 沙流方言* [Ainu Dictionary: Saru Liver Dialect](Tokyo: Souhukan, 1996), 231.

⁷³ Itsuhiko Kubodera, *アイヌ民族の文学と生活* [Ainu and their Literature and Livelihoods](Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 97.

⁷⁴ Itsuhiko Kubodera, *アイヌ民族の文学と生活* [Ainu and their Literature and Livelihoods](Tokyo:

the former type of *tusu*, the latter for the consultation was mainly the role of female shamans.⁷⁵ Kindaichi argued that *tusu-sinotcha* was held during this latter type of *tusu*. Female shamans who conducted *tusu* for the consultation were called *tusu-menoko* (*tusu*: to hold a séance (v.) and *menoko*: female) and were believed to be possessed by the snake as their *turen-kamui*.⁷⁶ Ainu people believe that each individual is possessed by some spirits or gods, called *turen-kamui* (or *turen-pe*).⁷⁷ The Japanese word *tukigami* (憑神) is a synonym for *turen-kamui*; however, it does not always hold a positive aspect in Japanese culture. In Ainu culture, it is common for people to be possessed by one or several *turen-kamui*.⁷⁸ Indeed, Ainu people believed that superior and inferior human nature is based on what kinds of *turen-kamui* they are possessed by.⁷⁹ If an individual has great superiority in terms of his/her human nature, it means he/she has been possessed, or is protected by a powerful or respectable *turen-kamui*.

Tusu-menoko who had shamanic power given to her by the snake *turen-kamui*, conducted *tusu* and played an important role in ancient Ainu societies. In ancient times, at the occurrences of starvation, flood, epidemics, or any unexpected incidents, Ainu people tried to communicate with the gods to ask their real intentions. The female shaman called *tusu-menoko* took the role as mediator between the Ainu people and the gods. The chief of the village and other villagers gathered and invited a *tusu-menoko* to let her

Souhukan, 2004), 98.; Itsuhiko Kubodera, *アイヌの文学* [Literature of Ainu](Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), 104-5.

⁷⁵ Itsuhiko Kubodera, 98.

⁷⁶ Kyosuke Kindaichi 金田一京助全集 [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke](Tokyo: Sanseido,1993), 12: 101.

⁷⁷ Itsuhiko Kubodera, *アイヌ民族の文学と生活* [Ainu and their Literature and Livelihoods](Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 100.

⁷⁸ Kyosuke Kindaichi 金田一京助全集 [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke](Tokyo: Sanseido,1993), 12: 333.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

communicate with the god. First, males offered the *inaw* and gave a prayer to the god, which is the activity known as *inonno-itak*, then they recited the *kamui-nishuk* which requests that the god come down to a female shaman.⁸⁰ At the ritual, a *tusu-menoko* mumbles in the beginning, then gradually changes her look, shakes her body, sometimes even dozes or sobs, and in the end she speaks or even sings the words of the god to the people. This story, which is like a song, is called *tusu-sinotcha* in the Ainu language and can be translated as a female shaman's sacred verse in English.⁸¹ In the act of *tusu-sinotcha*, the female shaman channels the voice of the god, in other words, the god 'borrows' her mouth and her voice changes and the shaman often does not remember what she said to the people.⁸² Since each *tusu-sinotcha* happened only once, the important ones that contained significant teachings for peoples' lives were transmitted orally from generation to generation, and it gradually made its form as *Kamuy Yukar*.⁸³ One of the key features of *Kamuy Yukar* is *sakehe*, referring to refrain, and it is the identification of each god who borrowed the mouth of a female shaman.⁸⁴

***Kasou Buyou Geki* (仮装舞踊劇) (A Costume Dance Play)**

Chiri Mashiho (知里 真志保) (1909-1961), an Ainu linguist who studied under the supervision of Kindaichi Kyosuke, argued that the origin of *Kamuy Yukar* is not a single derivation. Thus, although Kindaichi's hypothesis of *tusu-sinotcha* seems to be

⁸⁰ Itsuhiko Kubodera, *アイヌの文学* [Literature of Ainu] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), 105-106.

⁸¹ Itsuhiko Kubodera, *アイヌ民族の文学と生活* [Ainu and their Literature and Livelihoods] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 98.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Mashiho Chiri, *知里真志保著作集* [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 2: 116-117.

⁸⁴ Kyosuke Kindaichi, *金田一京助全集* [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke] (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1992), 7:346.

influential and well known among the Ainu scholars, we also need to consider other factors such as oracles in dreams, magic words, and the costume dance plays.⁸⁵ He argues that *Kamuy Yukar* could have possibly developed from the shamanic play which was performed at the animal sending ceremonies.⁸⁶ Although I was not able to find the Ainu name of this play, Chiri calls it *kasou buyou geki* (仮装舞踊劇) in Japanese, which can be translated as a costume dance play.

As discussed in Chapter 1, animal spirit-sending ceremonies were very important activities in ancient Ainu societies. At the ceremonies, although people actually killed the animals, in the Ainu spiritual belief systems, they did not consider it as ‘killing,’ but rather as sending the animals’ spirits back to their home land called *Kamuy Moshir* where they originally came from. In the Ainu spiritual belief systems, the gods live in their world, *Kamuy Moshir*, in human form. When they visit the human world called *Ainu Moshir*, they wear armour, called *hayokpe*; referring to the animals and the spirits of the gods literally sitting between the ears of these animals.

The bear’s gall, meat, and hide were considered gifts to the Ainu from the bear spirit, and the inaw (offering sticks with wooden shavings attached), cakes, and home-brewed beer were considered reciprocal presents to the bear spirit. The Ainu bear festival, which involved the ritual killing of a raised bear cub, can also be understood as a positive mechanism in the Ainu hunting strategies. In this case, the Ainu used the bear cub as a special messenger to their ancestors in the world of kamui, requesting them to send another bear to the Ainu world.⁸⁷

The gods who visited the human world wearing the *hayokpe* of animals can only go back to their home land, *Kamuy Moshir* if the Ainu people eat their *hayokpe* with great

⁸⁵ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha,1973), 2:115-116.

⁸⁶ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha,1973), 3:10-11.

⁸⁷ Juha Pentikainen, ed., *Shamanism and Northern Ecology* (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, c1996), 301.

appreciation and treat them in the right manner.⁸⁸ Traditionally, Ainu people conducted the animal sending ceremonies for bears, owls, foxes, raccoon dogs,⁸⁹ wolves, deer, and whales.⁹⁰

At the sending ceremonies, the shamans disguised themselves such as bears or owls and explained this event from their (the gods) points of views through the actions followed by the words in the play, and this is what Chiri Mashiho refers to as *kasou buyou geki* (a costume dance play). For instance, at the bear sending ceremony, Chiri explains one of the shamans dressed as a bear and played the scene where he was captured by humans. The shaman wore the bear skin over his head and cried “hu-wee! hu-wee!” or “o-wee-wee!” and danced.⁹¹ While he danced, he explained to the people by his actions and words how he was captured by the hunter and the fact that he is a god visiting the human world and it was his will to be captured by humans. Chiri argues that this play must be transformed into the oral literature belonging to *Kamuy Yukar*. Indeed, the words that the shaman who disguised himself as a Bear God, “*Huwee Huwee*,” later became a *sakehe* (or refrain) which is one of the key elements of *Kamuy Yukar* which I will explain in a section later.

Although there are very limited resources for the *kasou buyou geki* of the owl sending ceremony, similar to the bears’ one, at the ceremony the shaman disguised himself as the Owl God. He wore a headdress with symbolic features and a little carving attached to the top and held an *inaw* which has the owl’s ears feathers attached. He

⁸⁸ Kyosuke Kindaichi 金田一京助全集 [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke](Tokyo: Sanseido,1993), 12:282.

⁸⁹ Raccoon dogs (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) also known as “*Tanuki*” in Japanese are member of the canine family that inhabits East Asia.

⁹⁰ Hiroshi Utagawa, “The Archaeology of Iyomante,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 256-260 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 257.

⁹¹ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha,1973), 2:210.

danced to the right and left possibly imitating that he was flying. In the meantime, he explained how he became the guardian god of the village by his actions while singing a song.⁹² One of the songs sung at a costume dance play during the owl sending ceremony is documented in Ainu language and Japanese⁹³ and I translated each sentence into English as following:

<i>chupka wa</i>	東から	From the east
<i>kamuy ran</i>	神様が天降った	the god came down from the heaven
<i>iwa tuysam</i>	祭場の山のそばに	near the mountain where they hold the ceremony
<i>o-ran</i>	天降った	came down from the heaven
<i>iwa tuysam</i>	祭場の山のそばに	near the mountain where they hold the ceremony <i>kani</i>
<i>may n</i>	金具の音が美しく	the beautiful sounds of the metals
<i>chi-nu</i>	聞えた	heard

This is the ceremonial song, which is well known in various regions, and Chiri Mashiho states that this song originally was sung at the bear sending ceremony.

During the *kasou buyou geki*, this song was sung when the shaman disguised himself as the Bear God and appeared near the altar. The “sounds of metals” in the song must be the sounds of the decorated metal fittings around the chest of shaman. The song seems to be an opening song for the play since he just flew over to the human world. This song conveys a basic background of the animal spirit-sending ceremony in which the gods visit from *Kamuy Moshir* to *Ainu Moshir*. This unique Ainu worldview is often expressed in the stories in *Kamuy Yukar*.⁹⁴

Sarashina Genzo also discussed the relationship between the animal spirit-sending ceremony and the *Kamuy Yukar*. In the Oshyamanbe region in Hokkaido, after people

⁹² Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 3: 27.

⁹³ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho](Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 2: 80.

⁹⁴ I used the word ‘dualistic’ to illustrate the existence of the two worlds parallel to each other. However, it is important to be aware that more than two worlds existed in Ainu spiritual belief systems.

wrung the owl at his spirit-sending ceremony, a person, who was poorly dressed, carried the body of the owl on his back. Then two or three people followed this person and tried to pull or cut the rope that attached the owl on his back. These people threatened the poor person or tried to make him tumble.⁹⁵ Sarashina argues that this play has a connection to a famous story in *Kamuy Yukar*, the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” (Appendix 1). In the story, the poor boy captured the Owl God and the other boys from a rich family insulted him and tried to take the Owl God from him. Although, Sarashina did not mention this play as a costume dance play, there is a certainly a connection between the plays during the animal spirit-sending ceremony and some of the stories in the oral literature, *Kamuy Yukar*.

Key Features of *Kamuy Yukar*

As previously discussed, *Kamuy Yukar* has two potential foundations: *tusu-sinotcha* in Ainu language translated as a female shaman’s sacred verse and a costume dance play at the animal spirit-sending ceremonies which Chiri Mashiho calls *kasou buyou geki* (仮装舞踏劇). This is revealed in the three common features of *Kamuy Yukar*: first person narrative, use of *sakehe*, and ideological aspects. For instance, both *tusu-sinotcha* and *kasou buyou geki* must use the subject of “I” since the speaker is the god himself/herself. This links to the stories in *Kamuy Yukar* where we can find the consistency of using the first person narrative throughout the stories. I will discuss more details of each element in this section. Stories in *Kamuy Yukar* share three key features

⁹⁵ Genzou Sarashina, *コタン生物記:野鳥/水鳥/昆虫篇* [Kotan Record of Animals III Wild Birds, Water Birds and Insects] (Tokyo: Housei University Press, 1977), 554-555.

and I will argue that they made its stories important, direct messages from the gods to Ainu communities.

First Person Narrative

In *Kamuy Yukar*, the main characters are the deities, and they speak of their experiences using the subject “I” throughout the stories. In the Ainu language, the subject “I” is presented as “a=” or “=an” in *Yukar*, the Songs of Humans. However, in *Kamuy Yukar*, the subject “I” is presented as “ci=” or “as=” to clearly indicate that the speaker is a god.⁹⁶ For instance, “ci=ki kane hekaci utar enkasike” in the Ainu language is translated as “Singing this song, above the children.”⁹⁷ Although the subject is not completely defined or specifically identified beyond the person “I”, from the subject “ci=”, we know that the main character who is singing is not human, but a ‘deity.’

In addition, I will discuss how the narrative is narrated. Mieke Bal defined the concept of narration as “point of view or narrative perspective.”⁹⁸ She also introduces the ideas of ‘focalizer’ and says; “Focalizer, is the point from which the elements are viewed. That point can lie with a character (i.e. an element of the fabula), or outside it.”⁹⁹ Based on the concepts of narration associated with the idea of focalizer, we are able to analyze how (from whose point) the story is told. Focalization is divided into ‘external’ focalization and ‘internal’ focalization. External focalization is defined as “A type of focalization or point of view whereby the information conveyed is mostly limited to what

⁹⁶ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 12.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁹⁸ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Totonro Press, 1985), 100.

⁹⁹ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine van Boheemen. (Toronto: University of Totonro Press, 1985), 104.

the characters do and say and there is never any direct indication of what they think or feel.”¹⁰⁰ For example, “On the seashore, human children played with little toy bows and little toy arrows”¹⁰¹ from the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” (Appendix 1) is an externally focalized representation of this event.

However, ‘internal’ focalization emphasizes more what the characters think and feel. It is defined as “a type of focalization whereby information is conveyed in terms of a character’s (conceptual or perceptual) point of view or perspective.”¹⁰² Thus, the three sentences (“Seeing this, I felt terribly sorry for him”¹⁰³ from the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’”(Appendix 1); “Seeing that, violent anger surged up within me.”¹⁰⁴ from the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Konkuwa’” (Appendix 2); and “again, I was surprised...”¹⁰⁵ from “Owl and Salmon”(Appendix 3)) are examples of internally focalized representations because they express the thoughts and feelings of the Owl God.

These stories can be considered externally focalized representations; however, they are told mainly with internal focalization because we see the events and landscape through the eyes of the Owl God. In summary, the Owl God in each text can be called a ‘focalizer,’ one who describes his own experiences in first person narrative. By means of the gods as a focalizer, the contents of the stories have more power in meaning to people who believe the Owl God is a guardian of the village. The significance is that the Owl

¹⁰⁰ Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, c1987), 29.

¹⁰¹ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 21.

¹⁰² Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, c1987), 45.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰⁴ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 269.

¹⁰⁵ Ukaji Shizue, シマフクロウとサケ [Blakiston’s Fish Owl and Salmon](Tokyo: Hukuinkanshoten, 2006), 20.

God explains his teaching to Ainu people directly through a first person narrative. The first person narrative of the Owl God is effective only in a particular community, in this case, Ainu communities, where people greatly respect him as a *kamuy*, god.

However, if we consider the structure of the stories, there is a possibility that the stories are told by third person narratives. The common structure in *Kamuy Yukar*, in general, is “A narrative within a narrative”—embedded narrative.¹⁰⁶ What it implies is that the ‘embedded narratives’ (or ‘secondary narratives’) are contained within the ‘frame narratives’ (or ‘primary narratives’). Primary narrative is defined as “a narrative the narrating instance of which introduces one (or more than one) other narrating instance and is not itself introduced by any.”¹⁰⁷ For instance, the story “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops, Fall, Fall, All Around’” (Appendix 1) ends with the sentence, “Thus spoke the Owl God.”¹⁰⁸ Similarly, another story, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’” (Appendix 2), contains the sentence, “Thus told the guardian god, the Owl Man God of the Village, and went up to heaven. Thus the Owl God recounted”.¹⁰⁹ “Owl and Salmon” (Appendix 3) as well as “*Kamuy Chikap*” (Appendix 4) also finish in a similar manner. Thus, I will argue that the story told by the view of the Owl God is considered an ‘embedded narrative’ within a ‘frame narrative’ which is narrated by somebody else.

In sum, we can understand *Kamuy Yukar* as a first person narrative; however, if we consider the structure or construction of the stories, it is ambiguous whether they are first person or third person narratives. Although it is clear that the first person narrator in an ‘embedded narrative’ is the Owl God, it is difficult to determine the first person

¹⁰⁶ Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, c1987, 25.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁰⁹ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 287.

narrator in a ‘framed narrative’ who ends the story with “Thus, spoke the Owl God.”¹¹⁰ However, as discussed, *Kamuy Yukar* originated in *tusu-sinotcha*, a female shaman’s sacred verses, and the narrator in the framed narrative might be a female shaman. Indeed, the female shamans who are blessed with a sacred power by the snake are likely to be the story keeper.¹¹¹ Thus, one of the possible explanations of the consistent use of a first narrative in *Kamuy Yukar* is that the deities, such as the Owl God, borrow the mouths of humans to deliver their messages and return the mouth at the end with statements such as, “Thus, spoke the Owl God.”

However, since each *tusu-sinotcha* did not occur more than once, a female shaman as the narrator in a ‘framed narrative’ cannot be clarified. It might be a shaman at the bear and owl sending ceremonies who conducted *kasou buyou geki* (or a costume dance play) or might be somebody else who takes a role as transmitting stories. An ability to remember and talk about these stories might be considered a specialized skill. Indeed, in Ainu society, since they did not possess a form of writing, the moral teaching or social system could only be transmitted orally from generation to generation. There were no written laws, but the social rules were kept by the elders called *upash-kumakur*, who remembered the stories that belonged to the genres including *Kamuy Yukar* which became a foundation of the societies.¹¹²

As previously mentioned, shamanic activities might help us understand the complexities in the structure of the narratives and narrators: “The words spoken during shamanic séances assume the form of utterances of the deities themselves, borrowing the

¹¹⁰ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 89.

¹¹¹ Itsuhiko Kubodera, *アイヌ民族の文学と生活* [Ainu and their Literature and Livelihoods] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 100-101.

¹¹² Kyosuke Kindaichi, *金田一京助全集* [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke] (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1992), 7: 341.

mouth of the shaman.”¹¹³ Donald Philippi also defined *Kamuy Yukar* as “a literature of self-revelation by a speaker.”¹¹⁴ Thus, it is understood that originally it was a self-revelation of the gods who borrows the mouth of the female shaman or of a shaman who disguised themselves as a god. Later on, it became more of a self-revelation for people who tell the stories. In addition, there is a parallel between the action of the god borrowing the mouth of female shamans and the god wearing the armor of animals when they visit humans. In other words, Ainu spiritual belief influences the structure of *Kamuy Yukar*. From this discovery, we are able to conclude that the gods may not always be able to see or talk with humans directly but they need ‘mediation’ in order to interact with humans.

Use of Sakehe

In addition, since both *tusu-sinotcha* and *kasou buyou geki* are group activities where people gathered in the villages, it indicates that the *Kamuy Yukar* has a connection to the group-oriented society. The second feature of *Kamuy Yukar* is the use of an aesthetic technique known as *sakehe*. Each story in *Kamuy Yukar* possesses its own *sakehe* and it works as a musical accompaniment (or refrain). In addition, *sakehe* plays an important role in the identification of deities. In the traditional style of *Kamuy Yukar*, *sakehe* always appears in the beginning of the texts to clearly indicate who (what god) is speaking in the stories. The variety in numbers, positions, and origins of *sakehe* indicates

¹¹³ Donald L. Philippi, *Songs of Gods, Songs of Humans: the Epic Tradition of the Ainu* (Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press, 1979), 27.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

that the ancient Ainu people not only had great aesthetic sense and imagination, but they also were able to create the unique sounds and rhythms of *sakehe*.

Numbers

The number of *sakehe* used in *Kamuy Yukar* is usually one; however, some stories have more than two *sakehe*. These stories are called as “*tu-sake-kor-pe*” in the Ainu language, meaning “*tu* (two) *sake* (*sakehe*) *kor* (have/process) *pe* (thing).”¹¹⁵ Chiri Mashiho discussed that occasions in which readers are likely to find the second *sakehe* are when there is a shift of a main character and a drastic change in the content of the stories while having the same protagonist.¹¹⁶ In addition, there are stories which have more than three *sakehe*; however, according to Chiri, these are rare in *Kamuy Yukar*. Four different stories of the Owl God discussed in this project have a single *sakehe* in each story. In other words, the content and protagonists are kept constant and straight throughout the stories.

Positions

Positioning of *sakehe* in each story is also varied. Chiri Mashiho divided the positioning of *sakehe* into four major categories: (1) positioned in the beginning of each phrase; (2) positioned in the end of each phrase; (3) appeared regularly throughout

¹¹⁵ Mashiho Chiri, “神謡について[About the Songs of Gods],” In *アイヌ神謡集*, by Yukie Chiri, 163-184. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1878), 179.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

stories; and (4) used in specific dialogues.¹¹⁷ According to Chiri, the first and second categories are popular; however, the third and fourth categories are very rare. Indeed, all four stories “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops, Fall, Fall, All Around” (Appendix 1), “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*” (Appendix 2), “Owl and Salmon” (Appendix 3) and “*Kamuy Chikap*” (Appendix 4) have *sakehe* in the beginning.

In the stories, “Owl and Salmon” and “*Kamuy Chikap*”, *sakehe* appear in the beginning, but also at the end of the phrase. Thus, the use of *sakehe* in these stories can be analyzed as a combination of the first and second categories. Another story, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops, Fall, Fall, All Around”, has *sakehe* which appears in the beginning and is also used regularly throughout the story. Thus, it can be considered a combination of the first and third categories; *sakehe* in this song appears when the Owl God performs some actions of his own.

Origins

Although *sakehe* is utilized as a means to identify the deities, it does not mean each animal god has only one *sakehe*. Indeed, the four stories that I selected for my project contain different *sakehe*, all referring to the Owl God. Chiri Mashiho analyzed the origins of *sakehe* from four different categories, but I will explain three of them which are relevant to the stories that I selected. What is common among these categories is that because the main character of the stories in *Kamuy Yukar* is an animal god, the features of these animals often influenced *sakehe*. *Sakehe* originated from (1) the sounds or cries of the animals; (2) the representations of actions or behaviours of the animals; and (3) the

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

representations of the extraordinary actions or behaviours of the main characters, or the indication of the main events in the story.

For instance, two *sakehe* “Konkuwa” and “Humuhumukato” are examples of the first category. Many stories of the Owl God have *sakehe* indicating the cry of the owl such as “hum” or “hun huun.” One of the stories of the Owl God from the eastern part of Hokkaido has *sakehe*, which is “huunko hunko huunko.” This can be read as “huunkohunkohuunko” if we do not separate the words. Then, we take the end of this word ‘kohuunko’ and pronounce ‘hu’ weaker and change ‘ko’ into ‘kuwa’, and thus the word ‘kohunkuwa’ appears—“konkuwa.”¹¹⁸ Katayama Tatsumine states many *sakehe* in the songs of the Owl God originates from the cry of owls, which is ‘huun,’ and he states that the word ‘konkuwa’ originates from the sound ‘huun’. Indeed, the *sakehe* found in “Owl and Salmon” is “Humuhumukato.” The sound of “huun” is similar to “humu.” The word ‘huko’ is derived from the behavior when the owls find their game animals and they cry ‘hunko’ (usually they cry as ‘hun hun’). In addition, the *sakehe* from ‘Silver Drops, Fall, Fall, All Around’ can be categorized into the third category. Although this *sakehe* seems have no element of the cry of the owl, in this text it points to the actions of the Owl God in the story and it always appears before he makes any action. His next action is always followed by the sentence “*arian rekpo/chiki kane*” translated into “This song I sang, ...” or “Singing this song, ...”¹¹⁹

As mentioned, there is a variety of *sakehe* in *Kamuy Yukar*. I argue that there are reasons for this; for instance, the numbers of *sakehe* clarify the content and subjects of

¹¹⁸ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 294.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

the story. Positioning, in general, confirms ‘who speaks’ in the stories and emphasizes the events or contributions of the main characters based on the needs of each text. In addition, the origins of *sakehe* suggest that Ainu peoples carefully observed wild animals. The variety of *sakehe* originates from basic words such as “hun hun” and illustrates that Ainu people in ancient time might have played with the sounds and rhythms of each *sakehe*. For instance, “silver drops fall, fall, all around; gold drops fall, fall, all around” indicates that there are two pairs parallel to each other: one is “silver drops fall, fall, all around” and the other is “gold drops fall, fall, all around”. It suggests the same word count and the only difference between these two are the words “silver” and “gold.” There is a rhythm in this *sakehe* although it is hard to get a sense for those who do not speak the Ainu language. Even in the English translation, these sentences sound like a song. I would suggest that the variety of *sakehe* indicates that *Kamuy Yukar* was a popular form of amusement for the Ainu because they played with the functions of *sakehe* creatively by observing the animals in their natural habitat.

