THE JESUP NORTH PACIFIC EXPEDITION (1897-1902) AND THE AMUR-SAKHALIN REGION

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1. THE JESUP NORTH PACIFIC EXPEDITION: BACKGROUND

More than a century has passed since the completion of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (JNPE), and it is still considered a major event in the history of anthropology. Initiated with great fanfares in the mass media and the academic community by Franz Boas, a scholar still praised as the "Father of Anthropology" who labeled his project as "the greatest thing ever undertaken by any museum" (Cole 2001 : 29), it influenced whole generations of anthropologists due to its enormous wealth of data and its interdisciplinary approach, combining ethnology, archaeology, physical anthropology, linguistics and oral traditions. Some of the numerous JNPE published materials have become ethnographic classics, such as The Chukchee by W. Bogoraz (1904-09) and The Koryak (1908) by W. Jochelson, while others are still in the form of fieldnotes in archives waiting to be edited and published (Boas' own material on the Kwakiutl was not published until 1966, twenty-three years after his death, while Shternberg's contribution on the Gilyak or the Nivkh as they are known today was published in 1999, seventy-two years after his death - Shternberg 1999). Numerous studies followed throughout the 20th century, focusing on comparative analysis of culture traits found on both sides of Bering Strait that complemented the original JNPE research. These traits included the raven cycle in the North Pacific

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mythology, the bear ceremonial complex, rituals related to subsistence based on the salmon, sea- and land-mammal hunting techniques and tools, circumpolar pithouse architecture, clothing, footwear, water transportation and many others. The continuing interest in North Pacific cultural problems in the historical perspective led to increasing cooperation between American and Russian scholars since 1970's, resulting in several joint academic conferences and books based on them, and culminated in a large-scale American-Soviet project in 1988, which aimed at updating the results of the JNPE through a major exhibition and several conferences and publications associated with it. The exhibition, named "Crossroads of Continents : Cultures of Siberia and Alaska", was sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History, the same institution that also had sponsored the JNPE and that Franz Boas had directed. The organizers of the Crossroads exhibition praised the Jesup expedition lavishly ("a grandiose, brilliantly conceptualized, and masterfully orchestrated attack on one of the most important problems in American anthropology" - Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988 : 14 - and "the foremost expedition in the history of American anthropology - Freed, Freed, and Williamson 1988 : 7) and emphasized the continuity between the two projects. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism has further accelerated scholarly exchanges and liberalized the scope of study by freeing it from political restrictions. Boas' originally intended areal scope of the North Pacific research for the JNPE was a vast region centered on Bering Strait from which it was extending along the North Pacific coast in the southeastern direction encompassing the coastal cultures of Alaska, British Columbia and Washington, and in the southwestern direction via Chukchi and Kamchatka Peninsulas and Lower Amur and Sakhalin regions, terminating in Hokkaido whose Ainu culture seemed to Boas an integral component of the North Pacific cultural continuum. However, the Ainu research was eventually dropped from the JNPE agenda and it was not included in the Crossroads Exhibition, either, because of a strict definition of the project as one conducted by Soviet and U.S, scholars involving inhabitants of the Soviet and U.S. territories (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988). The failure to include the Ainu material that Boas hoped for was finally remedied in 1999 when a major museum exhibition named "Ainu : Spirit of Northern People" was opened and an

accompanying large-scale book of the same title published. This exhibition and book are based on research done by American, Russian and Japanese scholars, introducing many new dimensions to the North Pacific anthropological reaearch (Fitzhugh and Dubreuil 1999). By the time of the one-hundred year anniversary of the completion of the JNPE, the anthropological research activity became so vigorous that that a new project, tentatively labeled "Jesup 2", was launched (cf. Krupnik and Fitzhugh 2001). Thus, the relevance of comparative and historical research of North Pacific cultures of Asia and America seems to be as relevant today as it was a century ago under the leadership of Franz Boas.

The basic idea that initiated the JNPE research and kept the interest in ethnic and cultural links between northeastern Asia and northwestern North America alive until the present day has generally been constant. The consensus that America was populated by immigrants from the Asian continent who crossed Bering Strait in several waves in pursuit of wild animals had been reached several decades before launching the JNPE. While not much data existed on early migrations, evidence from linguistics and physical anthropology was clear about two final migrations from Asia : 1. That of the "Na-Dene" speaking peoples ; i.e. Athabaskans, Tlingit and Haida (approximately 10-9 thousand years ago), whose area of inhabitance now comprises most parts of Alaska and northwestern Canada and 2., that of the "Eskimo-Aleut" language family speakers who constitute the latest wave of immigrants to America (about 5 to 4 thousand years ago) and who live today in the easternmost peripheries of Russia, coastal Alaska, northern Canada and Greenland. Thus, the fact that the areas geographically the closest to Asia are inhabited by peoples whose migrations to America are proven to be the most recent suggests a possibility of retention of some common traits in culture. While in many parts of the world a period of ten thousand years is too long for survival of common cultural elements, in areas of isolation where foreign influences are few, such as in aboriginal Australia, the rate of retention may be much longer. Much of the data accumulated throughout the 19th century indicated that it may indeed be the case in the Bering Strait region. Furthermore, Bering Strait is narrow enough to allow its crossing with a relative ease, allowing human and cultural exchanges even after it ceased to be a land bridge. Some features common to the