Message from the God

Furthermore, the development of *Kamuy Yukar* resulted from peoples’ attempts to preserve their spiritual belief systems, as well as ideological aspects such as life lessons. Although I could not find a particular example for each *tusu-sinotcha* (a female shaman’s sacred verse) and *kasou buyou geki* (a costume dance play) that conveys life lessons, the purpose of conducting *tusu-sinotcha* was for people to figure out solutions for their misfortunes. Indeed, stories in *Kamuy Yukar* often carry ideological aspects, as do select stories (Appendix 1-4). This is the most significant feature of *Kamuy Yukar* and I believe

it was one of the potential reasons why *Kamuy Yukar* developed. I will further discuss the ideological aspects of the stories belonging to *Kamuy Yukar* in Chapter 4.

Summary

Ainu spiritual belief systems as its foundation, *Kamuy Yukar*, in traditional Ainu oral literature developed from ritual and ceremonial activities such as *tusu-sinotcha* (a female shaman's sacred verse) and *kasou buyou geki* (a costume dance play). Three key features of *Kamuy Yukar*: first person narrative, use of *sakehe*, and ideological aspects constructed this particular genre to differ from other genres. As discussed in Chapter 1, Ainu people do not perceive animals as a food resource, but rather as gifts or messengers who were sent by the deities from *Kamuy moshir*. Thereby, the stories in *Kamuy Yukar* are the messages from these animal gods to Ainu.

Chapter Three: Ainu Material Arts

Ainu lived close with nature and created various items for rituals purposes or daily use. In the Ainu worldview, people believe that all natural resources including animals and plants are the gifts from *kamuy* (or gods). This is also expressed in some stories in *Kamuy Yukar*. The practice of telling the stories was not just for entertainment, but also had an important role as a keeper of spiritual beliefs. Ainu utilized natural resources with great appreciation. In addition, they developed sophisticated skills in carving and embroideries and transmitted them from generation to generation. In this chapter, I will analyze three forms of Ainu arts: traditional material arts, tourism arts, and contemporary fine arts. Traditional Ainu material arts, in particular, were strictly governed by their spiritual belief systems. However, it gradually changed due to the introduction of tourism in Hokkaido. I will analyze how their material arts have been changed and why they changed. I will argue that contemporary Ainu fine arts are the visual record for Ainu history of material culture.

Traditional Ainu Material Arts

Traditional material arts can be defined as an art that acknowledges the utilization of natural resources and creative skills that are transmitted from generation to generation and which often follows cultural rules. There is a variety of traditional material arts found in the Ainu culture such as: clothes, robes, boots, basketries, bowls, spring bow traps, fishing spears, plates, and daily utensils. Ainu people created these material objects from various natural resources such as animal furs and skins, trees, plants, rocks, etc. Various

ways of using natural resources demonstrates that ancient Ainu people understood the materials well and knew how to utilize them for creating a specific item. For instance, salmon, which is believed to be the main diet of the ancient Ainu,¹²⁰ was also an important resource for making boots known as *chep-keri* meaning *chep*: salmon and *keri*: shoes¹²¹ and coats called *cep-ur* meaning *cep*: salmon/fish and *ur*: skin/clothing.¹²²

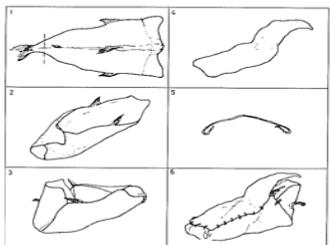


Figure 7 *chep-keri*



Figure 8 *cep-ur*

Source (Fig. 7): Shiro Kayano, “Who Owns the Salmon?,” in *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*, eds. Judith Roche and Meg McHutchison, trans. Jane Corrdry Langill and Rie Taki, 40-45 (Seattle, Wash.: One Reel: University of Washington Press, c1998. 42), 42.¹²³

Source (Fig. 8): Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 288.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Shiro Kayano, “Who Owns the Salmon?,” in *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*, eds. Judith Roche and Meg McHutchison, trans. Jane Corrdry Langill and Rie Taki, 40-45 (Seattle, Wash.: One Reel: University of Washington Press, c1998. 42), 41-42.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 13; Toshikazu Sasaki, *アイヌの文化誌ノート* [Ainu Cultural Descriptions Note] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2001), 89.

¹²³ Neither date nor place where its made are inscribed.

¹²⁴ This is a child’s salmon skin coat collected in Hokkaido. Because it has a Sakhalin Ainu cut, we could tell that it was originally from Sakhalin and ended up in Hokkaido. Chisato O. Dubreuil states, “This coat may have come to Hokkaido with Ainu refugees expelled when Sakhalin was turned over to the Russians in 1875. In 1896, it was sold to Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd, a participant in an Amherst College expedition that came to Hokkaido to view a solar eclipse (Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 288).”

To create salmon skin boots required four salmon.¹²⁵ The way they made salmon skin boots is remarkable as is shown in the Figure 6. We are able to observe that the ancient Ainu utilized salmon skin efficiently. Indeed, it is hard to determine how many salmon were used for the salmon skin garment; in other words, several salmon skins were attached together into one piece (Figure 7). Garments made of fish skin, including salmon and trout and animal furs such as sea otter and seal, were made before the emergence of woven fabric made from the fiber of an elm tree.¹²⁶ Salmon skin is generally strong and waterproof, thus it was suitable for making these items for winter when the land was covered by deep snow. In addition, after spawning the salmon were especially suitable since their skins were thicker and lasted longer.¹²⁷ Ainu people knew the best use of the natural resources available to them. Another example, a bear's skin, which is heavy and not suitable for making clothing, was used as a blanket.¹²⁸ According to Kayano Shigeru, if one covers his/her bodies with a bear's skin blanket as a *huton*, it would prevent fleas from biting their skins while they sleep.¹²⁹ This observation reinforces the idea that Ainu people were knowledgeable about the materials they used and that they used them efficiently.

In addition, Ainu peoples' attitude towards nature is another significant aspect of the utilization of natural resources. Ainu people treated natural resources such as fish, plants and animals respectfully. The story "Song Sung by the Owl God '*Konkuwa*,'"

¹²⁵ Kayano Shigeru, *アイヌ:暮らしの民具* [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use](Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005), 28.

¹²⁶ Kichiemon Okamura, *アイヌの衣装* [The Clothes of the Ainu People](Kyoto: Kyoto Shoin, 1993), 76.

¹²⁷ Kayano Shigeru, *アイヌ:暮らしの民具* [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use](Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005), 28.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

suggests that people need to show their appreciation towards animals that they hunt or fish and they need to be respectful to the gods who send them to the *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World) from *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World) (Appendix 2). In this story, the salmon and deer are not considered *kamuy* (or god); however, they are sent by the gods who live in *Kamuy Moshir*. Thus, people need to treat the salmon and deer in a proper manner to show appreciation towards them. In addition, the story stresses that the shortage of food was understood as a result of the mistreatment of humans towards animals. This idea of proper behaviour towards nature is also shown in the natural resource management for the convention of material objects. For instance, the inner bark of the elm trees was often used to make Ainu clothes and basketries. When Ainu were taking the inner bark from the elm tree, they tried to make sure they were not taking too much so that the tree could survive (Figure 9).¹³⁰ This practice of natural resource management can also be found in some First Nations communities on the West Coast of Canada (Figure 10).

¹³⁰ Mari Kodama, "Clothing and Ornamentation," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 314.



Figure 9 (Ainu) Taking Off the Elm Tree Bark



Figure 10 (Haida) Taking off the of Red-Cedar Bark

Source (Fig.9): Mari Kodama, “Clothing and Ornamentation,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 314.

Source (Fig.10): Nancy J. Turner and Sandra Peacock, “Solving the Perennial Paradox: Ethnobotanical Evidence for Plant Resource Management on the Northwest Coast,” in *Keeping it Living: Traditions of Plant Use and Cultivation on the Northwest Coast of North America*, eds. Douglas Deur and Nancy J. Turner, 101-150 (Seattle: University of Washington Press; Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, c2005), 124.

There are many examples of taking off tree bark in First Nations communities on the West Coast.¹³¹ First Nations culture is geographically diverse and thus their cultural practices are also varied. Indigenous people in general tend to be more aware of their close relationship to the land, which has been maintained through their ancestries. In other words, what was given to them is the result of the sustainable practices of their ancestors. Thus, they tried to maintain these natural resources for the benefit of the next generation.

¹³¹ Nancy J. Turner and Sandra Peacock, “Solving the Perennial Paradox: Ethnobotanical Evidence for Plant Resource Management on the Northwest Coast,” in *Keeping it Living: Traditions of Plant Use and Cultivation on the Northwest Coast of North America*, eds. Douglas Deur and Nancy J. Turner, 101-150 (Seattle: University of Washington Press; Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, c2005), 125.

In addition to the management of natural resources, creative skills such as weaving, embroidery, and carving were also significant in traditional Ainu material arts. Weaving is not a simple practice since the process of creating strings out of inner bark takes a lot of energy and time:

(...)The inner bark is then soaked in a hot spring - or for about a week or longer in a slow-moving stream or swamped water - to soften it so that it will be easy to split. Once the bark is divided into several pieces it is taken out of the water and its sliminess is removed by running water; if this slimy layer is not removed thoroughly, the bark cannot be peeled this because the layer will stick to each other when dried. The washed inner bark, which may have as many as nine layers, is dried for four to five days in the sun. Fibers from the inner bark are long and must be split carefully by hand; they are then twisted and tied into a skein.¹³²

The pictures below demonstrate the process of creating cloth out of the inner bark of an elm tree (Figure 11, 12, and 13).



Figure 11 Drying Inner Bark



Figure 12 Weaving

¹³² Mari Kodama, "Clothing and Ornamentation," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 314-316.



Figure 13 The Cloth Made of Inner Bark of Elm Tree

Source (Fig. 11, 12, and 13): Personal photos taken in a district of Nibutani, Hokkaido, 17 July 2009.

The clothes made of the inner bark of the elm tree are called “*attush*” robe¹³³ (Figure 14).

It takes more than two months to make one *attush* robe by pilling the inner bark of the elm tree.¹³⁴



Figure 14 Garments Made from Tree Bark - *Attush* - by Yasuko Uetake in 2008¹³⁵

¹³³ Mari Kodama, “Clothing and Ornamentation,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 317.

¹³⁴ Kayano Shigeru, *アイヌ:暮らしの民具* [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use] (Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005), 10.

Source: Kouji Yamazaki, Katsumi Katou, and Amano Tetsuya, eds. *Teetasinrit Tekrukoci: 先人の手あと: 北大所蔵アイヌ資料-受け継ぐ技-[Senjin no Teato: Hokudai Shozo Ainu Shiryou-Uketsugu Waza-]* (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies; Hokkaido University Museum, 2009), 48-49.

In the figure, we can note the intricate stitches on the cloth. Weaving and stitching were mainly the role of women, although the management of materials was secured by both men and women.¹³⁶ Knowledge of embroidery patterns was maintained and transmitted by Ainu women¹³⁷:

For the Ainu the design and ornamentation of clothing are not simply for beauty and enjoyment. The importance of traditional patterns can be seen in the fact that young Ainu girls played by drawing patterns in the sand and in the ashes of the hearth; this gave them training for making clothes and patterns when they grew older. The patterns and designs have been passed down along maternal lines for generations, from grandmothers to mothers, from mothers to daughters.¹³⁸

The methods that were used were embroidery and appliqué. Following are some examples of traditional Ainu designs (Figure 15).¹³⁹

¹³⁵ This is a copy of the original, which was collected from Hidaka region and now is stored in the Field Science Center for Northern Biosphere, Hokkaido University.

¹³⁶ Nobuko Tsuda, “A Personal Rebirth through Traditional Ainu Basketry,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 309-312 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 311.

¹³⁷ Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture](Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 89.

¹³⁸ Mari Kodama, “Clothing and Ornamentation,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 320.

¹³⁹ Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture](Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 89-90.

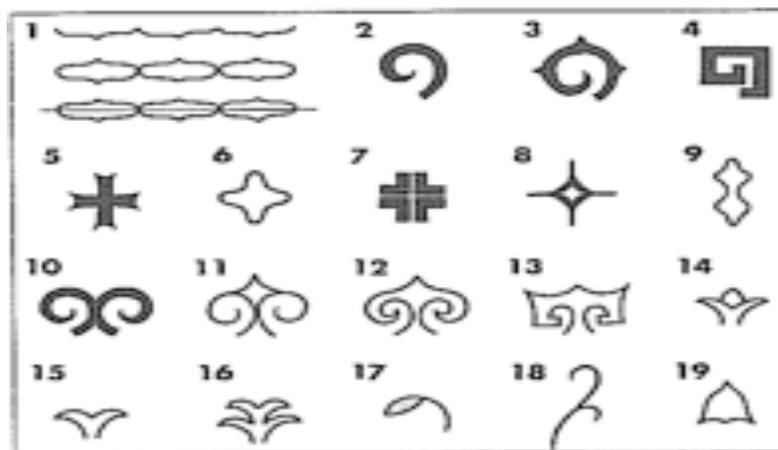


Figure 15 Traditional Ainu Designs

Source: Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 90.

According to Kodama Mari, nineteen traditional patterns were found.¹⁴⁰ Kodama states that although numerous scholars have discussed the meaning of each design, according to an elderly Ainu woman there is no special hidden meaning behind these designs, but they were made to demonstrate their appreciation for *kamuy*.¹⁴¹ There is also a regional variation in the designs; however, among them the most popular ones are called *ayus* (indicated as 1) and *morew* (indicated as 2, 3 and 4) as shown in this Figure 15.¹⁴²

In the early Edo Period (or Tokugawa Period) (1603-1868), cotton fabric was introduced to Ainu societies through trade with the Japanese. In the beginning, they were used for appliqué on *attush*. In the mid-Tokugawa Period, there was an increase of cotton cloth accessible to Ainu and they started to use it for embroideries.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Mari Kodama, "Clothing and Ornamentation," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 320.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁴² Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 89-90.

¹⁴³ Kichiemon Okamura, *アイヌの衣装* [The Clothes of the Ainu People] (Kyoto: Kyoto Shoin, 1993), 20.

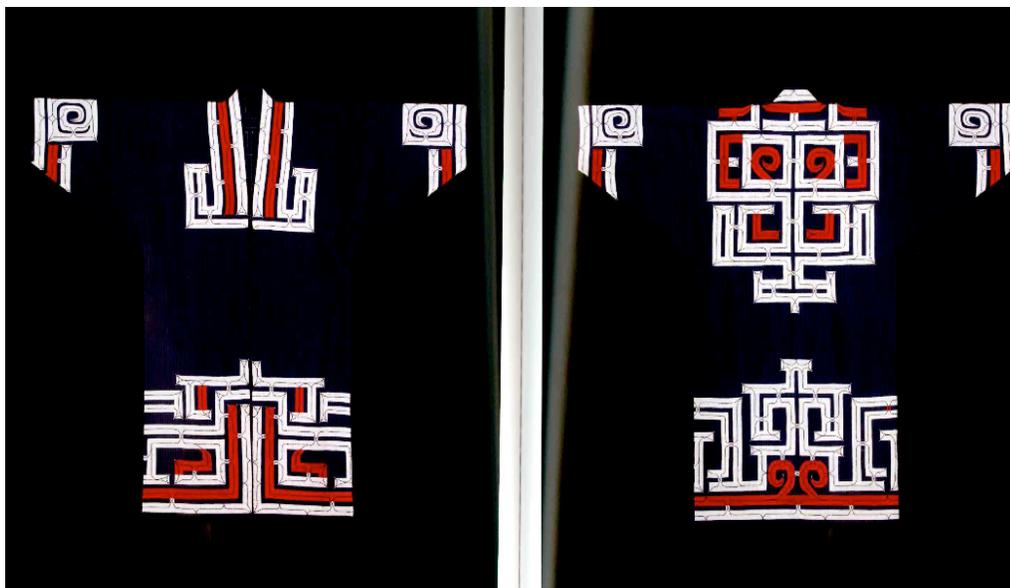


Figure 16 Cotton Garment –*runpe*: ceremonial garments– by Eiko Ota in 2008

Source: Kouji Yamazaki, Katsumi Katou, and Amano Tetsuya, eds. *Teetasinrit Tekrukoci: 先人の手あと: 北大所蔵アイヌ資料-受け継ぐ技-[Senjin no Teato: Hokudai Shozo Ainu Shiryou-Uketsugu Waza-]* (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies; Hokkaido University Museum, 2009), 52-53.¹⁴⁴

Four patterns in traditional Ainu cotton garments were: *chikarkarpe*, *runpe*, *kaparimip* and *chijiri*.¹⁴⁵ These are some of the prominent styles used by the Hokkaido Ainu. Figure 16 illustrates *runpe* which was worn at ceremonial activities.¹⁴⁶

Ruunpe (or *runpe*) are of several types:

the appliqué may be made only from narrow pieces of cloth, or, as in Shiraoui, made with patterns cut out of twelve-inch-wide (thirty centimetres) pieces of muslin, silk, or calico, with remnants applied to

¹⁴⁴ This is a copy of the original. Although the place it was made is unknown, it is dated from more than 100 years ago (Kouji Yamazaki, Katsumi Katou, and Amano Tetsuya, eds. *Teetasinrit Tekrukoci: 先人の手あと: 北大所蔵アイヌ資料-受け継ぐ技-[Senjin no Teato: Hokudai Shozo Ainu Shiryou-Uketsugu Waza-]* (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies; Hokkaido University Museum, 2009), 54). The original is collected in the Field Science Center for Northern Biosphere, Hokkaido University.

¹⁴⁵ Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識 [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture]* (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 86-89.

¹⁴⁶ Kouji Yamazaki, Katsumi Katou, and Amano Tetsuya, eds. *Teetasinrit Tekrukoci: 先人の手あと: 北大所蔵アイヌ資料-受け継ぐ技-[Senjin no Teato: Hokudai Shozo Ainu Shiryou-Uketsugu Waza-]* (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies; Hokkaido University Museum, 2009), 54.

the upper back part of the garment. Many of these remnants are red, but other colors are also used. One of the characteristics of some *ruunpe* [or *runpe*] is a contrasting color thread that is placed alongside the appliqué, and this thread and the appliqué are cord-stitched together.¹⁴⁷

Cotton fabric is lighter and warmer and its popularity spread to Ainu societies rapidly.

Thereby, Ainu women became more engaged in creating the cotton garments with

elaborative designs such as the one shown in Figure 16.¹⁴⁸¹⁴⁹ It was common practice for

Ainu women to keep their traditional designs and maintain embroidery skills. Whereas,

Ainu men engaged in wood carving and these designs were transmitted from father to

son.¹⁵⁰ In order to be considered a mature, independent male in Ainu society, it was

necessary for men to possess skills in carving. One of the tools that was made by Ainu

men was called *makiri*, a small sword. Indeed, *makiri* in traditional Ainu societies was

used in various ways; it was used as a chisel, a knife to cut meats, scissors to cut or

separate the clothes.¹⁵¹ Because of its necessity, “When he had mastered the skills needed

to use the *makiri*, a man was considered to be an independent carver as well as an adult in

the community.”¹⁵² If the man found someone he wanted to marry, he made *menoko*

makiri (*menoko*: women, *makiri*: a small sword) (the *makiri* was used by women in

particular) and he proposed to her.

¹⁴⁷ Mari Kodama, “Clothing and Ornamentation,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 318.

¹⁴⁸ Kayano Shigeru, *アイヌ:暮らしの民具* [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use] (Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005), 10.; Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 86.

¹⁴⁹ It is difficult to determine the regions where each garment was made by examining the styles and collaboration of embroidery designs. It is partly because the traditional designs were sometimes traveled among the communities in different regions by marriage. If a woman married to a man living in different region, the design that she brought from her material lines.

¹⁵⁰ Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化の基礎知識* [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 89.

¹⁵¹ Toshikazu Sasaki, *アイヌの文化誌ノート* [Ainu Cultural Descriptions Note] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2001), 117.

¹⁵² Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 295.

As mentioned previously, traditional material arts often follow cultural rules. I would like to explore ‘cultural rules’ and its relation to the Ainu spiritual belief systems. Among the Ainu traditional material arts, the motifs of animals were rarely found. This is because utilizing animal motifs was prohibited in ancient Ainu societies by their traditional belief systems. In Ainu spiritual belief systems, the gods live in human form in *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World), which is believed to be located above *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World). When the gods come down to visit *Ainu Moshir*, they wear armor of animals and their spirits literally sit between the ears of the animals such as owls and bears. In Ainu culture, incorporating wild animal motifs with their material arts was prohibited because people believed that these representations would trap the spirits of the gods in the objects. To avoid such a disrespectful attitude, they banned the utilization of wild animal designs.

All of the elder Ainu women I interviewed stated that they would never incorporate designs of wild animals into their garments because they adored, worshipped, and respected animals and their spirits as *kamuy*. They expressed much fear that the spirits would become angry if they were ‘trapped’ in the design or in any other mode of artistic expression,; this taboo also extended to humans represented in art.¹⁵³

Ainu people were afraid of being disrespectful to the gods by trapping their spirits and Chisato O. Dubreuil also states: “Another interesting theory holds that because the Ainu greatly respected and revered all of nature—not just animals, but such inanimate elements as thunder, wind, rain, or snow as well—the creative, personalized designs were also revered.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 292.

¹⁵⁴ Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 292.

In Ainu traditional material arts, the designs of wild animals can rarely be found in either their carvings or garments, except for certain arts which were used in rituals and ceremonies, such as *ikupasuy* (or *ikupasui*) (a prayer's stick) and *sapaunpe* (a ceremonial headdress). On these objects, we can find small carvings of wild animals attached to them. *Ikupasuy* is about 30 centimetres long and there are variety of styles and designs. “Normally twelve to sixteen inches (thirty to forty centimetres) long and two to four inches (five to ten centimetres) wide, it usually has rounded edges and is tapered at one end. They were made from yew, willow, or spindle trees and were carved in a somewhat flattened shape.”¹⁵⁵ From the Edo Period (1603-1868), *ikupasuy* was called *higebera* (ひげべら) by the Japanese which means “beard stick” because they mistakenly thought that Ainu men use this stick to hold their beards while drinking sake (Figure 17).¹⁵⁶

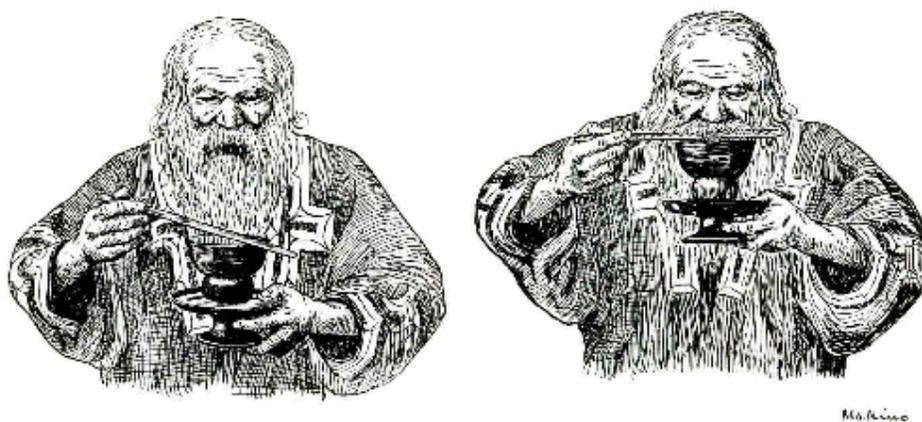


Figure 17 Illustration of a Man Using *Ikupasuy*

Source: Fosco Maraini, *Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu / アイヌのイクパスイ* [Ainu *Ikupasuy*](Hokkaido: Ainu Museum, 1994), 12.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹⁵⁶ Gyou Synya, *ユーカーの世界-アイヌ復権の原点-* [World of Yukar: Revitalization of Ainu](Tokyo: Kadokawashoten, 1974), 58.

Japanese people rarely recognized the significance of *ikupasuy* to the Ainu, or the roles it played in prayer. *Ikupasuy* is actually a prayer stick, which is probably one of the best-known Ainu material arts today. *Iku* means to drink sake and *pasui* or *pasuy* means chopsticks and it is used when people offer sake to the gods or ancestors.¹⁵⁷



Figure 18 Prayer

Source: Post card sold between 1989-1994 (Private Collection).

An Ainu man dips his *ikupasuy* into sake and sprinkles some drops of sake on the furnace or altar (Figure 18). People believe one drop of sake offered to the gods would be one cast in *Kamuy Moshir*.¹⁵⁸ In addition, as Kayano Shigeru suggests that *ikupasuy* also

¹⁵⁷ Suzuko Tamura, *アイヌ語辞典: 沙流方言* [Ainu Dictionary: Saru Liver Dialect] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 1996), 227.

¹⁵⁸ Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化入門* [Introduction to Ainu Culture], under “イクパスイ,” <http://www.ainumuseum.or.jp/nyumon/gireigu/ikupasuy.html>.

plays the role as a medium to convey peoples' wishes to the gods. Thus, he wrote that the role of *ikupasuy* is like a cell phone in contemporary society.¹⁵⁹

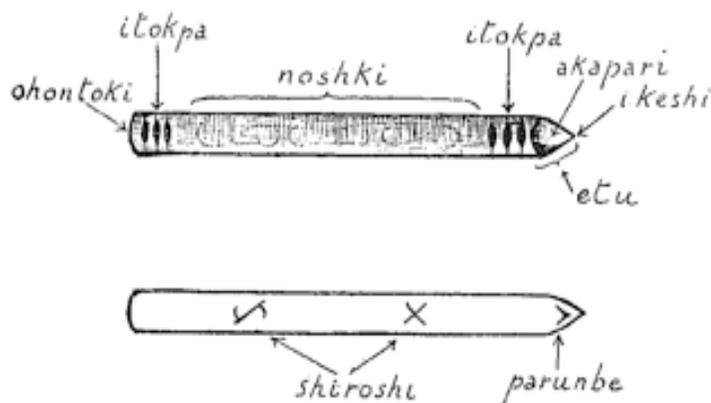
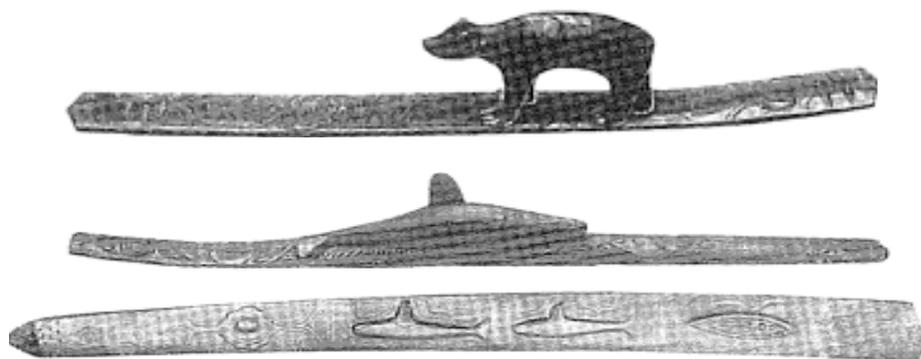


Figure 19 *Ikupasuy*

Source: Fosco Maraini, *Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu / アイヌのイクパスイ* [Ainu *Ikupasuy*] (Hokkaido: Ainu Museum, 1994), 25.

Because of its role as messenger to the gods, some *ikupasuy* have a carving called *parunbe* meaning ‘tongue’ (Figure 19).¹⁶⁰ *Ikupasuy* was used at rituals such as the animal sending ceremonies and also for the private purpose of prayer in daily life. There are many *ikupasuy*, which have been found in various regions in Hokkaido, and some of them have the animal motifs as shown in Figure 20.



¹⁵⁹ Kayano Shigeru, *アイヌ:暮らしの民具* [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use] (Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005), 48.

¹⁶⁰ Ainu Museum. *アイヌ文化入門* [Introduction to Ainu Culture], under “イクパスイ,” <http://www.ainumuseum.or.jp/nyumon/gireigu/ikupasuy.html>.



Figure 20 Some Examples of *Ikupasuy* with Animal Motifs

Source: Fosco Maraini, *Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu / アイヌのイクパスイ* [Ainu Ikupasuy] (Hokkaido: Ainu Museum, 1994), 54&57.¹⁶¹

The carving with the small wooden carved bear, known as *Kiren-kamuy*, or the God of Mountain, has the completed body. It is uncertain how the man who created this *ikupasuy* attached the bear carving. Although it is abstract, the bear seems to move his feet forward. The lower three all depict a killer whale, which is known as *Repun-kamuy* meaning the God of Sea. Similar to the bear, they are not presented in great detail, but rather they are carved in an abstract form. The upper two *ikupasuy* used a similar technique. Both have the carving done in three-dimensional form and are attached to the body part of *ikupasuy*. The lower two *ikupasuy* with the representation of the killer whales were done in an opposite manner: the second from the bottom carved an image whereas the one in the bottom was carved in relief. We are able to observe the sophisticated craftsmanship of the ancient Ainu men.

Not all *ikupasuy* have animal motifs as shown in Figure 20. Unfortunately, today it is difficult to determine why some *ikupasuy* have animal motifs while others do not. I would assume it might depend on individual creativity, or they might relate to the animal sending ceremonies or might be used when they specifically pray for these animal gods.

The Owl God was often respected as the highest ranked *kamuy* in the region where

¹⁶¹ In the book, *Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu* (アイヌのイクパスイ), Fosco Maraini analyzes approximately 1000 *ikupasuy*. Among these, 585 *ikupasuy* belong to the collection of Suelo Sugiyama (杉山寿栄男) from his book *Higebera* (ひげべら) (1934). Others are: Sapporo Museum (168), Sapporo Takushoku Kan (101), Maraini's private collection (115), a collection of Sakuzaemon Kodama (児玉作左衛門), and others (102) - () indicates the numbers. Above four *ikupasuy* all belong to the Sugiyama's collection from the book *Higebera*. Since Maraini does not mention the date and time, I was not able to figure out where they were from and when they were made.

people engaged in river fishing. People who relied on ocean fishing, on the other hand, tended to admire the Killer Whale God, who was believed to be the God of Sea, and considered him as the highest ranked *kamuy*. Thus, it is possible to say that the lower three *ikupasuy* which have the motifs of killer whales were made in the regions where people engaged in ocean fishing and prayed to the Killer Whale God. However, there is no evidence for these hypotheses, thus we are unable to comprehend the reasons.

In addition to *ikupasuy*, a ceremonial headdress known as *sapaunpe* (*sapa*: head, *un*: to get in and *pe*: thing) also has wooden carved animal motifs attached to its front (Figure 21). A small carving of bears is attached in front.



Figure 21 *Sapaunpe*

Source: Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 295.

Examples of animal motifs used for *sapaunpe* were bears (indicated as 3,5-9,11,12), foxes (indicated as 10), eagles (indicated as 1), snakes with two heads (indicated as 4) and sunfish (indicated as 2) (Figure 22).¹⁶²

¹⁶² Suelo Sugiyama, *北の工芸* [Crafts of North] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 1934), 104.

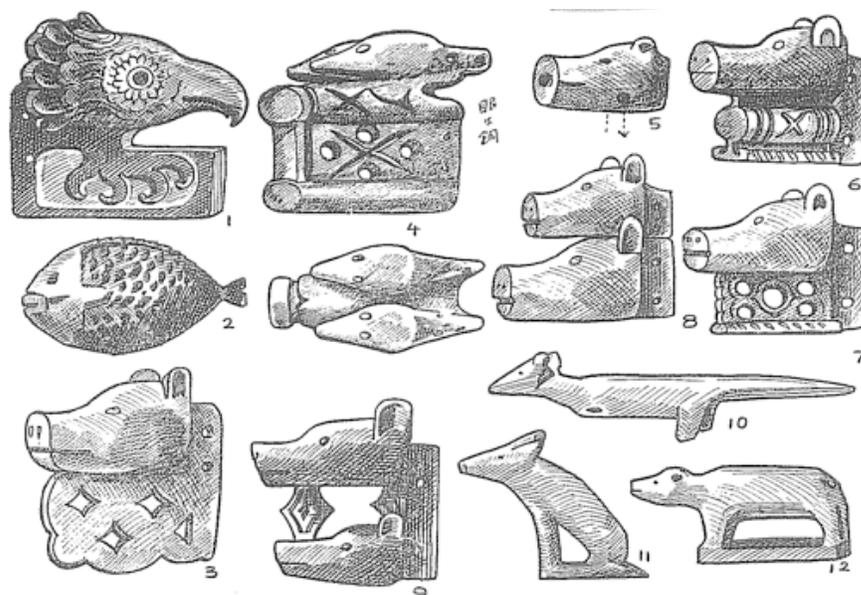


Figure 22 Representations of Animals Attached to *Sapaunpe*

Source: Sueo Sugiyama, *北の工芸* [Crafts of North] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 1934), 104.

Kayano Shigeru mentioned three major Ainu traditional ritual activities where the men wore *sapaunpe*: weddings, celebrations for a new home and *iyomante* (animal spirit-sending ceremonies).¹⁶³ For example, Figure 21 shows a small carving of a bear's head attached in front of the headdress. According to Kayano, he suggests that the bear sometimes struggled and fought back during the bear sending ceremony, so the ancient Ainu tried to calm the heart of bears by having a small carving of the bear attached in the front of the head.¹⁶⁴ I think this might have an association to a costume dance play during the animal sending ceremony which I discussed in Chapter 2. At the spirit-sending ceremonies, the shamans disguised themselves such as bears or owls and explained this

¹⁶³ Kayano Shigeru, *アイヌ:暮らしの民具* [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use] (Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005), 19.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

event from their god's point of view through the actions followed by the words in the play.

Similarly, there must be a reason for having a small bear in front of the headdress that helps the bears to calm down. It might suggest that the *sapaunpe* might play a role as an inter-medium between the world of humans and the world of gods. Many men wore the *sapaunpe* at the *iyomante* and it might have implied that they were ambassadors between the two worlds, *Ainu Moshir* and *Kamuy Moshir*, who helped bring back the spirit of the bear to his home land—*Kamuy Moshir*. Thus, the bear would be calm when he saw a little bear carving on their heads and knew that they were not strangers, but were actually guiding him back to his homeland. Again, the connection to the costume dance play is only my personal observation. Although I was not able to find the images of *sapaunpe* with the motifs of foxes, eagles, snakes and sunfish, these were also found in other regions.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, in addition to the bears and owls, there was also a fox spirit-sending ceremony. Thus, the *sapaunpe* with the object of fox might be used at the spirit-sending ceremony. For other animal motifs such as eagles, snakes and sunfish, it is ambiguous if the Ainu hold the spirit-sending ceremony for these animals. Thus, they might be used at different occasions such as weddings and celebrations for a new home as Kayano Shigeru mentioned as the occasions where the men wore *sapaunpe*.

The development of Ainu traditional material arts demonstrates the peoples' close relationship to nature. The variety of ways of utilizing natural resources allows us to have a glimpse of the livelihoods of ancient Ainu. People engaged in fishing, hunting and gathering and through these activities the utilization of various natural resources

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

emerged: not only for the purpose of their diets, but also for creating the items for daily and ritual/ceremonial uses. Ainu are people who believe that all natural resources (fish, animals, and plants) are gifts from the gods and based on this belief people treated natural resources respectfully. The development of material arts also helped develop creative skills and techniques. As an example of the designs for their garments and carvings, Ainu females and males passed down various designs/patterns from generation to generation. In Ainu traditional designs, we are able to find an example of a significant cultural rule based on their spiritual belief systems.

As discussed, animal motifs are rarely found in Ainu traditional material arts except certain objects used for ritual and ceremonial purposes: *ikupasuy* and *sapaunpe*. People believed if they use the animal motifs, they would trap the spirits of the animal gods in the object. Thereby, in order to be respectful to the gods, use of animal representation was traditionally prohibited in ancient Ainu societies. Two items that I discussed, *ikupasuy* and *sapaunpe*, were used at rituals and ceremonies. In both cases, they take a role as a medium that somehow connects people to *Kamuy Moshir* spiritually. I will argue that because these objects work as a medium between the two worlds, *Ainu Moshir* and *Kamuy Moshir*, they might allow the animal representations. For instance, *ikupasuy* has a role to bring the *sake* and a message from humans to the gods. *Sapaunpe*, according to Kayano Shigeru, works as a tool to make the animals calm down. This item could be a communication device between humans and animal gods. Thereby, in some senses, these two objects with animal motifs travel spiritually between the boundary between humans in *Ainu Moshir* and gods in *Kamuy Moshir*.

Ainu Tourism Arts

All through the traditional period—which begins, according to earliest known artistic evidence, around the thirteenth century and includes the transitional years inaugurated with the Meiji Restoration of the 1860s to after the turn of the century—the creative process in its entirety was governed by fundamental cultural rules.¹⁶⁶

However, I will argue that if the use of animal representation will take into account their traditional cultural rules, we have to conclude that the year after the Meiji Restoration (1867), it was difficult for the Ainu to maintain these traditional rules. For instance, Ainu peoples' livelihoods changed drastically; they became less dependent on fishing and hunting and the Japanese government prohibited some of the traditional Ainu cultures. Ironically, Ainu peoples' separation from their traditions opened a new era for the Ainu material arts. A great example is the emergence of a carved wooden bear which was originally made by Japanese farmers and later spread to Ainu communities. Then, there was an emergence of carved wooden Ainu dolls. These objects were made as a result of government control over the Ainu and stimulated by the boom of tourism promoted by the government. Opposite to their cultural rules based on traditional spiritual beliefs, the use of animal representations became a popular practice for the Ainu from the Meiji era onward.

In 1869, the government renamed the island of Ezo to Hokkaido and the Colonization Commission was established.¹⁶⁷ In order to assimilate Ainu into Japanese

¹⁶⁶ Chisato O. Dubreuil, "Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 287.

¹⁶⁷ Interaction between Ainu and Japanese were started earlier to the Meiji era as discussed in Chapter 1. Ainu people were exploited as a labor force by the Japanese at the salmon fisheries, which is recorded

societies, their traditional cultures were prohibited. Ainu customs such as: “burning a family’s house and moving elsewhere after the death of a family member¹⁶⁸; women’s tattoos; men’s earrings” were banned.¹⁶⁹ In addition, the Meiji government made some restrictions on Ainu traditional hunting and fishing: the use of fishing nets on some rivers and traps, and poison arrows for hunting, were banned.¹⁷⁰ The Japanese government thought of Hokkaido as the land “without owner”.¹⁷¹ The land was re-distributed to *Wajin* (or Japanese) and Ainu. Ainu people were encouraged to engage in agriculture; however, the land distributed to Ainu was often in poor condition and when the Meiji government promoted tourism in the 1920s in Hokkaido, they began to create art for retail to sustain their livelihood.

Expanded Japanese controls usurped Ainu hunting and fishing rights and ended economic security based on traditional resources. Income and prestige were transferred to jobs introduced by the Japanese in areas of industry, farming, and transportation. In response to ensuing occupational marginality and economic insecurity, the Ainu have capitalized on carving skills and resources to provide economic alternatives. Tourist art is of increasing importance to the welfare of the Ainu. Souvenir demand initiated wood and stone carving and introduced a new economic potential based on the production of ‘typical’ Ainu items. Tourist-related activity has created new sources of employment, economic networks, and sociopolitical roles within the Ainu community. Tourism, however, is based upon the ability of the Ainu to satisfy buyer preferences, thus promoting but another kind of

on the *Ainu-e* (or Ainu-print) that is a depiction of Ainu and their lives by the Japanese artists and became popular during Edo period (1600-1867). However, the Meiji Restoration is understood as the time of the Japanese official control over the island of Ezo (Kenji Namikawa, *アイヌ民族の軌跡* [Tracks of Ainu] (Tokyo: Yamakawa Publisher, 2004), 85.).

¹⁶⁸ It is a part of Ainu housing sending ceremony where people burned the house after the owner of the house deceased (Kenji Namikawa, *アイヌ民族の軌跡* [Tracks of Ainu](Tokyo: Yamakawa Publisher, 2004), 87).

¹⁶⁹ Kenji Namikawa, *アイヌ民族の軌跡* [Tracks of Ainu](Tokyo: Yamakawa Publisher, 2004), 87.; The Ainu Association of Hokkaido, *Brochure on the Ainu People*, under “Where, since when and how have the Ainu People existed?,” <http://www.ainuassn.or.jp/english/eabout01.html>.

¹⁷⁰ Kenji Namikawa, 88.

¹⁷¹ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Tourism, Assimilation, and Ainu Survival Today,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 92-95 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 92.

economic dependency even as it increases the range of available economic choices.¹⁷²

As a steady market of Ainu tourism art, Ainu people gradually gathered and established the Ainu *kotan* (*kotan* meaning a village in the Ainu language) as a permanent tourist area.¹⁷³ In Akan and other areas in Hokkaido, not only Ainu, but also Japanese gathered in the Ainu *kotan* where they owned souvenir stores and sold products to the tourists.

Although *kotan* primarily means a village in the Ainu language, today these areas represent tourist centres for Ainu culture.

After the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-05—when Japan solidified its national boundaries to include Hokkaido—the Hokkaido tourist industry began to develop rapidly. Railroad companies from Osaka and Nagoya sent groups of tourists to Hokkaido to view the “primitive” manners and customs of various Ainu groups in their natural “wild and untamed” setting, which were as exotic and fascinating to southern Japanese as western North America and its native peoples were to Easterners and Europeans in the late nineteenth century.¹⁷⁴

The production of wooden bear carvings, which later became a popular souvenir in Hokkaido, began when the Japanese government promoted tourism in Hokkaido in the early 1920s. From 1921 to 1922, Tokugawa Yoshichika (徳川義親) (1886-1976), the 19th head of the Owari branch of the Tokugawa clan and the owner of the Tokugawa farm in Yakumo located in Futami District, Oshima, Hokkaido, travelled to Europe and brought home wooden bear carvings from Switzerland. Although I was not able to find an image of the bear that he brought back, Ohtsuka Kazuyoshi describes this bear as follows:

¹⁷² Setha M. Low, “Contemporary Ainu Wood and Stone Carving,” in *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World*, eds. Nelson H.J. Graburn, 211-225 (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1976), 224.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

This bear was highly realistic, with its fur carved in great detail. The pose made it look as if it was moving forward on all fours (“crawling bear”—the type that has become the most popular today). The one Yoshichika bought in Switzerland was 6.2 cm in height and light brown in color. The inside of the mouth and tip of the nose were red and black, respectively, and two black glass beads were imbedded in the wood as eyes.¹⁷⁵

It is said that when Tokugawa Yoshichika saw these wooden bears made by the Swiss farmers he thought of farmers back in his country who lived in poor conditions and he saw the potential for income during winter. In 1923, he suggested to the Japanese settlers working at his farm to carve wooden bears and use the Swedish wooden bear as a model.¹⁷⁶ He intended to do this business during winter as a source of revenue for the farmers. He also encouraged other farms in the same region to produce the bears and told them that he would purchase these carvings from them.

In 1924, on behalf of the will of Tokugawa Yoshichika who wished to improve farmers’ living conditions, the Tokugawa farm held the First Farming Village Artwork Competition which took place at Yakumo Elementary School for five days.¹⁷⁷ Among the entries, there was one carving made by a dairy farmer, Ito Masao (伊藤政雄) (1884-1936) that followed a Swedish wooden bear as a model. Although I could not find a picture of his work, it was 9.5 cm long, 3.6cm wide and 6.3 cm high. This wooden bear made by Ito is considered as the first record of a bear carving that is known today as a

¹⁷⁵ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Ainu Handicraft: Tracing Its History,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ-ものづくりと心-* [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003), 139-140).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*; “八雲の木彫熊 [Wooden Carved Bear in Yakumo],” Hokkaido: Yakumo-cho Kyodo Shiryokan, <http://www.yappe.net/yakumo/kuma/index.htm#rekisi> (accessed January 18, 2011).

popular souvenir in Hokkaido.¹⁷⁸ Tokugawa Yoshichika saw the works by Ito and had a feeling of the potential success of the production of wooden bears. In 1927, the work by Ito won first prize at the big competition in Hokkaido held by Akita Prefecture and people who lived in Yakumo gradually started to have confidence in the production of wooden bears and began to promote it.



Figure 23 Picture of People Carving Bears (Ito in centre)

Source: “八雲の木彫熊 [Wooden Carved Bear in Yakumo],” Hokkaido: Yakumo-cho Kyodo Shiryokan, <http://www.yappe.net/yakumo/kuma/index.htm#rekisi> (accessed January 18, 2011).

In the picture, Ito Masao, standing in the centre, offered an art lecture for carving wooden bears at the Tokugawa Farm (Figure 23). A Japanese painter, Tokura Kaneyuki (十倉兼行)(1883-1943), also joined this seminar as a lecturer. In addition, the establishment of

¹⁷⁸ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Ainu Handicraft: Tracing Its History,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ-ものづくりと心-* [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003), 140.

the Yakumo Farmers Art Study Group in 1928 enhanced the quality of the carved wooden bears.¹⁷⁹ In order to exhibit their works in a competition, or for sale, the members must pass the screening process by the Group.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, to enhance the realistic sense in the works, the Tokugawa farm had two bears for the carvers to learn about their postures.