peoples on both continents, especially those of material culture and economy, can be explained by parallel ways of adaptation to identical physical environments. This includes the pithouse of the coastal peoples and the conical tent of the interior peoples, types of footwear, hunting tools etc. But some are identical in spite of their complexity to such a degree that explaining them in terms of convergence, independent invention or parallel adaptation is not sufficient. Such is, for example, the toggling harpoon head that is distributed contiguously, although in diverse forms, from the coast of southeastern Alaska all the way to Okhotsk and northern Japan Seas. Other traits that can only be explained by historical connections such as a certain type of trap and fishing weir are also found on both sides of Bering Strait, but their distribution is more limited. A number of traits in spiritual culture as well were known to be held in common by the peoples inhabiting both sides of Bering Strait long before the start of the JNPE, and they could likewise only be explained by historical connection. The complex mythological cycle of the Raven figure as a creator, culture hero and trickster is almost identical among the Tlingit,Athabaskans,Eskimos, Aleuts in America and Chukchi, Koryak and Itelmen in Asia. Many scholars were also intrigued by similarities in subsistence activities of the peoples of both continents where the differences can be traced along horizontal, east - west lines, rather than Bering Strait. Thus, the peoples of the arctic coastal tundra area, i.e. the Koryak and Chukchi of Asia and Eskimo and Aleut of America, whose sedentary economy centered on hunting of sea mammals, especially the whale and seal, shared most aspects of material culture, social organization and shamanistic belief and ritual systems. The same regarding the material culture was observed among the peoples of the interior taiga belt, e.g. the Yukagir wild reindeer hunters of Siberia and caribou hunting Athabaskans of Alaska and northwestern Canada. The cultural similarities appeared especially striking among peoples living in the temperate Amur-Sakhalin region on the one hand and the North American Northwest Coast (southeastern Alaska,coastal British Columbia) on the other, with their economies based on abundance of fish, especially salmon, their rich artistic life, the elaborate mortuary and clan winter rituals known as "bear ceremonies" in Russia and "potlaches" in America that involve large-scale redistribution of accumulated property, etc. Hence, the basic facts were

known by the end of the 19th century, and the JNPE provided a chance to complete the picture of the northeastern Asia - northwestern North America cultural and ethnic similarities by additing new data through intensive field research in every part of the North Pacific region. It promised to give answers to such basic questions about traits common to cross-Bering cultures as : Which ones are results of parallel adaptation to similar environments or independent inventions and which are historical consequences? In the case of the latter assumption, are the similarities results of a common ethnic or cultural foundation or substratum, or of a diffusion? In the case of a diffusion, was it one that accompanied the original Asia to America migration or one of a later stage in a reverse direction? Or was it a diffusion of ideas not carried by any large-scale human migration?

None of these questions were unequivocally answered by the JNPE. In spite of the volumes of ethnographic material on North Pacific cultures, no attempt has ever been made to systematize the data and find relevant culture-historical conclusions. This incompleteness of the results of the JNPE may be among the reasons why there is still so much interest in finding answers to the above and other questions, especially since no evidence among the vast amount of ethnological, archaeological, linguistic and physical-anthropological data accumulated over the 20th century has been found to disqualify the original JNPE hypotheses ; on the contrary, many of the early arguments have been strengthened, albeit not in any concrete and specific form. The reasons why the results of the JNPE failed to match Boas' and others' original aspirations were manifold : 1. The scope was too broad. Although the budget secured by the philanthrop Morris Jesup by far exceeded other similar projects, it was insufficient to finance research of a multitude of previously unknown ethnic groups that inhabited the vast areas of unexplored and poorly accessible lands of eastern Siberia, Alaska and northern Canada where the climate was harsh and infectious diseases rampant. Consequently, the research was uneven. The Ainu of Sakhalin, Kurile Islands and Hokkaido and the Tlingit and Athabaskans of Alaska and northwestern Canada were not included in the project because Boas thought there had already been enough data on them in previous studies. The Eskimo were excluded for the same reason ; their researcher had been Boas himself several decades prior to the Jesup