Although today the carved wooden bear is considered part of Ainu culture, in the beginning it was made by the Japanese settlers working on farms and no record of a significant connection between the Ainu and the carved wooden bear has been found. In addition, Ohtsuka Kazuyoshi wrote: “In Yakumo, woodcarving was initially encouraged as a side job for farmers during the agricultural off-season. For this reason, although a large number of Ainu lived around Yakumo at that time, woodcarvings never connect the Ainu and the Japanese.”¹⁸¹ It is difficult to determine if Ainu were engaged in the production of wooden bear carvings in Yakumo and, if so, how they were made. Later on the fixed idea on the wooden bear carvings linked with Ainu became apparent after the wooden carved bear from Yakumo traveled to Asahikawa in the Showa era (1926-1989).¹⁸²

In Chikabumi, Asahikawa, under the control of the Japanese, Ainu produced various items for sale before the Showa era (1926-1989):

In 1917, in an effort to control profits for the Japanese, Asahikawa City enacted a policy that forced the Ainu to sell their products to the city, which then controlled the distribution and sale of their work. The city secured raw materials through the local forest office and sold them at

¹⁷⁹ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Ainu Handicraft: Tracing Its History,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ-ものづくりと心-* [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003), 140.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

cost to the Ainu. The city also invited an instructor, Kosei Saito (1894-1966), from the Tokyo Art School to teach the Ainu to use chisels and Japanese methods of woodcarving—even though the Ainu had been extremely proficient and creative artists for hundreds of years.¹⁸³

Matsui Umetaro (松井梅太郎) (1901-1949) was one of the Ainu who studied under Saito from 1930 to 1931.¹⁸⁴ He became well-known for the bear carvings. It is believed that Matsui's work was the first wooden carved bear done by the Ainu. Later on, many young people came together to learn from Matsui.

The bear-carving skills of the Ainu progressed rapidly, however, and by the early 1920s Umetaro Matsui (1901-1949), from the Chikabumi *kotan*, (Ainu settlement) emerged as a celebrated bear carver. Matsui's bears capture the animal's awesome power and showed it as a formidable foe in the wild; it's obvious that he observed bears in nature.¹⁸⁵

An example of his works is shown in Figure 25. Compared to the earliest bear, which was called “pig bear” or “alligator bear” (1920s) because of its abstract detail, the work by Matsui is outstanding (Figure 24 and 25).¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Chisato. O. Dubreuil, *From the Playground of the Gods: the Life and Art of Bikky Sunazawa* (Washington, D.C.: Arctic Studies Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution; Honolulu: Distributed by University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 18.

¹⁸⁴ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Ainu Handicraft: Tracing Its History,” in *アイヌからのメッセージものづくりと心* [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003), 140.

¹⁸⁵ Chisato. O. Dubreuil, *From the Playground of the Gods: the Life and Art of Bikky Sunazawa* (Washington, D.C.: Arctic Studies Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution; Honolulu: Distributed by University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 39.

¹⁸⁶ Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 337.



Figure 24 Pig Bear or Alligator Bear Figure 25 Wooden Carved Bear by Matsui Umetaro

Source (Fig.24&25): Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington:University of Washington Press, 1999), 337.

Matsui’s work has a great sense of reality and is full of life and energy. Indeed, Matsui was chosen to create a bear carving for Emperor Hirohito (昭和天皇)(1901-1989) in 1938. Then, the market of wooden bear carvings gradually increased production in Chikabumi.¹⁸⁷

Despite that the number of Japanese carvers engaged in the production of the carved wooden bear was greater than the number of Ainu carvers, the bear has been received as a representation of ‘Ainu’ culture. There is no doubt that the popularity of the works by Matsui Umetaro was one of the reasons for building a connection between Ainu and the bears. In addition, the development of transportation would be another reason.

Ohtsuka Kazuyoshi explains:

The exhibition of Ainu manners and customs in expositions designed to promote industry, which were held beginning in the Meiji period in such cities as Tokyo and Osaka, made the public more aware of the relationship between Ainu and bears. At the same time, news of bear attacks began to appear more frequently in the newspapers as industrial deforestation displaced bears from their former forest habitat; in one tragic incident an entire family of farmers was killed, adding terror and

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 338.

mystique to the primeval image of the untamed northern territory. The establishment of nationwide transportation systems including roads, rail lines, and ferries between Honshu [a mainland of Japan] and Hokkaido made it possible for southerners to visit Hokkaido in large numbers for recreation as well as for business.¹⁸⁸

Exhibition would be one of the reasons. In addition, the establishment of a steady transportation system in Hokkaido also raised public awareness about the wilderness of Hokkaido and the people who lived there. Furthermore, Ohtsuka also explains another factor:

Around 1935, Ainu from Asahikawa and other areas began visiting tourist sites to demonstrate how to carve wooden bears. This strengthened the connection between carved wooden bears and the Ainu people. This connection seems to have developed into an established concept after the war, particularly around 1950s (...) it was the Ainu donned in distinctive ethnic costumes who demonstrated how to carve bears in front of souvenir stores at tourist sites and at products fairs held frequently throughout Japan. For this reason, the image of Ainu carving bears seems to have become etched in people's minds.¹⁸⁹

Perhaps the post card such as the one shown below is also another factor that represents the carved wooden bear as part of Ainu culture (Figure 26). These post cards emerged in the late Meiji era around 1912 and introduced the Ainu culture as a commercial aspect.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, "Tourism, Assimilation, and Ainu Survival Today," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 92-95 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 93.

¹⁸⁹ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, "Ainu Handicraft: Tracing Its History," in *アイヌからのメッセージ-ものづくりと心-* [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003), 141.

¹⁹⁰ Reiko Saito, "アイヌ工芸の過去と現在: 200年のメッセージ," in *アイヌからのメッセージ2007-現在(いま)から未来(あす)へ-* [Message from the Ainu: Now to Future]. (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2007), 92.

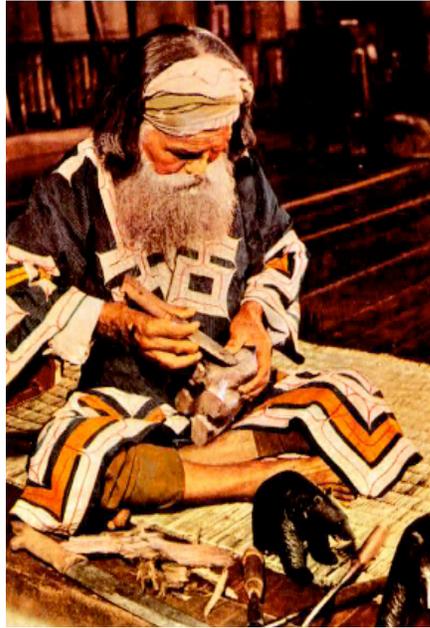


Figure 26 Men Carving a Wooden Bear

Source: Post card sold between 1989-1994 (Private Collection).

Asahikawa gradually became a centre for the production and marketing of ‘Ainu’ carved wooden bears. As mentioned earlier, Ainu were forced to engage in agriculture; however, the lands that were given to them were often in poor condition. Thus, the production of wooden bear carvings for tourists was a necessary practice for Ainu to sustain their lives.¹⁹¹ Japanese control over the marketing of the Ainu tourism arts built a steady marketing system:

In 1938, the Association of Ainu Folk Art was founded in Asahikawa by Japanese producers and dealers. Kensei Kato became honorary chairman of the association with the endorsement of the other members.

¹⁹¹ Tetsuo Iino, フクロウの文化誌-イメージの変貌- [Cultural Description of Owls: ransfiguration of the Images] (Tokyo: Chuoukouronsha, 1991), 24.; Yasushi Asakawa, 砂澤ビッキ-風に聴く [Sunazawa Bikky: Listen to the Wind] (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shinbunshya, 1996), 68.; “八雲の木彫熊 [Wooden Carved Bear in Yakumo],” Hokkaido: Yakumo-cho Kyodo Shiryokan, <http://www.yappe.net/yakumo/kuma/index.htm#rekisi> (accessed January 18, 2011).

Concurrently, a dealer union was also founded to expand the sales routes. As a result, the Asahikawa Ainu were forced to play an integral role in the major Japanese distribution mechanism and also to assume the role of being the symbol of commodities produced there.¹⁹²

Although during World War II the production of carved bears gradually faded in Asahikawa, soon after the end of the war in November 1945, as a result of a request from the commander of the United States Armed Forces stationed in Japan, the Asahikawa Association of Folk Art started the production of the carved wooden bear. Under the guidance of the designers from the U.S. Forces, the items including forks, spoons, bookends, magazine racks with bears and Ainu traditional designs became popular and received a good reputation.¹⁹³ The Asahikawa region achieved remarkable rehabilitation in postwar Japan and it became a centre for both the production and sale of Ainu tourist arts. It also influenced the marketing in Shiraoi, Akan and Nibutani where later on they began to produce the carved wooden bears.¹⁹⁴ Despite being against their traditional cultural system, the production of wooden bear carvings gradually expanded from Asahikawa into a wide range of Ainu communities and tourist centers in Hokkaido.

Between 1955 and 1965, tourism in Hokkaido was promoted by the government as a part of the rehabilitation of postwar Japan.¹⁹⁵ During this time, a large number of carved wooden bears was produced. The production of Ainu dolls, which were also

¹⁹² Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Ainu Handicraft: Tracing Its History,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ-ものづくりと心-* [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003), 140.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁹⁵ Reiko Saito, “アイヌ工芸の過去と現在: 200年のメッセージ,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ2007-現在(いま)から未来(あす)へ-* [Message from the Ainu: Now to Future]. (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2007), 93.

known as *nipopo*, were also produced for a new market and soon became very popular:¹⁹⁶

“In addition to bears, the tourist industry soon began to produce dolls wearing traditional Ainu clothing; these were initially made by Japanese, but the practice was later taken by Ainu craftsmen.”¹⁹⁷ Ainu totem poles were also created for major tourism centers after the end of WWII. However, it was not due to the interaction between Ainu and First Nations on the West Coast indeed, “it was not until the 1970s that direct and continuing exchanges between Ainu and native peoples of the Northwest Coast were initiated.”¹⁹⁸

These poles often had an owl on top which was believed to be a guardian of the village in Ainu spiritual belief systems.¹⁹⁹ In addition, small totem poles were also produced which were sold initially to American soldiers who occupied Hokkaido after WWII.²⁰⁰ The introduction of tourism in Hokkaido brought many changes in Ainu material culture, especially a new form of art—the utilization of human and wild animal motifs.

Tourism Arts to Contemporary Fine Arts

The carved wooden bears, Ainu dolls, and small Ainu totem poles are still popular today as souvenirs. Later, small articles such as accessories with Ainu traditional designs

¹⁹⁶ Reiko Saito, “アイヌ工芸の過去と現在: 200年のメッセージ,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ2007-現在(いま)から未来(あす)へ*—[Message from the Ainu: Now to Future](Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2007), 93.

¹⁹⁷ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Tourism, Assimilation, and Ainu Survival Today,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 92-95 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 93.

¹⁹⁸ Motomichi Kondo and William W. Fitzhugh, “Ainu and Northwest Coast Peoples: A Comparison,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 116-123 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 117.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁰⁰ Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 338.

attracted tourists.²⁰¹ Although a variety of Ainu tourism arts emerged around the time of the tourism boom in Hokkaido, it demanded mass production so it was difficult for an individual to explore personal imagination and creativity.²⁰² In addition, Chisato O. Dubreuil argues that:

While producing tourist art was modestly successful for some Ainu men, the more creative, skilled artists soon grew impatient carving the limited choice of subjects for the tourist market; they wanted to produce art that was respected as art, not as *kogei* (handicraft) or Ainu tourist art. Penetrating the Japanese fine-art market proved very difficult, however, because the discrimination that blocked Ainu participation in other areas of society was perhaps even more rampant in the elitist Japanese art world. Most of Japan's successful artists had been trained prior to World War II by prestigious art schools or were apprenticed to master artists or teachers. Securing such mentors usually required family wealth and influence, which the Ainu lacked.²⁰³

For the Ainu, it was economically and socially difficult to have freedom in self-expression in their works. After the boom of tourism in Hokkaido, the misrepresentation of Ainu in tourism industries was denounced around 1965 to 1975 and more opportunities came for Ainu to explain their culture directly to the public.²⁰⁴ Another factor that opened the door for Ainu fine art was the role of exhibitions and competitions.

For instance, the Ainu Association of Hokkaido began the Hokkaido Ainu *Mingei* (folk art) Competition in 1964.²⁰⁵ In 1983, they established two divisions in the competition: traditional craft art and folk art. In the division of traditional craft art, the

²⁰¹ Reiko Saito, “アイヌ工芸の過去と現在: 200年のメッセージ,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ2007-現在(いま)から未来(あす)へ*-[Message from the Ainu: Now to Future](Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2007), 93.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 338-339.

²⁰⁴ Reiko Saito, “アイヌ工芸の過去と現在: 200年のメッセージ,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ2007-現在(いま)から未来(あす)へ*-[Message from the Ainu: Now to Future](Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2007), 94.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

entries were judged by their elements in tradition, craftsmanship/skills and artistic sense. In the division of folk art, the works were examined by their craftsmanship, artistic sense and marketability.²⁰⁶ In 1996, they declared the artists who won the competition for three times as a “Superior Craft Artist” and started to introduce these artists as well as their art works at the exhibitions. Thirteen Ainu artists were declared as a “Superior Craft Artist” by 2007.²⁰⁷ In addition, The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture also established Ainu Craftworks Competition in 1997 and they also found the private exhibition and group exhibition.²⁰⁸ These institutions have gradually increased opportunities for Ainu artists to express their art works in public spheres and form a new category of art—contemporary Ainu fine arts.

Contemporary Ainu arts embodies traditional and tourist arts. Tourist arts brought a new idea of carving animal and human representations, although one might argue that it is the beginning of the era in which people were moving away from their traditional beliefs. In the mean time, many kept some of their traditions such as the traditional Ainu patterns which have been transmitted from generation to generation. In addition, for the motifs of their arts, animals from their traditional belief systems are sometimes selected. Perhaps the most leading contemporary Ainu artist was Sunazawa Bikky (砂澤ビッキ)(1931-1989).

Recently, the number of artists who are endeavouring to pursue their artistry by expressing the spirit of Ainu in specific forms is getting increased. One of these artists is woodcarver Bikky Sunazawa, who,

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ “優秀工芸師[Superior Craft Artist],”北海道アイヌ協会[The Ainu Association of Hokkaido], <http://www.ainu-assn.or.jp/zigyo02.html> (accessed February 15, 2011).

²⁰⁸ Reiko Saito, “アイヌ工芸の過去と現在: 200年のメッセージ,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ2007-現在(いま)から未来(あす)へ*-[Message from the Ainu: Now to Future]. (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2007), 94.

after entering his work in a modern art competition in 1952, he produced many etudes by primarily using Ainu patterns as motifs. As a result, he has established his own unique style and attained an international reputation.²⁰⁹

Chisato O. Dubreuil has done thorough research on his biography and published the book, *From the Playground of the Gods: the Life and Art of Bikky* (2004). In my project, I would like to discuss the works by Takiguchi Masamitsu(瀧口政満) and Toko Nupuri(床ヌプリ). Later, I will pay particular attention to the works by Toko since he is well-known for the owl carvings.

Summary

Ainu spiritual belief systems were the foundation from which people created various material arts for both rituals and daily use. Their knowledge of natural resources and skills of carvings and embroideries were transmitted from generation to generation. In addition, people followed the cultural rules for the creation of material arts. The restriction on the use of wild animal representation is one of the examples. Although in *Kamuy Yukar*, various animal gods appear to speak about their own experiences, in order to avoid trapping the spirits of gods in the objects, the use of wild animal representations were prohibited in ancient Ainu societies. However, this changed due to the expansion of Japanese control over the Ainu. The production of tourism arts was a trigger and today the practice of using wild animal motifs has become popular among the artists.

Contemporary Ainu arts are the historical witnesses of Ainu history. Although the use of

²⁰⁹ Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka, “Ainu Handicraft: Tracing Its History,” in *アイヌからのメッセージ-ものづくりと心-* [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit] (Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003), 142.

animal representation is against their cultural rules, contemporary artists and the art they produce are historical witnesses of Ainu history.

Chapter Four: Representation of the Owl God

As discussed in previous chapters, the relationship between humans and nature is governed by their spiritual belief systems. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Ainu see the animals as a gift from *kamuy* (gods) from *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World). Gods visiting *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World) disguised themselves as animals wearing *hayokpe* (an armour). In *Kamuy Moshir*, stories are told by the point of view of these animal gods. The beliefs of animal gods are woven in the stories and transmitted generation to generation. Because people believed they would trap the spirits of the animal gods, traditionally the use of wild animal motifs was strictly banned in traditional material culture. In this chapter, I will pay particular attention to the Owl God known as the God of the Village. First, I will analyze the presence of the Owl God in Ainu traditional oral literature and how it has been perceived in ancient Ainu societies. Then, I will discuss the representations of the Owl God in three different forms of art: traditional art, tourism art, and contemporary fine art. The representation of the Owl God has changed over time; however, it is still important in contemporary Ainu societies. I will argue that the representation of the *Kotan-kor-kamuy* is an important symbolic expression of Ainu cultural identity.

Literary Analysis of the Owl God

According to Mitsuru Hasegawa, approximately 30 stories on the subject of the Owl God have been found in the genres of *Kamuy Yukar*.²¹⁰ In this project, I will analyze four different texts which have the Owl God as a subject: “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” (Appendix 1); “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Konkuwa’” (Appendix 2); “Owl and Salmon” (Appendix 3); “*Kamuy Chikap: Stories of Gods*” (Appendix 4). Perhaps, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” is the most well-known story of the Owl God. The first two stories, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” and “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Konkuwa’”, are collected in the book, *Ainu Shin'yo Shū* (1923). *Ainu Shin'yo Shū* (1923), a collection of stories in *Kamuy Yukar*, and is the first publication on the subject of Ainu oral literature. Chiri Yukie, an intellectual Ainu writer who was proficient in both Japanese and Ainu languages, wrote this book in both languages. For the English translation, this project refers to the recent publication of the book *Commentary on Ainu Shin'yo Shu Collected Stories of the Ainu* (2003) by Katayama Tatsumine (Appendix 1 and 2). This text is based on Chiri's Japanese translation of the songs and provides an in-depth analysis and interpretation of each song. The third story, “Owl and Salmon”, was told by Shitaku Yae, an Ainu elder and published by Ukaji Shizue, an Ainu embroidery artist who learned Ainu traditional patterns. In her book “Owl and Salmon”(2006), each scene is followed by Ukaji's beautiful works of embroideries. The English translation for the story “Owl and Salmon” is provided in the publication, “Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit” (2003), by The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture

²¹⁰ Mitsuru Hasegawa, “シマフクロウと アイヌ民族 [Blakiston's Fish Owl and Ainu People],” The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, <http://www.frpac.or.jp/rst/sem/sem18.html> (accessed February 15, 2011).

(Appendix 3). This project will refer to the English translation while also comparing it with the original contents in Japanese since some words and phrases have not been translated into English. The fourth story, “*Kamuy Chikap: Stories of Gods*” (1984), is published by Fujimura Hisakazu. It was told by an Ainu elder, Shirasawa Nabe (1905-1993). For this story, an English translation has not been found, thus I carefully translated it into English while trying to keep the original context of the story (Appendix 4).

Although I mentioned the publication dates for each book or book in which the stories are collected, it does not imply one is older than the other. These stories in *Kamuy Yukar* have been transmitted orally from generation to generation in many different regions. Various scholars have tried to collect the stories from the Ainu elders who remember the stories. Since the Ainu language is endangered, collecting and documenting oral literature such as *Kamuy Yukar* is very important for scholars who are studying Ainu culture and Ainu communities. However, we are unable to trace the exact date when the stories were created. As discussed in the origin of *Kamuy Yukar*, the stories in *Kamuy Yukar* have developed and changed over time. This can be demonstrated in the stories, “Owl and Salmon” and “*Kamuy Chikap: Stories of Gods*,” in which the content of the story is similar; however, the main character is different: one is a salmon and the other is a killer whale. Thus, instead of trying to discuss where the story came from (or from which region), I will analyze messages and implications that the Owl God carries in the stories, and later explore the roles of the Owl God in Ainu society.

4.1 “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’”

Summary of the Story

One day, the Owl God flew over the village of humans and saw social disorder in the community. The villagers, who were once poor, were now rich and insulted others who were once rich, but now were poor. Then, the Owl God saw one poor, young boy and some wealthy children playing on the seashore with little toy bows. They found the Owl God and tried to shoot him. Children from the wealthy families had golden arrows; however, the poor boy only had wooden arrows and wore tattered clothing. The Owl God soon realized by looking at the eyes of the poor boy that he was a descendant of a great man. Children from the wealthy families laughed at him because they thought he would never be able to capture the Owl God with his dilapidated arrows. But, the boy did not pay attention to what the other children said to him.

When the Owl God saw this, he decided to come down and be captured by him: “I [the owl god] put out my hand and took the little arrow.”²¹¹ The poor boy shot the Owl God and took him to his home. When the Owl God saw the elderly man and woman of the house, he soon realized that, although they looked destitute, these people had dignity. The elderly man and woman were surprised by the sudden visit of the Owl God to their house and began to worship him. At night, the spirit of the Owl God, which was literally sitting between the ears of the physical body of the owl, woke up and decorated the house full of beautiful treasures. Then, the Owl God showed the people of the house a dream to explain his message: A rich man was unlucky and ended up a poor man; he was ridiculed by the people who used to be poor and were now rich. Seeing how he was ridiculed and

²¹¹ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 29.

mistreated, I felt sorry for him, so, although I am not a mere deity of low standing, I stayed at the human house and made them wealthy.²¹²

The next morning, when the people of the house saw the treasures, they cried and worshipped the Owl God even more. Then, the elderly man and woman dressed the boy in old clothing on purpose and sent him to the people who had insulted them, to invite them to their house. However, when he arrived at their houses they laughed at him because they did not believe that his family could host them properly so they went to his house just to mock them. When they arrived at his house, they were very surprised by the treasures given by the Owl God. The elderly man of the house told what the Owl God and said to them: Because we were poor, we could not associate with anyone without discrimination, but the weighty god who watched over this village took pity on us. Since we had never done any bad deeds, we were blessed in this way. So, I would like to ask that from now on the people of this village unite and get along with one another.²¹³ The wealthy people realized what they had done and apologized to the family repeatedly. Then, the whole community worshipped the Owl God (Appendix 1).

Message from the Owl God

In the story, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’,” the theme can be analyzed as a peaceful inter-human relationship and the importance of pure mind or spirit as an essential element for human nature. During the time of the visit

²¹² *Ibid.*, 59.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 81.

of the Owl God, there was social disorder in the Ainu community. Those who were once poor, but now rich, insulted those who were once rich, but now poor. Although in the story the reason for the switch in social status is not explained, it is not highlighted. The Owl God gave great treasures to the poor family who had pure minds and, as a result, it led the community to get along with each other to establish a peaceful inter-human relationship.

It is important to recognize that the Owl God did not directly establish a peaceful inter-human relationship. Rather, he became involved in a human relationship indirectly by giving a poor family great treasures. What the Owl God did in the story was let the poor boy capture him, decorated the house of the poor family with beautiful treasures, and explained the reason why he gave treasures to the poor family in their dreams. As we can observe, the Owl God did not suggest to the poor people that they should get along with the rich people who insulted them. Indeed, in the dreams he explains to the poor family as following:

A rich man was unlucky and ended up a poor man and was ridiculed by the people who used to be poor and were now rich. Seeing how he was ridiculed and mistreated, I felt sorry for him, so, although I am no mere deity of low standing, I stayed at the human house and made them wealthy.²¹⁴

In the dream, the Owl God did not mention teaching the importance of unity of the community, nor to invite the rich people who insulted the poor family to their house. However, instead of giving them direct instructions, the Owl God explained the reason why he gave them treasure.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

In other words, it was up to the poor family how they used this great opportunity. They could have even saved it for their wealth; however, the poor family used this chance to get along with rich people who had insulted them. I would argue that the Owl God knew that the family would not use the treasure for their own benefits. He knew the members of the poor family had pure hearts (or spirits) and he trusted them. That is why he did not directly tell them to get along with others by his words in the dream. Indeed, although it may not be seen by the eyes of humans, gods such as the Owl God is able to see whether the person has a pure spirit, or not. Indeed, in the story the Owl God says, “When I saw them [the poor family], they looked truly destitute, but they had the dignity of a gentleman and a lady.”²¹⁵ No matter how they dress, the Owl God can see the spirits of people through his great eyes.

Having a pure heart is a key factor in this story since it results in the establishment of a peaceful inter-human relationship. Another possible interpretation of the ideological aspect derived from the story is the idea that although the person is poor, treasure can be given to him/her if he/she has a good spirit.²¹⁶ Thereby, the story explains that pure hearts or spirits are crucial elements for human nature.

4.2 “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Konkuwa’”

Summary of the Story

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

²¹⁶ Gyou Synya, ユーカラの世界-アイヌ復権の原点- [World of Yukar: Revitalization of Ainu] (Tokyo: Kadokawashoten, 1974), 34.

The Owl God played the role of messenger, one who can freely come and go between *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World) and *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World). However, he was very old and needed to look for somebody who could take over his job. Three candidates came to him, but the first two, a young crow and mountain jay, failed. These two birds fell asleep while they were listening to the messages that the Owl God commissioned them to bring to *Kamuy Moshir*. However, the last candidate, a young water ouzel, successfully listened to all six messages without falling asleep. After hearing all the messages, he flew to *Kamuy Moshir*. Then, the Owl God began to explain the reason for sending him:

[T]here was a famine and the humans were on the verge of starvation. Looking at the reasons for this, it seemed that the god who sent the deer and the god who sent the fish down from heaven had conferred and decided not to send down any more deer or any more fish. No matter how the other gods pleaded, they would not play them the slightest heed. So when the humans went to the mountains to hunt, there were no deer, and when they went to the river to fish, there were no fish. Seeing that, I had become angry, so I sent a messenger to the gods who sent down the deer and the fish from heaven.²¹⁷

In Ainu belief systems, the Owl God is believed to protect humans from starvation and thus the story greatly reflects this principle. A few days after, the young water ouzel brought responses from the god of the deer and god of the fish:

The reason that the deer god and the fish god did not send any deer or fish down from heaven was that when the humans hunted the deer, they beat them over their heads with a stick, and when they skinned the deer, they abandoned their heads in the forest, and when the humans caught the fish, they hit the fish over their heads with rotten sticks,

²¹⁷ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 275-277.

so the deer had gone naked and crying back to the deer god, and the fish had gone back to the fish god holding rotten sticks in their mouth.²¹⁸

This is why the deer god and the fish god became angry and they decided not to send the deer and fish anymore to *Ainu Moshir*. The young water ouzel also brought another message that if humans hunt or fish with proper etiquette, the gods would start to send them again. The Owl God showed humans a dream and told them about the messages from the god of deer and the god of fish. Then, humans came to realize their mistreatment of hunting animals and began to treat them with great respect (Appendix 2).

Message from the Owl God

The main theme of the story, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’,” is a relationship between humans, animals and the gods. In the story, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’,” the importance of nature, especially animals, is emphasized. “Salmon are just these of the “belongings” of the Master of the Fish; deer are just these of the Master of the Deer. It is believed that salmon and deer are given by these two deities in response to human beings’ courteous treatment of these animals.”²¹⁹ The shortage of food was understood in the story as a result of the mistreatment of humans towards animals. In the story, the humans’ mistreatment of animals leads to the shortage of their food supplies because they disrespect their spiritual belief systems.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 278-279.

²¹⁹ Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 84.

The Ainu believe that the animals are sent by the gods from *Kamuy Moshir*. Indeed, the former story, the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’,” illustrates this point. In the text, the Owl God decided to be captured by the poor boy. He says, “The poor boy planted one foot far away and planted one foot nearby, and biting his lower lip hard and aiming carefully, he shot an arrow at me. The little arrow drew a sparkling line as it flew. When I saw that, I put out my hand and took the little arrow.”²²⁰ It implies that “a successful hunt is of the will of the animal to be hunted.”²²¹ Yamada Takako summarizes the point as following:

Thus Ainu believe that in their own world of *Kamui-moshir*, *kamui* live in the form of human beings and that they dress in specific costumes when they visit the Human World. Plants and animals in this world are regarded as temporary forms of *kamui* when they visit the Human World. And they are considered gifts from *kamui* to human beings.²²²

People need to show their appreciation towards animals that they hunt or fish and to be respectful to the gods who send them to *Ainu Moshir* from *Kamuy Moshir*. In the story “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’,” the salmon and deer are not considered as *kamui*; however, they are sent by the gods in *Kamuy Moshir*. Thus, people need to treat the salmon and deer in a proper manner to show appreciation towards them.

4.3 “Owl and Salmon”

²²⁰ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 29.

²²¹ Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 81.

²²² *Ibid.*

Summary of the Story

In the story, the Owl God came down to the seashore and saw a group of salmon approaching the shore. The head of the group of salmon recognized the Owl God watching over them from the branch of a tree. He told the rest of the salmon to be respectful to the Owl God. However, there were some at the bottom of the group, called ‘split tails,’ said, “What kind of god is he? Why the one, who has such wired large eye balls, can be a respectful *kamuy* (god)?” These salmon did not listen to the head salmon and were disrespectful to the Owl God and they scattered water with their fins. The Owl God got angry and removed half of the sea water by his silver scoop. The head salmon said to the group of ‘split tails’ that because he was afraid of this kind of punishment from the Owl God, he asked them to show proper behaviour towards him. The Owl God removed the rest of the sea water by his golden scoop and the ocean was almost dried out. Even the group of ‘split tails’ groaned and the head salmon talked intermittently to the salmon again, “I told you we should not be disrespectful to the Owl God; however, because you did not listen to me, we are all going to die.” The Owl God heard this and thought that nothing good would result from his anger so he put water back into the ocean so the group of salmon could survive (Appendix 3).

4.4 “Kamuy Chikap”

Summary of the Story

The story of “*Kamuy Chikap*” is very similar to “Owl and Salmon.” The major differences between the two stories are the main characters; the form of punishment by the Owl God; and *sakehe*. One day, the Owl God spread his wings and flies along the seashore. The sky is infinitely blue and the ocean without a single wave is like a mirror, the rising sun reflected on its surface. He sits on the top of a dead tree and has a little rest. He looks around and makes sure everything is fine. Then, he sees something black appear beyond the sea and it is approaching the seashore. It is a family of Orcas. The head of the family tells the rest of his family members about the presence of the Owl God in the tree and lets them know to make sure to swim slowly and quietly without making any noise. However, the young ones in the family do not listen to him and are very disrespectful to the Owl God. They insult him by splashing the water with their tails, making noise, and leaping into the air. The Owl God is now soaked from head to tail. The Owl God is very angry and opens his wings and flaps them. A fierce wind occurs from far beyond the mountains and comes down to the beach. The fierce wind breaks the trees and strips off the soil. Then, the uprooted trees, the stones and the rocks hit the orca family in a wave. When the wind finally stops, the orca family has disappeared. After a few years, the Owl God decides to go down to the beach. Then, he sees the orca family again. This time, the family follows along respecting the Owl God and returns far back to the ocean with an air of profound respect (Appendix 4).

Message from the Owl God

The stories, “Owl and Salmon” and “*Kamuy Chikap*,” focus on the interactions between the Owl God and the salmon and the Owl God and the killer whale. Compared to the other two narratives discussed earlier, no active involvement with humans was shown in the stories. It focused more on the interactions between the Owl God and animals, salmon and killer whale. However, I will argue that these stories carried an indirect message to humans. Similar to the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’,” the emphasis was on the disrespectful attitude towards *kamuy* (or gods) and being punished for it. In the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’,” because humans mistreated animals, they were punished by the god of deer and the god of fish, and they stopped sending these animals to the world of humans. Similar to this, in the “Owl and Salmon” and “*Kamuy Chikap*,” because some salmon and killer whales were disrespectful to the Owl God, they were punished by him and the Owl God attempted to dry out the sea water in “Owl and Salmon” and created a fierce wind in “*Kamuy Chikap*.” What they emphasized in these three stories was to be respectful to the *kamuy* (or god), and all other living things.

As mentioned, the importance of the Owl God as a *kamuy* is stressed in all of the selected stories. However, these two stories, in particular, illustrate the position of the Owl God in the animal world. In Ainu spiritual belief systems, deer and salmon are not considered *kamuy*, but rather the god of deer and the god of salmon living in the world of gods, *Kamuy Moshir*, send them to the human world, *Ainu Moshir*. This is illustrated in the story “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’” which introduces the presence of the god of deer and the god of salmon in the world of gods, *Kamuy Moshir*. Thereby, in the story “Owl and Salmon,” salmon must be respectful to the Owl God. Whereas, in

“*Kamuy Chikap*,” since the killer whale is also considered as one of the highest ranked *kamuy*, it is doubtful whether the Owl God is superior to the Killer Whale God. In Ainu belief systems, the Bear God (Master of the Mountain), Killer Whale God (Master of the Sea) and the Owl God (Master of the Village) are considered the highest ranked nature *kamuy*. However, in the story “*Kamuy Chikap*,” the killer whales were illustrated in a way that they needed to be respectful to the Owl God. I will argue that this resulted from a process in transformation of the story and the regional variation in the perspective of ranking *kamuy*.

Although the characters and the forms of punishment are different, the contents of the stories are very similar; therefore, it is highly probable that these two stories share the same roots. The story might have come from a female shaman’s sacred verse or costume dance play, and through transmitting the original story orally over generations, the characters changed while keeping the core content. Thus, it is doubtful that there might be another original story that existed earlier than the two stories discussed here. In addition, it is likely that one of two stories is an original and the other developed from it. However, since it is nearly impossible to date the stories, there is no answer for these hypotheses.²²³ Thus, it is difficult to determine where and how these stories developed as they are today. However, one can argue that the characters were changed by time and space.

In the process of transmitting the story, the characters changed. What I would like to discuss here is why the killer whale, which is also considered a high ranked *kamuy*, had to be respectful to the Owl God in the story (“*Kamuy Chikap*”). As already

²²³ We cannot clarify the time when the stories were created based on the publication year of the sources since it has been re-told over time.

mentioned, there are regional variations in the perspectives of ranking *kamuy*. For instance, Sarashina Genzo argues that the region where people respect the Owl God as the highest ranked *kamuy* often depended on river fishing for sustaining their livelihood.²²⁴ Since salmon is also a main diet for the owls, they habituate near the spawning ground of salmon. They were not only protecting people from evil by their huge cry, but since they only eat a certain part of the salmon, they often leave the rest for humans. Thereby, in these regions, people respect the Owl God and call him “*Kotan-kor-kamuy*” meaning the Master/Guardian of the Village.

On the other hand, in the area such as Uchiura Bay, it is warm during winter since it is an inland sea, and they did not need to depend on river fishing, but rather on sea fishing. Thus, people living in the inland sea, call the owl just as “*Hum Hum*” because he does not play an important role for humans in this area.²²⁵ I would assume that the area where people depend on sea fishing, the Killer Whale God plays a more important role for them since he is believed to be Master of the Sea. Thus, although there is no direct evidence, one can argue that the story “*Kamuy Chikap*” has been told in the region where people depend on river fishing to sustain their lives.

The two stories, “Owl and Salmon” and “*Kamuy Chikap*” illustrate the presence of the Owl God in the animal world. Changes in the sub-characters (salmon and killer whale) are great examples of how Ainu literature was transmitted orally and because of the regional variation of the perspective of the *kamuy*, they sometimes change characters

²²⁴ Genzou Sarashina, コタン生物記:野鳥/水鳥/昆虫篇 [Kotan Record of Animals III Wild Birds, Water Birds and Insects] (Tokyo: Housei University Press, 1977), 555.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 555-556.

to be more powerful for the people in a particular region while retaining the same ideological aspect.

Representations of the Owl God in the Selected Stories

In the selected stories, the Owl God is illustrated as a god whose presence is notable to both humans and animals. From the first two stories (“Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” and “Song Sung by the Owl God, ‘*Konkuwa*’”), the Owl God is presented as a guardian of the village who is often known as “*Kotan-kor-kamuy*” in many regions.²²⁶ Indeed, he is greatly involved with humans in the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” by solving a social disorder in a community and guided people to build a strong unified community. In the second story, “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’,” he plays a role as a messenger between *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World) and *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World) and he actually set people free from starvation. In both stories, the role of the Owl God, a guardian of the village, is stressed.

The relationship between the Owl God and humans began at the time of land creation in Ainu myth. The World Creator God came down from the sky and created the land, which is today known as *Ainu Moshir*. One of the stories on the subject of the land creation suggests his attendant, the Owl God, was commanded to spread the seeds of Japanese millet over the land which later became one of the important food resources for Ainu people. Although the World Creator God and his other attendant, the Dog God, came back to their homeland (*Kamuy Moshir*) after the land was created, the Owl God

²²⁶ Names of the Owl God differ geographically.

remained to watch over the land of humans. Thus, people today respect the Owl God with great appreciation according to the interview with the Ainu artist, Toko Nupuri.

I suggest that since Ainu worship their ancestors with great respect, they have great appreciation for the Owl God who created the land where they live today. Thereby, the story of the creation of the land as its background, the presence of the Owl God in these two stories (“Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” and “Song Sung by the Owl God, ‘*Konkuwa*’”) are deeply connected to the life of humans. Although in both stories (“Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” and “Song Sung by the Owl God, ‘*Konkuwa*’”) the Owl God went back to his home land (*Kamuy Moshir*) after he had done his duty, the continuity of the favour of the Owl God for people is expressed in the stories. For instance, by giving a sense of time processing in the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’,” it stressed that although the Owl God returned back to his world (*Kamuy Moshir*), he still cares about people in the human world (*Ainu Moshir*).

In the story, he says: “Now when I look at that human village, the people live peaceful lives, and everyone gets along with one another. The man of that house is now the head of the village, and that child is now an adult with a wife and children and is obedient to his parents.”²²⁷ From his speech, readers will know several years have passed since the Owl God visited the village; however, he still cares for people in the village. Similarly, in the second story, “Song Sung by the Owl God, ‘*Konkuwa*’,” because the Owl God got old he tried to find responsible alternatives that could take over his duties to watch over humans. After he found an alternative, the Owl God said, “But now that there

²²⁷ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 87-89.

are no more worries, I am leaving a true warrior, a young warrior, to protect the world of the humans after me, and now I am about to go to heaven.”²²⁸ In this statement, readers are able to realize his sense of strong responsibility over humans. The relationship between the Owl God and humans has never diminished and continues through the practice of telling these stories.

In addition, what makes the Owl God a close figure to humans is that he has similar emotions that humans have. In the latter two stories, “Owl and Salmon” and “*Kamuy Chikap*,” we are able to see he has a temper. In the stories, some salmon (or killer whales) were disrespectful to the Owl God and insulted him. The Owl God showed his anger: When the wind finally stops, the orca family has disappeared without a trace. Wherever the wind has passed now looks as if ravaged by a storm. I return to my home but my anger is not easily suppressed. He has emotions of anger, happiness, and sadness as humans do: they share similar feelings. Indeed, in the world of gods (*Kamuy Moshir*), the gods, including the Owl God, live in a human form. They have a family as humans do; for instance, the Owl God has a sister who appears in the story, “*Tookina To: Story of the Sister of the Owl God*.”

Despite the Owl God being greatly involved in human communities in the selected stories, communication between the Owl God and humans is not simple since there are no direct talks between them in the contexts of the stories. The Owl God states his intentions to humans in a dream that he shows to them. As a response to the message from the Owl God in the dream, humans then react. For instance, in the “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’,” the Owl God showed a dream and

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 287.

explained to the poor family why he gave a treasure to them. In response to his message, the poor family, who received the great treasure from the Owl God, invited the rich people who once insulted them and it became a trigger for people in the village to unite. Similarly, in the story “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘*Konkuwa*’,” the Owl God showed a dream to people: “After that, I taught the humans in their sleep, in their dreams, that they must never do such things again.”²²⁹ As a response to the message from the Owl God, humans started to treat the salmon and deer with proper respect. Thereby, communication between the Owl God and humans was built on the dreams and human actions.

The presence of the Owl God is very close to humans in terms of his duty as a guardian of the village, based on the myth of the land creation, as well as the human like character that he has; however, indirect communication between them suggests that there is a strong differentiation between the humans and the gods. It also stresses the two distinctive worlds that they live in: humans live in *Ainu Moshir* and the gods live in *Kamuy Moshir*. Thereby, the presence of the Owl God is distinctive from humans. This is reinforced in the latter two stories in which the extraordinary power that the Owl God has towards humans and animals is expressed. In the third and fourth stories, the Owl God actually punished the salmon and killer whale in the stories and they were close to dying. These stories tell people about the importance of respecting the Owl God with the animal characters, salmon and killer whale. The context of the story implies that this would happen to people if they insult him or are disrespectful to him. What I argue is that the Owl God is not just a ‘guardian’ god who always watches over the people, but the power of the Owl God is beyond this concept. Although his presence is close to humans as his

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 283.

role as a guardian of the village and shares similar emotions that humans have, the power that the Owl God has distinguishes his presence above all humans and the rest of animals living in *Ainu Moshir*.

Visual Analysis of the Owl God

In Ainu culture, incorporating wild animal motifs with their material arts was traditionally prohibited because people believed that these representations would trap the spirits of the gods in the objects.²³⁰ Trapping the spirits was considered highly disrespectful. In Ainu traditional material arts, the designs of wild animals are rarely found in their carvings or garments. Exceptions are *ikupasui* (a prayer's stick) and *sapaunpe* (a ceremonial headdress) both used at ritual and ceremonial activities. For instance, the representation of bears, foxes, dogs, and otters was most frequently used for *ikupasuy*.²³¹ In addition, other sea mammals including deer, seals, sea lions and killer whales; fish such as salmon; and water birds were also found. However, Sugiyama Sueo states that among the birds that appeared on *ikupasuy* the representation of owls has not been found.²³² Indeed, in the book, *Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu* (アイヌのイクパスイ), Fosco Maraini analyzes approximately 1000 *ikupasuy*; however, I could not find the representations of the owls. Similarly, I could not find any information on the owl motifs on *sapaunpe*.

²³⁰ Ainu people believed the gods live in a human form in their world, *Kamuy Moshir*. When they come down to visit the human villages, they wear armour of animals and their spirits literally sit between the ears of the animals (Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 81.).

²³¹ Sueo Sugiyama, 北の工芸 [Crafts of North] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 1934), 109.

²³² *Ibid.*

Examples of animal motifs used for *sapaunpe* were foxes, eagles, snakes with two heads, and sunfish.²³³ For both *ikupasuy* and *sapaunpe*, bears were most frequently used. According to Yamada Takako, bears, killer whales, snakes, and the Blakiston's fish owls were considered significant animal gods in terms of their role as a symbol of spaces. For instance, the bear is a symbol of a mountain, the killer whales is that of an ocean, the snakes is of an altar, and the Blakiston's fish owl is a symbol of a village or country.²³⁴ These animal gods are important to frame the Ainu worldview. Although the three gods: bears (the God of Mountain), killer whales (the God of Sea), and snakes (the God of Altar) appeared as a symbol for the *ikupasuy* and *sapaunpe*, the presence of the Blakiston's fish owls, which was equally as important as the other three gods, was not found on both traditional items. Unfortunately, due to limited documented resources, I was not able to comprehend the reason for the absence of the owls in these two traditional items. However, there was a traditional item that was specifically made for the owls—*inaw*.

Ainu men made *inaw* with great appreciation towards the gods.²³⁵ The *inaw* appeared in the story, “Song Sung by the Owl God, ‘Silver Drops Fall Fall All Around’”. In the story, the poor family offered *inaw* to the Owl God with special thanks to him for giving them a great treasure: “Weeping, the elderly man expressed his thanks. Then, the man cut a tree for an *inau* [*inaw*] and beautifully made a splendid *inau* [*inaw*] and decorated with me [the Owl God] with it.”²³⁶ *Inaw* was a necessary item for the rituals

²³³ Sueo Sugiyama, *北の工芸* [Crafts of North] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 1934), 104.

²³⁴ Takako Yamada, *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language* (London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001), 146.

²³⁵ Kayano Shigeru, *アイヌ:暮らしの民具* [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use] (Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005), 136.

²³⁶ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie

besides *ikupasuy*.²³⁷ During prayer, humans were not able to directly tell their message to the gods, but it was the *ikupasuy* and *inaw* which played the role as a messenger. When people prayed, they stuck the *inaw* in the ground. Then they had a bowl filled with *sake* in their left hand and held an *ikupasuy* to dip the tip in *sake* with their right hand. Sprinkling the *sake* on the *inaw*, Ainu men prayed and recited their messages to the gods.²³⁸ The message was first driven to the *ikupasuy* and then *ikupasuy* transmitted it to *inaw*. The *inaw*, accompanied with other *inaw*, went to *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World) carrying the message and some offerings from humans. Although it is invisible, people believe that *inaw* transformed its appearance into a bird and flew over to *Kamuy Moshir*, which is located above *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World).²³⁹

Kayano Shigeru states that the gods who received *inaw* from humans were admired by other gods because it was evidence that he/she achieved something good for the Ainu and the god gained power three times greater.²⁴⁰ Willow (*Salix*) and dogwood (*Swida controversa*) were used to make *inaw*. People believe that the willow would turn into silver and the dogwood would become gold in *Kamuy Moshir*.²⁴¹ The gods also shared the *inaw* with other gods and they were impressed by the sincere attitudes of humans and attempted to help the Ainu even more.²⁴²

Inaw had many different shapes and was made for particular occasions. For instance, *inaw* were necessary items for the animal spirit-sending ceremonies. They were

Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 63.

²³⁷ Ainu Museum. アイヌ文化の基礎知識 [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture](Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 157.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Kayano Shigeru, アイヌ:暮らしの民具 [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use](Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005), 236.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁴² Ainu Museum. アイヌ文化の基礎知識 [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture](Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 158.

offerings for these animals whose spirits were sent back to their world, *Kamuy Moshir*, by humans. *Inaw* in the Figure 27 were made for the owl for his spiritual sending ceremony.



Figure 27 Inaw for the Owl

Source: Shigeki Akino, “Spirit-Sending Ceremonies,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 255.

Figure 27 is the *inaw* for the owl: “The owl, guardian of the village, is also given special attention by some Ainu groups. In 1903-05 Pilsudski photographed a *nusa* (or an altar) dedicated to the owl in Sakhalin.”²⁴³ Chiri Mashiho mentioned on the *chikap-inaw* (*chikap*: bird), one kind of *inaw*, which was made for the owl sending ceremony.²⁴⁴

Although the word *chikap* meant a bird, the *chikap* dedicated to *chikap-inaw* often refer

²⁴³ Shigeki Akino, “Spirit-Sending Ceremonies,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 255.

²⁴⁴ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho]. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 3:27.

to the Owl God.²⁴⁵ What makes it different from other *inaw* is that it has something like owl's feathers attached to it.²⁴⁶ Perhaps what Chiri meant by 'feather like' can be observed in Figure 28. The feature like small pieces of wood shavings attached to the top.



Figure 28 Kotan-koro Kamui

Source: Neil Gordon Munro, *Ainu Creed and Cult* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, c1962), 30-31.

Figure 27 had real owl feathers, Figure 28 had feather like whittled pieces of willow. Both represent *chikap-inaw*, which were specifically made for offerings to the *Kotan-koro Kamui*. In Ainu spiritual belief systems, Blakiston's fish owl is often called *Kotan-koro Kamuy (or Kamui)* who protects the human villages. Indeed, "Each *inaw* was carved in a form recognizable to the god for which [whom] it was intended."²⁴⁷ Thus, although compared to other animals' motifs found in *ikupasuy* and *sapaunpe* that were more

²⁴⁵ Kouji Yamazaki, Katsumi Katou, and Amano Tetsuya, eds. *Teetasinrit Tekrukoci: 先人の手あと: 北大所蔵アイヌ資料-受け継ぐ技-[Senjin no Teato: Hokudai Shozo Ainu Shiryou-Uketsugu Waza-]* (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies; Hokkaido University Museum, 2009), 46.

²⁴⁶ Mashiho Chiri, 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho]. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 3:27.

²⁴⁷ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney. "Ainu Sociality," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 240-247 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 244.

realistic representations, the *chikap-inaw* is a ‘symbolic’ representation of the owls in Ainu traditional material culture.

Another symbolic representation of owls is found in Ainu traditional embroidery designs. As discussed previously, nineteen traditional patterns were found.²⁴⁸ One of the popular designs is *morew* meaning ‘turn gracefully’ in the Ainu language (Figure 29).²⁴⁹



Figure 29 Traditional Ainu Design “*Morew*”

Source: Ainu Museum. アイヌ文化の基礎知識 [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture] (Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004), 90.

Kodama Mari states that although numerous scholars have discussed the meaning of each design, according to an elderly Ainu woman there is no special hidden meaning behind these designs, but they were made to demonstrate their appreciation for *kamuy* (or god).²⁵⁰ Indeed, it might be true that there was no hidden meaning behind these designs; however, the artists’ creativity might or might not be influenced by nature and the distinctive features of a particular animal such as an owl. Although it is also vague, the round shape around the eyes of owls is, in some sense, similar to the Ainu traditional design called *morew* (Figure 30).

²⁴⁸ Mari Kodama, “Clothing and Ornamentation,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 320.
²⁴⁹ Chisato O. Dubreuil, “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 294.
²⁵⁰ Mari Kodama, “Clothing and Ornamentation,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 313-326 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 320.



Figure 30 Owl Eye

Source: Kiyoshi Yamaura and Hiroshi Ushiro, “Prehistoric Hokkaido and Ainu Origins,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 39-46 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 42.

Evidence of a ceramic fragment of an owl found from the Jomon Era (1,000 B.C.)

(Figure 30), suggests that the owls have habituated in Hokkaido for thousands of years.

Although it is uncertain about peoples’ perspectives of owls in 1,000 B.C., the uniqueness of the facial features of owls is clarified on this ceramic piece.

In fact, there is a collaborative design of *morew* known as the ‘god eye’ representing the owls (Figure 31).²⁵¹



Figure 31 God Eye

²⁵¹ Tetsuo Iino, フクロウの民俗誌 [Ethnography of Owls] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999), 23.

Source: Tetsuo Iino, フクロウの文化誌-イメージの変貌- [Cultural Description of Owls: Transfiguration of the Images] (Tokyo: Chuoukouronsha, 1991), 23.

In the design, we can find the eyes of an owl. There is a spiritual meaning applied to this design, which is often stitched on Ainu clothing as we see in Figures 32 and 33.



Figure 32 Cotton garment: embroidery **Figure 33 Striped cotton garment: colored appliqué and embroidery**

Source (Fig. 32): Kichiemon Okamura, アイヌの衣装 [The Clothes of the Ainu People] (Kyoto: Kyoto Shoin, 1993), 26.

Source (Fig. 33): Kichiemon Okamura, アイヌの衣装 [The Clothes of the Ainu People] (Kyoto: Kyoto Shoin, 1993), 42.

It is not exactly the same as the illustration of the eye shown in Figure 31; however, we are able to observe the two *morew* in the centre to symbolize the eyes of an owl. Eyes of the gods were believed to prevent evil spirits from entering the human body. In order to avoid the tricks played by the mischievous gods, they designed this on the back of their clothing where people could not see.²⁵² Association of the eyes with owls is attributed to the traditional belief systems. Ainu people believe the owls are able to see in

²⁵² Toko Nupuri, interview by author, Akan, Hokkaido, May 11, 2010.

the dark and, therefore, Blakiston's fish owls in particular, are able to watch over the village day and night and protect humans from evil spirits. The idea of the eyes of the gods as protection for the people came from their beliefs in owls. In Ainu traditional material arts, the representation of owls was symbolic.

Although we can find the symbolic representations of the Owl God in a form of *inaw* and the design (the God Eye), carvings of the owls were not found in traditional Ainu material arts. The emergence of carved wooden owls was due to the expansion of the tourism market in Hokkaido. During the boom of tourism in Hokkaido in the 1920s, a great number of carved wooden bears were produced and established a steady market in some areas of Hokkaido such as Asahikawa and, later on, it expanded into other regions including Shiraoi and Akan. Although the bear became very popular as a motif, carved wooden owls never came to be in the spotlight. Perhaps, the most recognizable figure of owls began when the idea of the North American totem pole was introduced after World War II. According to Chisato O. Dubreuil, the miniature totem poles became popular after World War II(Figure 34).²⁵³

²⁵³ Chisato O. Dubreuil, "Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 338.



Figure 34 Miniature AINU Totem Pole



Figure 35 AINU Totem Pole (1979)

Source (Fig. 34): Chisato O. Dubreuil, "Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 338.

Source (Fig. 35): Chisato O. Dubreuil, "Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts," in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353 (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), 342.

Figure 34 was made in Akan, the area where they produce many AINU folklore arts associated with owls today. According to the author, it was acquired in 1986.²⁵⁴ On this miniature pole, we are able to find an owl, AINU man, AINU woman, and bear. It is interesting to observe that the artist who created this pole set the owl higher than the bear. Indeed, in AINU spiritual belief systems, the owl and bear seem equally important as animal gods: the bear as God of the Mountain and the owls (Blakiston's fish owl) as the God of the Village. However, the artist chose the owl to sit on the top. Many AINU totem poles have the owl on the top (Figure 35). Perhaps, it was because the Owl God is the

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 338.

God of Village so that people wished to have his protection. Sunazawa Bikky built the totem pole on the right from the viewers' perspective in front of the museum in Asahikawa, Hokkaido, 1979. On this pole, the same as the miniature pole, the owl sits on top and other animals such as the bear and killer whale were also carved in middle. The pole, which stands outside the museum, consists of several Ainu elements, most dominant of which is the *itokpa* (family crest emblem) of the killer whale. Also included in the carvings are a prayer stick (*ikupasuy*), offertory cup and saucer (*tuki*), images of the chief Ainu deities (killer whale, bear, owl), and the canoe, important to the survival of the Ainu.²⁵⁵ Although Ainu totem poles were not their traditional art, they still use the symbolic animals from their spiritual belief systems. In other words, they fit their traditions in the concept of West Coast totem poles.

Today, many artists, both Ainu and Japanese, engage in the creation of carved wooden owls, including Blakiston's fish owls in Hokkaido, either as tourism art or contemporary fine art. For tourism art, many items with owl motifs are for sale and some are emphasized as an important god (or *kamuy*), an idea conveyed from Ainu spiritual belief systems. For instance, I observed this tendency in Akan in Kushiro, Hokkaido where the Blakiston's fish owl plays a significant role representing Ainu culture. There are massive statues of Blakiston's fish owls displayed at Kushiro Airport, a close transit to Akan, and in Ainu *kotan* (a permanent tourism centre) in Akan for welcoming visitors. The picture below was taken at the Ainu *kotan*. A large statue of Blakiston's fish owl was attached to the gate to Ainu *kotan* (Figure 36).

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 342.



Figure 36 Owl Statue at the Gate to Ainu *Kotan*, Akan

Source: Personal photos taken in a district of Akan, Hokkaido, 10 May 2010.

Many souvenir stores in Akan sell items with the motifs of owls, and some can be identified as a Blakiston's fish owl and some cannot. Generally speaking, tourism art tends to be mass-produced and tries to meet the consumers' demands. We may be able to call them art; however, in order to gain attention from the tourists, some are 'labelled' or associated with Ainu by using the owls as a motif. In fact, Blakiston's fish owl does not inhabit the mainland of Japan; thereby, it is something special for tourists coming from outside of Hokkaido. Also, today this particular species is endangered due to environmental degradation; therefore, its number is declining and this can be another factor why this owl has gained more attention in the public sphere.

I believe that tourism art teaches about the symbolic representation of owls in Ainu culture to wider audiences, visitors from all different regions in Japan. For instance, items such as cell phone charms, key holders, and small objects with owl motifs are not very expensive so that the visitors purchase them as a souvenir and may bring a little taste of Ainu culture to their home. Tourism art can also act as a tool for the grassroots activities to promote Ainu culture. Many contemporary artists whom I met in Nibutani and Akan in Hokkaido own souvenir stores. Besides producing some tourism art for sale, many of them also create their own art works for sale or for public exhibits or competitions. Artists who have become well known often exhibit their art work in public spaces and enter their work in competitions. As mentioned, I do believe tourism art differs from contemporary fine art. However, most well known artists today started their career by producing tourism art then gradually entered the field of contemporary fine art. The artists that I am going to introduce, Takiguchi Masamitsu and Toko Nupuri, both began their careers creating tourism art.

Takiguchi Masamitsu, who is Japanese, was 22 years old when he traveled to Hokkaido and met Ainu people in Akan for the first time.²⁵⁶ He said at that time, in 1963, there were about twenty souvenir stores in Ainu *kotan* and many young Ainu men engaged in wood carving.²⁵⁷ He fell in love with an Ainu woman and got married to her six years later. He was impressed by the young Ainu carvers in Akan and eventually moved to the area and rented a house in Ainu *kotan*. In 1967, popular souvenirs were carved wooden bears holding salmon, reliefs of bear faces, and Ainu dolls called *nipopo*.

²⁵⁶ Masamitsu Takiguchi, 樹のなかの音 [Sounds Inside the Trees] (Tokyo: Henshu Group SURE, 2008), 41.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

However, he wrote that he wanted to make something different.²⁵⁸ Thus, using his wife as a model, he carved a portrait of a bust of an Ainu female. His new style of art attracted visitors and the items sold immediately. Through engaging in carving, he also became more knowledgeable about the characteristics of different trees.²⁵⁹ Then he opened his own store in *Akan* and participated in his first exhibit in the city of Kushiro in 1970. Although he is not Ainu, we are able to observe that some of his works are influenced by Ainu culture such as the figure that we are going to discuss in a later section (Figure 37).

In 1987, he was awarded 釧路新聞社芸術賞 (Kushiro News Paper Arts Award) and received 厚生大臣賞受賞 (Award of Minister of Welfare) and also had an opportunity to meet the emperor and empress in 1991. In addition, he visited the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia, Canada in 1997 and interacted with Haida Nations. Takiguchi has intercultural knowledge of indigenous arts of Ainu and First Nations in the West Coast. In 2000, he entered the work titled シマフクロウ (Blakistons' Fish Owl) for the 北海道アイヌ伝統工芸展 (Hokkaido Ainu Traditional Material Art Exhibition) and was awarded 北海道知事賞受賞 (Hokkaido Prefectural Governor Award).²⁶⁰ Takiguchi began his career creating tourism art and, gradually, developed his skills in carving and gained knowledge of materials which guided him to explore his own unique art form.

I think we are not able to completely separate the two kinds of art: tourism art and contemporary fine art, but rather they are connected in a process of development in the artists' master craftsmanship. As a way for the artists' to explore their own creativity and interests, some of the contemporary artists, such as Takiguchi Masamitsu and Toko

²⁵⁸ Masamitsu Takiguchi, *樹のなかの音* [Sounds Inside the Trees] (Tokyo: Henshu Group SURE, 2008), 42.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

Nupuri, connect their works to the Ainu culture. I would like to pay particular attention to contemporary fine art that uniquely conveys some elements of Ainu traditions.



Figure 37 シマフクロウ [Blakiston's Fish Owl] (2000)

Source: Masamitsu Takiguchi, 樹のなかの音 [Sounds Inside the Trees] (Tokyo: Henshu Group SURE, 2008), 30.

This masterpiece of art is a work by Takiguchi Masamitsu in 2000. It is titled “Blakiston’s Fish Owl” (Size: 65x40). By opening his wings, he moves in a lively way. He may be flying up to the sky, or flying down to the river to capture salmon. He may threaten strangers by looking bigger with his opened wings. He seems to be larger than

life, spiritually. In reality, the Blakiston's fish owl is the largest species of owl in Japan. They are around 60–75 cm and reach to 200 cm (2m) if they fully open their wings. In this work, feathers are depicted in great detail and his facial expression provides viewers a sense of his dignity as a God of the Village. Although his eyes are shadowed, he fully opens his eyes. Many works entitled as a Blakiston's fish owl are associated with the idea of God of the Village and depict the owl with fully open eyes. It may be because people believed, and some still do today, that the Owl God watches over the human village day and night with his big eyes.

As discussed, his eyes became a symbol of design, 'god eye,' a corroborative design of *morew*. Ainu women stitched this design on the back of their garments to prevent evil spirits from tricking them. We are able to find the Ainu traditional design, *morew*, carved on his wings, chest, and forehead. It is interesting to observe that the design, god eye and perhaps *morew* itself were derived from the owls and now the design returned where it originally came from. This traditional design that appears on his body and head indicate that is not just an owl in general, but one that belongs to the Ainu culture—the Owl God who is also known as the God of the Village. In this particular work, Takiguchi successfully transformed the Ainu traditions and ideas associated with the owl into his work. It is depicted in a dignified way as the extraordinary animal god in Ainu spiritual belief systems.

Another example conveys a glimpse of Ainu worldview. As discussed, Ainu people believe gods live in the world called *Kamuy Moshir*, which is believed to be located above the world of humans known as *Ainu Moshir*. Gods live in a human form in their world; however, when they come down to visit *Ainu Moshir*, they wear armor of

animals called *hayokpe* in the Ainu language, and their spirits literally sit between the ears of animals. This is described in the story, “Song Sung by the Owl God, ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around’” where the Owl God says, “I sat between my own ears, and finally when it was around midnight, I woke up.”²⁶¹ Although he says “own ears” it implies the ears of an animal, in this case, the owl.



Figure 38 コタン コロ カムイ – 村を守る神- (1988)

[Kotan-kor-kamuy: Guardian of the Village]

Source: Nupuri Toko, *床ヌプリ作品集*[Playground of the God] (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995), 105.

Although the expression “sitting between the ears” is ambiguous, it might be explained by the above figure. Toko Nupuri made this beautiful work in 1988 titled “The God of the Owl” (48x65x60cm). The bodies of the two owls look almost identical; they are attached together but are looking in different directions.

²⁶¹ Tatsumine Katayama, *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, trans. Julie Kaizawa (Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003), 55.

As mentioned, the spirit of a god literally sits between the ears of the animal. The word “between” is a little unclear in this sentence because if someone says “sitting between the ears”, it indicates the head. However, many well-known scholars, including Chiri Yukie and Kindaichi Kyosuke, described this traditional belief followed by the above expression of “between”. They would even write, “the spirit of god sits on the head of an animal”. Thus, I believe there is a hidden meaning behind this expression.

Kindaichi explains the features of *hayokpe* (an armor) that gods wear: if it is a bear *hayokpe*, it would be black fur with fangs and claws; if it is a wolf *hayokpe*, it would have white fur and the edges of mouth cut towards ears; and if it is an owl *hayokpe*, it would have the feathers with dots and also have big, golden colored eyes and a thick beak.²⁶²

Gods live in a human form in their world, but when they come down to visit the human world, they ‘wear’ the armor of animals. In other words, if they ‘wear’ them, their spirits should be inside. However, it does not mean it is inside the head or brain, but I believe there is a spiritual meaning applied to it. This great piece of art somehow became a trigger to think of this expression. Indeed, in the stories that I analyzed in this project and another story with the Owl God as a main character, the presence of the Owl God is always one. However, as we see in Toko’s work, there are two owls, yet it is titled “Guardian of the Village” in singular form. Thus, I think there is space to think about why there are two owls represented as one. It is very difficult to comprehend the real meaning since there are no written records on this. However, this work can be read as a spiritual metaphor of the expression, “to sit between the ears.”

²⁶² Kyosuke Kindaichi 金田一京助全集 [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke](Tokyo: Sanseido,1993), 12:360.

As we see in both Takiguchi and Toko's works, artists successfully transformed some elements of tradition into their contemporary works of art. An owl in general is now a very popular theme for wooden sculpture or other art forms for both Ainu and Japanese artists. However, it is hard to determine whether their creations are associated with the Ainu culture. Not every owl motif is intended to express the idea of owls, such as the Blakiston's fish owl as the Owl God known as the God of Village, in the Ainu spiritual belief systems. In addition, owls made in Hokkaido do not mean they all belong to the Ainu culture. It may differ from the carved wooden bear since it has a long, popular history in Ainu culture before and after World War II. Whether or not it is tourism art or contemporary art, the carved wooden bears made in Hokkaido are often received as Ainu culture; whereas, the emergence of carved wooden owls happened after WWII. Although the theme of owls has become popular, it is still less popular than the Bear God. Examples of the carved wooden Blakiston's fish owl made by Takiguchi and Toko are easy to link with Ainu spiritual beliefs. Takiguchi utilized the Ainu traditional designs and Toko titled his work as "Guardian of the Village." They expressed or blended the elements of Ainu traditions with their own creativity. Through their works, the belief in the Owl God in Ainu spiritual beliefs was kept alive.

Spiritual Dialogue between the Owl God and the Artist—Toko Nupuri –

Toko Nupuri was born in 1937 and raised in Kushiro in a family descending from Ainu.²⁶³ In the book *アイヌからのメッセージ—ものづくりと心—* [Message from Ainu Craft and Spirit] published by the Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, Sapporo in 2003, he says that after graduating from junior high school he became a pupil of the Ainu master carver, Yamamoto Tasuke (山本多助), and started to work as a craftsman in Akan around 1952.²⁶⁴ He was also acquainted with the artist, Sunazawa Bikky (砂澤ビッキ) and was influenced by his art work.²⁶⁵ I came to know the artist when I was doing research on the Ainu totem poles and knew that there is a group of totem poles in Burnaby Mountain Park in British Columbia, Canada made by this artist. The style was very unique, very different from West Coast totem poles, and I was interested in the artist who created these enormous wooden statues. I sent a letter to Toko expressing my interest in his art work and was hoping to meet him in person.

In May 11, 2010, I visited Akan and was able to interview him. The place is located beside lake Akan where it is famous for hot springs, *marimo* (moss balls) and is known as a natural monument in Japan. In the town, they have Ainu *kotan* and many Ainu and Japanese own souvenir stores in this permanent tourism area and also outside the *kotan*. Visitors come from all different parts of Japan and it is a famous tourism centre. Toko also owns his souvenir store in the Ainu *kotan*. I was very grateful to have had the chance to meet Toko in person. During the interview, I asked him a couple of

²⁶³ Toko, Nupuri. *床ヌプリ作品集* [Playground of the God] (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995), 127.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

questions regarding his experiences and art work. My first question was why he started to carve owls and if there was any trigger that guided him to work on this particular motif.

He said that there was nothing special, but it was a suggestion made by an Ainu elder.²⁶⁶ At that time, carved wooden bears were popular, but this elderly man advised Toko that there is diversity in Ainu spiritual beliefs. The bear is not the only god that Ainu have, but rather their worldview is much larger in scale. He suggested to Toko to carve another animal god, the Owl God. However, Toko told me that he did not know what to do because he said that the Owl God is such a respectful god in Ainu spiritual belief systems that he hesitated to create his visual representation.²⁶⁷ Indeed, creating a visual representation of wild animals was traditionally prohibited since they would trap the spirit of the god in the object. Thereby, although there was a former example of creating an animal god, the bear, he was not able to carve owls for almost twenty years. Although the years are unclear, during those years, he experienced seeing the Blakiston's fish owl in the wild.²⁶⁸

One day, Toko went fishing on the lake of Akan and suddenly heard the sound of birds flapping their wings. It was the Blakiston's fish owl. After he went back to his home, he explained what he saw to one of the elders. The elder told him that because the owl came to see Toko, he should go see him again. The next day, he went to the site again where he saw the owl the last time and the owl was sitting on the same tree that he saw him on the other day. For the first ten days or so, he could not say anything, he just observed him. Then, he began to greet the owl. Toko understood this experience as the

²⁶⁶ Toko Nupuri, interview by author, Akan, Hokkaido, May 11, 2010.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

owl coming to see him rather than he coming to see the owl.²⁶⁹ The owl continued to see Toko for forty days. I think this relates to the spiritual beliefs in which people believe the gods living in *Kamuy Moshir* come down to ‘visit’ human villages. It is all about the willingness of the gods. This encounter with the Blakiston’s fish owl in the wild encouraged him to carve wooden owls. Through his conversation, I felt a deep spiritual connection between Toko and the Owl God which nobody else can understand fully, but it is only between them. He also mentioned that when he began to produce the owl carvings, other craftsman in Akan said to him that nobody would purchase them because the carved wooden bear was still popular at that time.²⁷⁰ However, he told other craftsman that he is not creating it for sale, but for his own attempts, possibly for revitalization of other animal gods in Ainu spiritual beliefs.

Today Toko Nupuri is considered a pioneer artist of wooden owl statues. Many of his works are based on Ainu oral literature, especially *Kamuy Yukar* (or Songs of Gods). The best example would be the group of Ainu totem poles located in Burnaby Mountain Park. It is one of the great examples of a modern form of Ainu art. Toko adapted the concept of West Coast totem poles to visualize the relationship between animal gods and humans. There is another group of Ainu totem poles built in front of the souvenir shop that Toko owns in the town of Akan in Hokkaido. He named this type of Ainu totem pole as the “God of Tree.”

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*



**Figure 39 カムイ ミンタラ— 神々の遊びの庭—
[Kamui Mintara: A Playground of the Gods] (1990)**

Source: Nupuri Toko, 床ヌブリ作品集 [Playground of the God] (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995), 80-81.

“The Playground of the Gods” was made by Toko Nupuri in 1990 (Figure 39). Totem poles that were made by Toko often have animal gods on the top of each pole. This is why he calls them “Gods of the Tree” because it looks like the Gods sitting on the trees. On the top of the totem poles, the owl is not carved in the middle of the pole, but rather he was carved as three dimensional on the top of the pole, the place closest to the sky. Toko also expresses the main characters such as the Owl God and Bear God from *Kamuy Yukar* in his work. “The Playground of the Gods” is translated into “*Kamuy Mintara*” in Ainu language. He might express the visit of *kamuy* to *Ainu Moshir* from *Kamuy Yukar*. For instance, the shorter poles with no animal motifs indicate humans.²⁷¹

Since there are various deities who appear in *Kamuy Yukar*, these groups of totem poles are the visual representation of this oral literature. This is something that he wanted to do in the beginning when he started carving wooden owls. Observers may find it

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

difficult to trace back the meaning of Ainu contemporary art without having direct commentary from the artists. He told me about his relationship to the Owl God. I wondered why the Owl God is so different from other animal gods. Indeed, in some books and articles, it seems the Bear God, Killer Whale God, Snake God and Owl God are equally important for Ainu people. What I thought in the beginning was since the Owl God is the God of Village who watches over the humans, the Owl God is ‘close’ to humans. Toko told me about his own relationship to the Owl God. He said that the presence of the Owl God is not physically close to humans, but rather he is always together in spirit and kept alive in his mind.²⁷²



Figure 40 The Artist, Toko Nupuri

Source: Nupuri Toko, *床ヌブリ作品集 [Playground of the God]* (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995), 120.

²⁷² Toko Nupuri, interview by author, Akan, Hokkaido, May 11, 2010.

It is not me to decide what to carve. The moment I see a tree, the inspiration strikes me and makes me to carve it. All I have to do is to sit face to face with the tree. I do not like to talk or write. A piece of the work, I believe, is much more talkative than a hundred arguments. I leave everything to my works and I myself keep silence while they walk and talk by themselves. We, the Ainues, regard all things in nature as the gods. The themes of the works know no bounds. A revelation always lies heavily and it suffocates me. I devote myself to my works intently to escape from it. I will be happy if you can hear what my works tell us.²⁷³

²⁷³ Nupuri Toko, 床ヌブリ作品集 [*Playground of the God*] (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995), 121.

Conclusion

Ainu people expressed their relationship to nature through their oral literature and material arts. In traditional oral literature, we are able to have a glimpse of the Ainu worldview. In this project, because I paid particular attention to the relationship with nature, I have discussed two different realms called *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World) and *Kamuy Moshir* (the Divine World). In Ainu spiritual belief systems, people believe the existence of spirits in nature. Among the spirits, the most revered ones were considered *kamuy* meaning gods in their language. People believe the gods live in a human form in *Kamuy Moshir* and only when they come down to visit *Ainu Moshir*, they wear an armor called *hayokpe* made of animals and plants. Their spirits also, literally, sit between the ears of animals. Thus, the Ainu think that all natural resources are gifts from *kamuy* and various ritual activities developed in ancient Ainu societies such as the animal spirit-sending ceremony.

In *Kamuy Yukar*, meaning Songs of Gods, in particular, various animal gods appear and speak of their own experiences. These texts bring messages to humans and often carry important life lessons for the Ainu. Indeed, *Kamuy Yukar* was believed to have developed from a female shaman's sacred verse known as *tusu-sinotcha* and a costume dance play known as *kasou buyou geki* taken place during the animal spirit-sending ceremony. In *tusu-sinotcha*, gods borrowed the mouth of female shamans and delivered a message to humans. At *kasou buyou geki*, a shaman disguised himself as a bear god, or another animal god, and spoke from the god's point of view. Thus, in *Kamuy Yukar*, the subject is always "I" referring to animal gods and the *sakehe* (or refrain) is an

identification of the gods who speak. However, what is the most important in *Kamuy Yukar* is the message that they carry. As mentioned, *Kamuy Yukar* often conveys messages from the god such as life lessons for the Ainu. The Ainu keep these messages from *tusu-sinotcha*, *kasou buyou geki* and other rituals by telling the stories—the origin of *Kamuy Yukar*.

Same as the stories in *Kamuy Yukar* in which the spiritual beliefs were greatly embedded, Ainu material arts, especially the traditional material arts, were governed by their belief systems. Although the animals often appear in the stories in *Kamuy Yukar* as a protagonist, in Ainu traditional material arts, the representation of wild animals was taboo. As discussed previously, Ainu believed that the gods wore armor of animals to visit *Ainu Moshir*. Based on this belief, people believed if they use the wild animal representations for materials, they would trap the spirits of the animal gods in the objects. In order to avoid being disrespectful to the gods, they avoided using wild animal representations. However, a drastic change occurred in Ainu material arts when the Japanese government promoted tourism in Hokkaido in the Meiji Period.

The introduction of the carved wooden bear in Ainu communities opened a new era for the history of Ainu material arts culture. At that time, both Japanese and Ainu produced a large number of carved wooden bears. The bear was gradually considered as Ainu art although the Japanese introduced it. Even though it was against their spiritual belief systems, the production of wooden bears became a popular practice for many Ainu men. Many well-known Ainu artists such as Sunazawa Bikky and Toko Nupuri started their careers carving these tourism arts for sale. Contemporary Ainu fine arts eventually

emerged from traditional arts and tourism arts, as I explained, by the work by Takiguchi Masamitsu and Toko Nupuri.

The use of animal representations is something that tourism arts introduced. However, while using the animal motifs, some artists still keep the Ainu traditions in different ways. For instance, Takiguchi Masamitsu used traditional Ainu designs called *morew*, which has an association with the design known as “God Eye” that was stitched on the traditional Ainu garments to prevent the evil spirits entering the bodies. Another artist, Toko Nupuri gave us a glimpse of Ainu spiritual beliefs by the two owls and visualized the *Kamuy Yukar* by a group of totem poles. He presented the various animal gods visiting *Ainu Moshir* (the Human World). I am aware that not every artists attempts to express the Ainu traditions. Indeed, it is hard to know until we have a direct commentary from them.

Toko Nupuri intended to present a variety of animal gods in Ainu spiritual belief systems in visual forms. I paid particular attention to the Owl God since it is one of the key deities. I demonstrated how the beliefs of the Owl God have been carried out through traditional oral literature and embedded in material arts based on the spiritual belief systems. Ainu oral literature is not just text, but it provides a feeling of ‘living’ culture. Thereby, the presence of the Owl God in the selected stories discussed in this project gives a realistic glimpse of the significant relationship between Ainu people and the Owl God. The Owl God is not just a ‘guardian’ god who always watches over the people, but the power of the Owl God is beyond this notion. Although his presence is close to humans as his role as a guardian of the village and shares similar emotions that humans

have, the power that the Owl God has distinguishes his presence above all humans and the rest of animals living in *Ainu Moshir*.

In ancient times, the beliefs of the Owl God were kept through *Kamuy Yukar* and ritual activities such as the owl sending ceremonies. Belief in the Owl God was shared in communities by telling the stories and engaging in the rituals. We are able to summarize that the ancient Ainu communities were united by these spiritual beliefs. The Blakiston's fish owl, in particular, is a symbol of the village. He is the God of the Village who protects humans in ancient Ainu societies. Today, I will argue that the Owl God still carries an important role as a communal identity of Ainu ethnicity. Such as in the place of Akan, the Owl God plays a symbolic role representing the place in relation to the Ainu culture. Although in some places Ainu and Japanese gathered to form the *kotan* as a permanent tourism area, peoples' ways of lives are no longer reliant on nature. However, the representation of the Owl God has more spiritual meaning for some people in contemporary societies. I will argue that the representation of the Owl God known as *Kotan-kor-kamuy* in contemporary societies goes beyond his role as the God of the Village and it has become an important symbolic expression of communal Ainu ethnic identity.

Bibliography

- Ainu Museum. アイヌ文化の基礎知識 [Basic Knowledge of Ainu Culture]. Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004.
- アイヌ文化振興研究推進機構 [The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture]. アイヌ民族:歴史と現在 [Ainu Ethnicity: Past and Present]. Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2008.
- Ainu Museum. アイヌ文化入門 [Introduction to Ainu Culture]. <http://www.ainu-museum.or.jp/nyumon/gireigu/ikupasuy.html> (accessed February 13th, 2011).
- Akino, Shigeki. "Spirit-Sending Ceremonies." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 248-255. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.
- Asakawa, Yasushi. 砂澤ビッキ-風に聴く [Sunazawa Bikky: Listen to the Wind]. Sapporo: Hokkaido Shinbunshya, 1996.
- Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine van Boheemen. Toronto: University of Totonro Press, 1985.
- Becker, Udo. *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Symbols*, translated by Lance W. Garmer. NY: Continuum, c1994.
- Chiri, Mashiho. 分類アイヌ語辞典第二巻:動物編 [Classification of Ainu Language Dictionary Second Volume: Animals]. Vol.2. Tokyo: Nihon Jomin Bunka Kenkyu-sho, 1953-62.
- Chiri, Mashiho. アイヌ文学 [Ainu Literature]. Tokyo: Gengensha, 1955.
- Chiri, Mashiho. アイヌの文学 [Literature of Ainu People]. Tokyo: Iwanami, 1959.
- Chiri, Mashiho. 知里真志保著作集 [Collected Works by Chiri Mashiho]. Vol.1-3.

Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973.

Chiri, Mashiho. “神謡について[About Songs of Gods].” In *アイヌ神謡集*, by Yukie Chiri, 163-184. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1878.

Chiri, Yukie. *アイヌ神謡集* [Ainu Songs of Gods]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978.

Cooper, J. C. *Dictionary of Symbolic and Mythological Animals*. London: Thorsons, 1995, c 1992.

Dorsey, George. A., and Alfred L. Kroeber. *Traditions of the Arapaho*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Dubreuil, Chisato O. “Ainu Art: The Beginning of Tradition.” In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 287-300. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Dubreuil, Chisato O. “Ainu Journey: From Tourist Art to Fine Arts.” In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 335-353. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Dubreuil, Chisato. O. *From the Playground of the Gods: the Life and Art of Bikky Sunazawa*. Washington, D.C.: Arctic Studies Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution; Honolulu: Distributed by University of Hawaii Press, 2004.

Etter, Carl. *Ainu Folklore: Traditions and Culture of the Vanishing Aborigines of Japan*. Chicago: Wilcox & Follett Co., 1949.

Ferguson, Diana. *Native American Myths*. London : Collins & Brown, 2001.

Fujimura, Hisakazu *カムイチカプ神々の物語* [Kamuy Chikap: Stories of Gods]. Tokyo: Hukuinkanshoten, 1984.

Fujimura, Hisakazu. “Kamuy: Gods You Can Argue With.” In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern*

People, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 193-197. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Hasegawa, Mitsuru. “シマフクロウとアイヌ民族 [Blakiston’s Fish Owl and Ainu People].” The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture. <http://www.frpac.or.jp/rst/sem/sem18.html> (accessed February 15, 2011).

Iino, Tetsuo. フクロウの文化誌-イメージの変貌-[Cultural Description of Owls: Transfiguration of the Images]. Tokyo: Chuoukouronsha, 1991.

Iino, Tetsuo. フクロウの民俗誌 [Ethnography of Owls]. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999.

Katayama, Tatsumine. *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, translated by Julie Kaizawa. Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003.

Kayano, Shigeru. 五つの心臓を持った神 [God with Five Hearts]. Tokyo: Komine Shoten, 2003.

Kayano, Shigeru. カムイユカラと昔話 -*kamuiyukar tura uwepekere*- [Kamuy Yukar and Legends]. Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1988.

Kayano, Shiro. “Who Owns the Salmon?.” In *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*, edited by Judith Roche and Meg McHutchison, translated by Jane Corddry Langill and Rie Taki, 40-45. Seattle, Wash.: One Reel: University of Washington Press, c1998. 42.

Kindaichi, Kyosuke. 金田一京助全集 [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke]. Vol.7. Tokyo: Sanseido, 1992.

Kindaichi, Kyosuke. 金田一京助全集 [Complete Works by Kindaichi Kyosuke]. Vol.12. Tokyo: Sanseido, 1993.

Kodama, Mari. “Clothing and Ornamentation.” In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil. 313-326. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

- Kondo, Motomichi and William W. Fitzhugh. "Ainu and Northwest Coast Peoples: A Comparison." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 116-123. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.
- Kubodera, Itsuhiko. *アイヌの文学* [Literature of Ainu]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977.
- Kubodera, Itsuhiko. *アイヌ民族の文学と生活* [Ainu and their Literature and Livelihoods]. Tokyo: Souhukan, 2004.
- Kumagai, Kimio. *蝦夷の地と古代国家* [Land of Ezo and Ancient Country]. Tokyo: Yamakawa, 2004.
- Kunnie, Julian E. and Nomalungelo I. Goduka, eds. *Indigenous Peoples' Wisdom and Power: Affirming our Knowledge through Narratives*. Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, c2006.
- Low, Setha M. "Contemporary Ainu Wood and Stone Carving." In *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World*, edited by Nelson H.J. Graburn, 211-225. Berkeley: University of California Press, c1976.
- Maraini, Fosco. *Gli iku-bashui degli Ainu / アイヌのイクパスイ* [Ainu Ikupasuy]. Hokkaido: Ainu Museum, 1994.
- Miyajima, Toshimitsu. *Land of Elms: the History, Culture, and Present Day Situation*. Trans. Robert Witmer. Etobicoke, Ont.: United Church Publishing House, c1998.
- Munro, Neil Gordon. *Ainu Creed and Cult*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, c1962.
- Namikawa, Kenji. *アイヌ民族の軌跡* [Tracks of Ainu]. Tokyo: Yamakawa Publisher, 2004.
- Nomoto, Masahiro. "Home and Settlement: COTAN AND CHISE." In *Ainu: Spirit of a*

Northern People, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 227-233. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Nupuri, Toko. Interview by author. Akan, Hokkaido, May, 11 2010.

Ogihara, Shinko. "Mythology and Animal Tales." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 274-277. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. "Ainu Sociality." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 240-247. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Ohtsuka, Kazuyoshi. "Ainu Handicraft: Tracing Its History." In *アイヌからのメッセージ-ものづくりと心-* [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit]. Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003.

Ohtsuka, Kazuyoshi. *Ainu Moshir: アイヌモシリ民族文様から見たアイヌの世界* [Ainu Moshir: Ainu Worldview through Analyzing Ainu Traditional Designs]. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1993.

Ohtsuka, Kazuyoshi. "Tourism, Assimilation, and Ainu Survival Today." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 92-95. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Okamura, Kichiemon. *アイヌの衣装* [The Clothes of the Ainu People]. Kyoto: Kyoto Shoin, 1993.

Ono Yugo. "Ainu Homelands: Natural History from Ice Age to Modern Times." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 32-38. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Pentikainen, Juha. ed., *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*. Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, c1996.

Pflugfelder, Gregory M. and Brett L. Walker, eds. *JAPANimals: History and Culture in*

Japan's Animal Life. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2005.

Philippi, Donald L. *Songs of Gods, Songs of Humans: the Epic Tradition of the Ainu*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Prince, Gerald. *A Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, c1987.

Saito, Reiko. “アイヌ工芸の過去と現在: 200年のメッセージ。” In *アイヌからのメッセージ2007-現在(いま)から未来(あす)へ*-[Message from the Ainu: Now to Future]. Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2007.

Sarashina, Genzou. *アイヌ文学の謎* [Mystery of Ainu Literature]. Tokyo: Miyamashobou, 1982.

Sarashina, Genzou. *アイヌの神話* [Ainu and Stories of Gods]. Tokyo: Miyamashobou, 1981.

Sarashina, Genzou. *アイヌの民族* [Ethnicity of Ainu]. Tokyo: Miyamashobou, 1982.

Sarashina, Genzou. *コタン生物記III野鳥/水鳥/昆虫篇* [Kotan Record of Animals III Wild Birds, Water Birds and Insects]. Tokyo: Housei University Press, 1977.

Sarashina, Genzou. *シマフクロウ-神鳥コタンコルカムイ-* [Blakiston's Fish Owl: God of Bird Kotan-kor-kamuy]. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984.

Sasaki, Toshikazu. *アイヌの文化誌ノート* [Ainu Cultural Descriptions Note]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2001.

生物多様性情報システム[Japan Integrated Biodiversity Information System].“フクロウ目フクロウ科 絶滅危惧IA類.” Ministry of Environment.
<http://www.biodic.go.jp/rdbfts/2000/73-009.html> (accessed February 15th, 2011).

- Shigeru, Kayano. アイヌ:暮らしの民具 [Ainu: Articles for Everyday Use]. Tokyo: Cleo Corp., 2005.
- Shizue, Ukaji. シマフクロウとサケ [Blakiston's Fish Owl and Salmon]. Tokyo: Hukuinkanshoten, 2006.
- Strelka, Joseph, ed. *Perspectives in Literary Symbolism*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968.
- Sugiyama, Sueo. 北の工芸 [Crafts of North]. Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 1934.
- Synya, Gyou. ユーカラの世界-アイヌ復権の原点- [World of Yukar: Revitalization of Ainu]. Tokyo: Kadokawashoten, 1974.
- Takiguchi, Masamitsu. 樹のなかの音 [Sounds Inside the Trees]. Tokyo: Henshu Group SURE, 2008.
- Tamura, Suzuko. アイヌ語辞典:沙流方言 [Ainu Dictionary: Saru Liver Dialect]. Tokyo: Souhukan, 1996.
- The Ainu Association of Hokkaido. *Brochure on the Ainu People*. <http://www.ainu-assn.or.jp/english/eabout01.html> (accessed February 13, 2011).
- Toko, Nupuri. 床ヌプリ作品集 [Collected Works by Toko Nupuri]. Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 1995.
- Tsuda, Nobuko. "A Personal Rebirth through Traditional Ainu Basketry." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 309-312. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.
- Tsushima, Yuko. トーキナ-トふくろうのいもうとのはなし [To-kina To: Story of the Sister of the Owl God]. Tokyo: Hukuinkanshoten, 2008.

Turner, Nancy J. and Sandra Peacock. "Solving the Perennial Paradox: Ethnobotanical Evidence for Plant Resource Management on the Northwest Coast." In *Keeping it Living: Traditions of Plant Use and Cultivation on the Northwest Coast of North America*, edited by Douglas Deur and Nancy J. Turner. 101-150. Seattle: University of Washington Press; Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, c2005.

Turner, Nancy J. *The Earth's Blanket: Traditional Teachings for Sustainable Living*. Vancouver; Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, c2005.

Utogawa, Hiroshi. "The Archaeology of Iyomante." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 256-260. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Walker, Brett L. *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Watanabe, Hitoshi. *The Ainu Ecosystem : Environment and Group Structure*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, c1972.

“八雲の木彫熊 [Wooden Carved Bear in Yakumo].” Hokkaido: Yakumo-cho Kyodo Shiryokan. <http://www.yappe.net/yakumo/kuma/index.htm#rekisi> (accessed January 18, 2011).

Yamada, Takako. *The World View of the Ainu: Nature and Cosmos Reading from Language*. London; New York: Kegan Paul, c2001.

Yamaura, Kiyoshi and Hiroshi Ushiro. "Prehistoric Hokkaido and Ainu Origins." In *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil, 39-46. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Yamazaki, Kouji, Katsumi Katou, and Amano Tetsuya. Eds. *Teetasinrit Tekrukoci: 先人の手あと: 北大所蔵アイヌ資料-受け継ぐ技*-[Senjin no Teato: Hokudai Shozo Ainu Shiryoku-Uketsugu Waza-]. Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies; Hokkaido University Museum, 2009.

“優秀工芸師[Superior Craft Artist].” 北海道アイヌ協会 [The Ainu Association of

Hokkaido]. <http://www.ainu-assn.or.jp/zigyo02.html> (accessed February 15, 2011).

Appendix 1

梟の神が自ら歌った謡『銀の滴降る降るまはりに』
“Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Silver Drops Fall, Fall, All Around”

Source for English translation: Katayama, Tatsumine. *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, translated by Julie Kaizawa. Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003.

“Silver drops fall, fall, all around; gold drops fall, fall, all around.”

This song I sang, as I followed the river downstream.
 Looking down as I passed over the village of the humans,
 I saw that the people who were once poor were now rich,
 and those who were once rich were now poor.

On the seashore, human children played with little toy bows and little toy arrows.

“Silver drops fall, fall, all around; gold drops fall, fall, all around.”

Singing this song, above the children I passed, and they ran about beneath me saying,
 “Beautiful bird! Holy bird! Whoever shoots at that bird, that holy bird,
 and gets it first is a true warrior, a true champion.”

Saying this, the children of the people who were once poor but were now rich fixed their
 little golden arrows to their little golden bows, and when they shot at me,
 I passed the little golden arrows beneath me and above me.

While I was doing this, one child,
 a boy with a plain little bow and a plain little arrow, caught my eye.
 When I looked at him,

I could tell right away from his clothing that he was the child of a poor man.
 But when I looked into his eyes I saw that he was the descendant of a great man,
 and it was as though a bird of a different feather were mixed in with the flock.
 Admirably, that child fixed a plain arrow to his plain bow and aimed at me,
 and when he did the children of the people
 who were once poor and were now rich said as follows:

“Well, would you look at that! The child of the poor man is aiming at that bird, that holy
 bird! Why, that bird wouldn’t even take our little golden arrows. It would be a miracle if
 such a bird, a holy bird were to take a plain arrow, a rotten arrow from a poor child like
 you.”

Saying this, they all trampled on the poor boy and punched him.
 But the poor boy did not pay them a bit of attention.
 Seeing this, I felt terribly sorry for him.

“Silver drops fall, fall, all around; gold drops fall, fall, all around.”

Singing this song, I slowly circled in the sky.
 The poor boy planted one foot far away and planted one foot nearby,

and biting his lower lip hard and aiming carefully, he shot an arrow at me.
 The little arrow drew a sparkling line as it flew.
 When I saw that, I put out my hand and took the little arrow.
 Spinning round and round, I fell with the wind whistling in my ears,
 and the children began running all at once,
 stirring up a terrible cloud of dust as they charged toward me.
 The instant I fell to earth, ahead of all the rest, the poor boy came and picked me up,
 whereupon the children of the people who were once poor but were now rich,
 ran up behind, and saying twenty or thirty words of abuse,
 they knocked down and punched the poor boy.

“You hateful poor boy, succeeding at what we tried to do first!”
 they said, but the poor boy, throwing himself over me again and again,
 pinned me down under his belly.

After a very long time, finally the boy broke away from the other children
 and ran as fast as he could. The children of the people who were once poor but were now
 rich threw stones and pieces of wood at him, but the poor boy paid them not a bit of
 attention. Stirring up a cloud of dust, he ran and ran, and finally he came to a small house.
 The boy put me in through the sacred window and, in his owl words,
 told what had happened.

The elderly man and woman of the house came out, moving their hands up and down.
 When I saw them, they looked truly destitute, but they had the dignity of a gentleman and
 a lady. When they saw me, they briefly bent at their waists as if folding their bodies.
 The old man retired his belt neatly and worshipped me.

“Owl God, O weighty god, we thank you for coming to our humble home. Long ago we
 counted ourselves among those who prospered, but now, as you can see, we have become
 terribly poor. It would be presumptuous of us to take such a weighty god into our humble
 home, but today the sun has already set, so tonight we offer you lodging, and tomorrow,
 we would like to send you off, even if with only an inau.”

Saying this, he worshipped me over and over again.

Beneath the window, the elderly woman spread out a patterned woven mat and laid me
 upon it. Then everyone went to bed, and soon the sound of their snores resonated.

I sat between my own ears, and finally when it was around midnight, I woke up.

“Silver drops fall, fall, all around; gold drops fall, fall, all around.”

Singing this song softly to the lower seat and to the upper seat of the house I flew,
 and the sound echoed like mental. When I flapped my wings, all around me beautiful
 treasures, marvellous treasures, fluttered down, making a beautiful echo.

In a mere instant, I filled the little house with beautiful treasures, marvellous treasures.

“Silver drops fall, fall, all around; gold drops fall, fall, all around.”

Singing this song, in an instant I turned the little house into a metallic house, a great
 house, and inside I made a splendid alcove to hold the treasures.

Then I rushed to make some beautiful, splendid kimono and decorated the house with them. I decorated this house even more splendidly than the house of a rich man, and when I finished, I went back to sitting between the ears of my own body.

Then I showed the people of the house a dream:

A rich man was unlucky and ended up a poor man and was ridiculed by the people who used to be poor and were now rich. Seeing how he was ridiculed and mistreated, I felt sorry for him, so, although I am no mere deity of low standing, I stayed at the human house and made them wealthy. Of this I told them.

Soon after, dawn arrived, and all at once the people of the house awoke, and rubbing their eyes as they looked around the house, they all fell to on the floor in disbelief.

The elderly woman sobbed loudly over and over, and the old man spilled pure tears, but finally he stood up and came to me

and worshipped me twenty or thirty times and said as follows:

“I thought I had just had a dream or fell asleep, but to my surprise, you really have done this for us. We were grateful just to have you in our worthless, humble home, but you, the God of the Village, the weighty god, have taken pity on us in our misfortune and blessed us with the greatest of blessings!”

Weeping, the elderly man expressed his thanks.

Then, the man cut a tree for an inau

and beautifully made a splendid inau and decorated me with it.

The elderly woman retied her belt neatly, and with the little child’s help, gathered firewood and drew water to prepare for making wine,

and in no time there were six tubs full of wine lined up at the head of the hearth.

Then, I and the Fire Goddess, the Elderly Goddess, began telling stories of various gods.

After two days had passed,

the scent of wine, a favourite of the gods, wafted through the house.

Next, the old man and woman purposely dressed that little child in old clothing and sent him to invite to their house the people who were once poor and who were now rich.

Now, as I watched the child go off, he entered the houses one by one and delivered the message. When he did, the people who were once poor and who were now rich all laughed at once.

“Well, well. What kind of wine have the poor people made and what kind of feast is there that they should invite us? Let’s go see what is going on and laugh at them.”

Saying this, a crowd of people came, and some of them,

even just seeing the house from a distance were so surprised and ashamed that they went straight home, while others came to the front of the house and were paralyzed with shock.

Seeing this, the elderly lady of the house came out and took their hands

and led them into the house, and everyone entered hesitantly, sliding in while seated and crawling in, not one of them able to raise his head.

Finally the man of the house stood and began to speak,
 his voice ringing out beautifully like a cuckoo, and he said as follows:
 “Because we were poor, we could not associated with everyone without discrimination,
 but the weighthly god who watched over this village took pity on us.
 Since we had never done any bad deeds, we were blessed in this way.
 So, I would like to ask that from now on the people of this village unite
 and get along with one another.”

When the old man said this, the people rubbed their hands together again and again and
 apologized to the man and promised to get along with one another.
 I was thanked and worshipped by everyone. After that, they all relaxed and took turns
 pouring for one another the exceptionally delicious wine.
 I had a truly enjoyable time watching the humans hopping and dancing about
 while I chatted pleasantly with the Fire Goddess, the God of the House, and the Inau
 God.

After two or three days,
 the feast ended, and seeing that the humans were getting along with one another,
 I was able to relax. So, to the Fire Goddess, the God of the House, and the Inau God,
 I said my farewells and returned to my own home.
 But before I arrived, my house had already been filled with beautiful inau and delicious
 wine. So I sent a messenger to invite the nearby gods and the far away gods,
 and we took turns pouring for one another the exceptionally delicious wine,
 and on this occasion I told the gods everything that happened at the village of the
 humans,
 and when I told them the details, the gods praised me heartily.
 Then, when the gods left, I gave them many beautiful inau.

Now when I look at that human village,
 the people live peaceful lives, and everyone gets along with one another.
 The man of that house is now the head of the village,
 and that child is now an adult with a wide and children and is obedient to his parents.
 Whenever they make wine, they always worship me with inau
 and wine at the beginning of the feast.
 And I am always with the humans, supporting them and watching over them.
 In this way, I protect the world of the humans.

Thus spoke the Owl God.

Appendix 2

梟の神が自ら歌った謡『コンクワ』 “Song Sung by the Owl God ‘Konkuwa’”

Source for English translation: Katayama, Tatsumine. *Commentary on Ainu Shin-yoshū: Collected Stories of the Ainu Gods*, translated by Julie Kaizawa. Tokyo: Sofukan, 2003.

Konkuwa

“Long ago, when I spoke my voice rang out strong like the whirl of a bow wrapped in cherry bark when its center was plucked, but now I am old and feeble. However, if there is anyone who is eloquent and confident in his ability to deliver a message, I want to send him to carry five and a half messages to heaven,”

I said, beating time on the lid of a hooped shintoko.
Just then, from the doorway, I heard someone say,

“Who is more eloquent and more confident a messenger than I?”

When I looked, I saw that it was a young crow.
I let him in, and then, in order to send the young crow on my errand,
I told him the messages as I beat on the lid of the hooped shintoko.

After three days had passed, although I had told only three of the messages,
when I looked up, I saw the young crow behind the hearth frame, nodding off.
Seeing that, violent anger surged up within me,
and I beat the young crow to death, feathers and all.
Then, once again beating time on the lid of a hooped shintoko, I said,

“If there is anyone who is confident in his ability to deliver a message, I want to send him to carry five and a half messages to heaven.”

When I said this, once again, someone stood in the doorway and said,

“Who is more eloquent and more suited to deliver a message to heaven than I?”

When I looked, I saw that it was a mountain jay.
I let him in, and once again, beating time on the lid of a hooped shintoko.
I spent four days telling the five and a half messages to the mountain jay.
When I was in the middle of the fourth message,
I noticed the bird dozing behind the hearth frame.
Enraged, I beat the mountain jay to death, feathers and all.

Once again, beating time on the lid of a hooped shintoko, I said,

“If there is anyone who is confident in his ability to deliver a message,
I want to send him to heaven with five and a half messages.”

When I said this, someone respectfully entered my house.

When I looked, I saw that it was a young water ouzel,
and with a splendid appearance, he sat in the guest seat.
Seeing that, I began beating time on the hooped shintoko lid
and told the five and a half messages, continuing night and day.

When I looked up, I saw that the water ouzel was listening to my words,
with no sign of nodding off.
When it had been altogether six days and six nights, I finished speaking.

Immediately, the water ouzel flew out through the smoke hole and went up to heaven.

The content of the message was that
there was a famine and the humans were on the verge of starvation.
Looking at the reasons for this, it seemed that the god who sent the deer and the god
who sent the fish down from heaven had conferred
and decided not to send down any more deer or any more fish.
No matter how the other gods pleaded, they would not pay them the slightest head.
So when the humans went to the mountain to hunt, there were no deer,
and when they went to the river to fish, there were no fish.
Seeing that, I had become angry, so I sent a messenger to the gods who sent down the
deer and the fish from heaven.

Several days passed,
and after I heard a faint sound from across the sky, someone entered my house.
When I looked, I saw the young water ouzel, even more beautiful than before, his heroic
features even more gallant, and he stated the response to my message.

The reason that the deer god and the fish god did not send any deer or fish down from
heaven was that when the humans hunted the deer,
they beat them over their heads with a stick,
and when they skinned the deer, they abandoned their heads in the forest,
and when the humans caught the fish, they hit the fish over their heads with rotten stick,
so the deer had gone naked and crying back to the deer god,
and the fish had gone back to the fish god holding rotten sticks in their mouths.
The deer god and the fish god had become angry,
and after conferring, they had decided not to send down any more deer or fish.
But after that, the river crow explained in detail,
the deer god and the fish god decided that
if the humans would handle the deer and fish with proper etiquette,

the gods would agree to send down more deer and fish.
When I heard this, I praised the young water ouzel.

When I looked, I saw that the humans really did treat the deer and fish carelessly.
After that, I taught the humans in their sleep, in their dreams,
that they must never do such things again. With a start, the humans realized their mistake,
and from that day they made beautiful sticks like inau for beating the heads of the fish
and catching them,
and when they hunted deer, they decorated the deer beautifully with inau.
The fish happily put the beautiful inau in their mouths and went back to the fish god, and
the deer happily went back to the deer god with their newly decorated heads.
Pleased with this, the deer god and the fish god sent down plenty of fish and plenty of
deer.

Now the humans live without worries and without wanting for food.
Seeing that, I was relieved. Old and feeble, I had wanted to go to heaven,
but because a famine had occurred in the human worlds that I was protecting,
I could not abandon the humans when they were on the verge of starvation, so I had
stayed here. But now that there are no more worries, I am leaving a true warrior, a young
warrior,
to protect the world of the humans after me, and now I am about to go to heave.
Thus told the guardian god, the Old Man God of the Village,
and went up to heaven. Thus the Owl God recounted.

Appendix 3

『シマフクロウとサケ』 “Owl and Salmon)”

Source for Japanese translation: Shizue, Ukaji. シマフクロウとサケ [Blakiston's Fish Owl and Salmon]. Tokyo: Hukuinkanshoten, 2006.

Source for English translation: アイヌからのメッセージ-ものづくりと心- [Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit]. Sapporo: The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, 2003.

フムフムカト フムフムカト
わたしは、村の守り神、
シマフクロウのカムイチカプ。
山でひとり暮らしていたので、
つまらなくなつて、山を下り、
浜へおりてきました。
木にとまって、沖の方を見ていると、
神の魚、サケの群れがやってきました。
まっさきに上ってきた
先頭のサケは、
仲間のサケたちにこう告げました。
「尊いシマフクロウの
カムイチカプがおいでになるぞ。
おそれつつしみなさい」

Bored with my life in a mountain village, I decided to fly to the beach.
As I was sitting on a tree at the beach and looking out over the sea,
A shoal of fish gods came ashore and a salmon god, the first one
to come out of the sea, said to the other salmon,
“Be quiet! A gracious god is in our presence.”

ところが、最後にやってきたサケたちが
こう言ったのです。
「いったい何のカムイだい。
そんなでっかい目玉をしたものが、
おそれおおい神だというのかい」
そのサケたちは、
「しっぽが裂けたもの」と呼ばれ、
神の魚と言われるサケの中でも
一番どんじりの魚でした。

However, the last salmon to come ashore questioned,
 “What kind of god is he? Do you really think a creature with such big eyes could be gracious?”

This fish god had a name. Although he was the true god of food,
 He was actually called “Fish with a split tail fin.”

This fish was the very last among all the salmon.

「しっぽが裂けたもの」たちは、
 「あいつは何さまだっていうんだ。
 どんな神さまがいるからって、
 おれたちがおとなしくしなければ
 ならないんだ」
 と、くりかえしくりかえし言いながら、
 高く高く尾びれをあげてはバタつかせ、
 とびはね、とびはね、
 テレケテレケ、ホリピリピと、
 海の水をまきちらしました。
 これには、シマフクロウのわたし、カムイチカプも、
 がまんがならなくなり、ふところから
 銀のひしゃく、シロカネピサックをとりだしました。
 そして海の水を汲むと、
 海の半分の水がなくなってしまいました。

He jumped with his tail fin flapping and said,
 “What do we have to be quiet for a god we do not ever know?”
 Having no patience with what he had said, I took out a silver ladle from my bosom and
 Began drawing water from the sea. At last I had scooped out half of the seawater.

すると、先頭にいたサケが、
 どんじりのサケに向かって、怒って言いました。
 「このような怒りを、わたしはおそれていたのだ。
 シマフクロウのカムイチカプに失礼のないようにと、
 わたしが告げておいたのに、
 おまえたちは聞こうともせず、あのようなことをして。
 いまはもう、水が半分も汲まれてしまい、
 われわれは、仲間ともども、
 死にそうに苦しんでいるではないか」
 先頭のサケは苦しそうにうめきました。

The top salmon god then became angry and said,
 “This is the rage I was afraid of. This is what the god does!
 All of this is your fault because you did not obey what I said.”

And with this, the top salmon god and the other salmon began to suffer.
I continued to bail out the seawater with the silver ladle until the sea had completely dried up.

シマフクロウのわたし、カムイチカブは、
こんどは金のひしゃく、コンカネピサックをとりだして、
さらに海の水を汲みましたので、
海はすっかり干上がってしまいました。
ここにいたっては、どんじりのサケたちさえ、
苦しみ、うめき声をあげました。
先頭のサケは、はげしくもがき苦しみ、
うなり声をあげ、きれぎれにこう言いました。
「神をおそれぬことをしてはならぬと、
どんじりのサケに告げておいたのに、
おまえたちは耳を貸さなかった。
だから、いま、仲間ともども、わたしは
死のうとしているのだ」
それを見て、シマフクロウのわたし
カムイチカブは、
いまさらのように驚き、
「わたしが怒りをかきたてたとて、
なんのいいことがあるか」
と、思い直しました。

Though all of the salmon groaned saying,
“Don’t act as if you do not fear the god,” they all began to die.
I was shocked at what was happening and thought to myself,
“What benefit is there from doing this just because I am angry.”

そして、銀のひしゃく、
シロカネピサックで水をもどすと、
海の半分が満ちました。
さらに、金のひしゃく、
コンカネピサックで水をもどすと、
海は満ち、もとにもどりました。
すると、先頭のサケは、
「尊いカムイチカブよ、
怒りをしずめて、
海の水を満たしてくださり、
わたしたちは、生き返りました。
ありがとうございます。
尊いカムイチカブよ」

と言って、喜びつつ、
 しずかに去ってゆきました。
 それからシマフクロウのわたし、
 カムイチカプは、
 わたしの大地、
 わたしの山へ
 帰ることにしました。
 そして、山にもどってきたわたしは、
 いつものように
 ひとりさみしく山で暮らすカムイとなって、
 このように語っているのです。

フムフムカト フムフムカト
 これが、シマフクロウ、
 カムイチカプの語った物語です。

Then I had a second thought about what I had done,
 I used the silver ladle to return all of the water to the sea.
 The top salmon god was delighted and thanked me,
 “Gracious god, thank you for appeasing your wrath and filling the sea with water.
 Now we will be able to survive.”
 And he quietly left.
 I returned to my village, and continued my life as a god living on the mountain as I
 always had.

This is the story told by the Blakiston’s Fish Owl god.

Appendix 4

『カムイチカプ 神々の物語』 “Kamuy Chikap: Stories of Gods”

Source for Japanese translation: Fujimura, Hisakazu *カムイチカプ神々の物語* [Kamuy Chikap: Stories of Gods]. Tokyo: Hukuinkanshoten, 1984.

Source for English translation: Yuko Kameda

トロリンポー、トロリンポー、
わしは、シマフクロウの神で、
ふかいふかい山おくで、くらしておった。
トロリンポー、トロリンポー、
わしのつとめは、村人が、
やすらかに、ねむれるように、
トロリンポー、トロリンポー、
村村をみまわることじゃった。
トロリンポー、トロリンポー、

Tororinpoo, Tororinpoo,
I am the owl god,
living deep, deep, deep in the mountains.
Tororinpoo, Tororinpoo,
My job is to keep the villagers
sleeping safely,
Tororinpoo, Tororinpoo,
Looking after the villages
Tororinpoo, Tororinpoo,

あるひ、ながい夜もあけて、
たいようが海のかなたから、
かおをだしはじめた。
わしは、つばさをひろげ、
ひといきに浜へとおりた。

Finally now finally, the long night finally ends
and the sun begins to rise, lifting its face from the sea.
I spread my wings and fly along the seashore.

空は、どこまでもあおくすみ、
海は、なみひとつなくかがみのよう、
のぼるたいようを、うつしておった。

The sky is infinitely blue
and the ocean without a single wave is like a mirror,
the rising sun reflected on its surface.

わしは、たかいかれ木のでっぺんにとまり、はねをやすめ、
なにごともしなかつたことをたしかめた。
すばらしいながめにうっとりしていると、
海のかなたに、なにかくろいものが
あらわれた。

Sitting at the top of a dead tree and having a little rest,
I make sure everything is fine.
Just as I am fascinated by the beautiful scenery,
something black appears beyond the sea.

くろいものは、だんだん大きくなり、
わしのほうへむかってくる。
なにものだと目をこらして、よくみると、
それは、シャチの一ぞくじゃった。

The black things are getting bigger
and coming towards me.
I pay great attention to see what they are
Aha! They are a family of Orca.

せんとうをおよいでいた、
シャチのとうもくは、
わしにきがつくと、あとをふりむいていった。
「これ、一ぞくのものよ。むれから
はなれずに、きちんとならんでおよげ。
りくのかれ木のでっぺんには、
うわさにたかいシマフクロウの神が、
おいでになる。
おとをたてず、なみしぶきをあげずに、
ゆっくりしずかにおよぐのだぞ」

The head of the family who takes the lead notices me
and says to his followers,
“Listen to me my family, do not separate from the group, but swim in a single line.
We have the famous god, the Owl God, sitting on the top of the tree on the seashore.
Do not make a noise or splash, but swim slowly and quietly.”

ところが、あとからやってきた、

シャチのわかものどもは、
 わしをみてわるくちをいいおった。
 「なんとまあ、ぶかっこうな鳥。
 ギョロ目で、大きなくちばしの鳥。
 あれが、うわさにたかいシマフクロウの神とはねえ」
 わるくちにあきたらないやつらは、
 おびれでなみをたたいて音をたて、
 大きくはねた。

However, some young ones bringing up the rear see me and insult me.
 “What a clumsy looking bird! With such strange big eyes and a big beak!
 Can he really be the famous Owl God?”
 Not satisfied with speaking ill of me,
 They splash the water with their tails,
 making noise, and leaping into the air.

わしは、なみしぶきをかぶり、
 あたまからずぶぬれに
 なってしまった。
 シャチの父さん、母さんが、
 「やめろ、やめろ」といっても、
 わかものどもは、
 まるでいうことをきかない。
 わしは、しだいにはらのそこから、
 いかりがこみあげてきて、
 おさえようにも、おさえきれなくなった。
 おもわずつばさをひらいて、
 はばたくとどうだろう。
 とつえんたかいたかい山のいただきから、
 はげしい風が、かたまりになって、
 ふきおろし、浜へとくだってくるではないか。
 まっすぐな木は、えだはをとられ、
 ねじれた木は、まがりめからおれ、
 うろになった木は、ひきぬけて、
 たかい空へとはねとんだ。

From head to tail I'm totally soaked!
 Even though their parents say, “Stop! Stop!”
 The young orcas take no heed.
 My anger grows and grows from deep within me!
 Try as I might to hold it in—but I cannot!
 Without thinking, I open my wings and flap them!
 From far beyond the top of the tall mountains,

Comes a fierce wind down to the beach.
 Straight trees lose their branches and leaves;
 twisted trees are broken;
 and hollow trees are pulled out and flung up to the sky.

風はいきおいをまし、だいちを
 はぎとり、そぎちぎり、土けむりをたてて、
 海へとつきすすんだ。

The force of the wind increases,
 stripping off the soil,
 filling the sky with a smoke of earth and driving towards the ocean.

ひきうかれた木と、石や岩は、
 大なみにまかれて、
 シャチのむれをおそい、かわをやぶり、
 肉をきり、ほねをくだいた。

The uprooted trees and the stones and the rocks
 hit the orca family in a wave,
 breaking their skin, cutting their flesh, and breaking their bones.

はげしい風が、おさまったときには、
 シャチのむれは、あとかたもなく
 きえておった。
 風のとおりすぎたところは、
 まるであらしのあとのようじゃった。
 わしは、家へともどっていったが、
 いかりは、なかなか
 おさまらなかつた。

When the wind finally stops, the orca family has disappeared without a trace.
 Wherever the wind has passed now looks as if ravaged by a storm.
 I return to my home but my anger is not easily suppressed.

なん年かすぎて、わしはふたたび浜へおりてみたくなった。
 浜のかれ木のでっぺんにまいおり、
 つばさをやすめ、わしは海をながめておった。
 すると、海のかなたに、
 なにかくろいものがあらわれた。
 くろいものはだんだん大きくなり、
 目をこらしてよくみると、それは、
 シャチの一ぞくじゃった。

A few years pass, and I decide once again to go down to the beach.
 I settle myself at the top of a dead tree and have a rest.
 When I look out over the distant ocean, something black has appeared.
 The black dots are getting bigger.
 I keep my eyes fixed on them, and it is the family of orca.

むれのせんとうをおよいでいた、
 シャチのとうもくは、ふりむいていった。
 「これ、一ぞくのものよ。むれからはなれずに、
 きちんとならんでおよげ。
 りくのかれ木には、うわさにたかい
 シマフクロウの神がおいでになる。
 音をたてず、なみしぶきをあげずに、
 ゆっくりしずかにおよぐのだぞ」

The leader of the family says to his followers,
 “Listen my family. Do not separate from the group, but swim in a single line.
 We have the famous Owl God sitting on a dead tree.
 Do not make a noise or spray, but swim slowly and quietly.”

あとにつづくシャチの一ぞくは、
 わしをうやまい、かしこまり、
 ぎょうぎよくならんで、
 海のかなたへともどっていった。

The family following along respect me, and, behaving humbly,
 Return far back to the ocean with an air of profound respect.

ながい年月がたち、シャチのとうもくは、
 年をとって、わしのまえにすがたを
 みせなくなった。かわって、わかい
 シャチのとうもくが、一ぞくをつれて、
 まい年のように、わしのところへ
 あいさつにやってきた。

Many long years have passed; the head of the family of orca has grown old
 and does not appear before me.
 Instead, the new younger head of the family leads his family to greet me every year.

わしは、たいへんかんしんし、
 うれしかったので、トロリンポー、
 トロリンポー、シャチの一ぞくを

いつまでも、すえながくみまもることを、
トロリンポー、トロリンポー、
ふかくこころにきめたんじゃ。と、
シマフクロウの神が、人に
かたりましたとさ。タネパクノ。

I am deeply impressed and happy!
Tororinpoo, Tororinpoo,
I decide I will look after the orca family for a long time.
Tororinpoo, Tororinpoo,
I decide this deep in my mind.
This is what the Owl God tells to the humans.
Tanepakuno.