project. His earlier conclusions, now proved to be wrong, that the Eskimo were late intruders into the area who disturbed the local intercultural relationships, prevented him from including problems related to the Eskimo role in the arctic and subarctic culture history in any discussion. The unevenness of research material was thematic as well. Some contributions to the JNPE dealt exclusively with an ethnic group's basketry, others with another group's decorative arts, yet others were concerned solely with tribal mythology. Bogoraz's study of the Chukchi and Jochelson's work on the Koryak and Yukagir were the only comprehensive descriptions encompassing all the aspects of culture, which was Boas' original plan (but which he himself did not fulfil in his own Jesup contributions). 2. Any culture-historical research requires interdisciplinary approaches, utilizing ethnology along with archaeology, linguistics, physical anthropology and other fields. Archaeologists and linguists of the turn of the century were more interested in investigating the Old World rather than recently colonized territories. Some archaeologists participated in the Jesup project, but the vast majority of researchers hired by Boas were ethnologists whose knowledge of other disciplines was superficial. Boas was aware of the danger of error in conjectural reconstructions based mainly on comparative ethnology without interdisciplinary cross-checking, and actively discouraged the Jesup project participants from making hasty conclusions. Nevertheless, Boas himself was guilty of postulating unfounded hypotheses, such as the "Eskimo wedge" theory mentioned above and the "Americanoid theory" according to which all the east Siberian "Paleoasiats" (ethnic groups such as Chukchi, Koryak, Yukagir and Nivkh who speak languages that do not belong to the Tungusic, Mongolic, Turkic or Uralic families) represent postglacial returnees from America, ideas that have had no scientific foundation either in Boas' days or now. 3. It is not surprising that an expedition of such a large scale would run into various logistical problems. On the American side, the problems were relatively mild and were generally related to rivalry between competing groups of field anthropologists focusing on the same place as the one selected by Boas and other members of the Jesup project and trying to lure key informants away from them. On the Russian side, however, the obstacles were tremendous because of the political instability during the turn of the century and economic

backwardness of the areas intended for research. For the northeast Siberian part of the project, Boas hired two ethnologists, W. Bogoraz and W. Jochelson who had already had field experience and who were still currently working on their projects. Like many ethnologists in Russia of that period, Bogoraz and Jochelson became ethnologists only after they were forcibly exiled to Siberia by the Czar's government for their political activities. They trained themselves in the field and by the time their names were suggested to Boas, they had already been well-known ethnologists with numerous publications in Russia. Bogoraz was assigned to study the Chukchi, whose language he already spoke fluently and among whom he had already spent many years, while Jochelson's task was to continue in his research of the Koryak and other ethnic groups of northeastern Siberia.

Both researchers' difficulties, including spending weeks and months in near-death condition due to infectious diseases and exposure to the severe arctic climate during winters, are well documented. The main problem for Boas was that the Russian researchers, especially Bogoraz, returned to their political activities during the tumultuous years in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, neglecting their obligations to complete their ethnographic manuscripts for the JNPE. Much has been written about the Bogoraz - Boas correspondence in which the former pleads the latter for understanding of the importance of the revolutionary cause in Russia, and receives a stern reply that academic and financial responsibilities to the JNPE have a priority (Cole 2001 : 41). Nevertheless, in spite of numerous postponements of deadlines, Bogoraz' and Jochelson's work have become the main pillars of the published Jesup material. But the publication of Bogoraz' and Jochelson's monographs did not alleviate Boas' irritation and frustration. The president of the American Museum of Natural History and the financial provider of the expedition, Morris Jesup, whose budget had almost become exhausted, began to see that the project was far from being completed, with many contributors' field notes still unedited and unpublished. While Boas begged him for more funds to make the long-term completion possible, Jesup demanded a prompt conclusion of the project. The conclusion was supposed to be written by Boas and published as the final volume in the JNPE series, and would contain a thorough review and analysis of all the contributions and present

conclusive discussion of all the hypotheses regarding the historical connections of the ethnic groups and cultures of northeastern Asia and northwestern North America. In spite of Jesup's pleas repeated for years until his death (1908), Boas never wrote any comprehensive conclusion of the project except two brief overviews (1940, 2001). He gradually began to realize that such an undertaking would be futile, and in his private correspondence he expressed regrets of having been part of the project, wishing, in his own words, to "simply dump the whole Jesup Expedition and concern myself no further with it" (Cole 2001 : 29). All the hypotheses that had motivated the JNPE project and that had been used as its driving force remained unproven, and none of the lists of common cross-Bering cultural traits they contained were additions directly resulting from the JNPE data. The activities surrounding both the exhibition Crossroads of Continents and the informal project Jesup 2 have revived the hope that the objectives of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition may in the future be fulfilled ; nevertheless, both of these projects remain within the range of theoretical proposals. It seems we are today where we were more than a century ago.

The Jesup research never assumed that the North Pacific is one single homogeneous culture area. Although the concept of culture area is more associated with Boas' students (C. Wissler, T. Kroeber, M. Herskovits), Boas also used the classificatory concept of culture areas, defined as geographic regions inhabited by peoples whose comparable cultural characteristics are derived from similar adaptation to their physical environment and from parallel historical development with intensive cultural interchange that is due to their mutual proximity, in his comparative analyses and historical reconstructions. The area of the North Pacific as defined by the JNPE project has since the Boas' days until the present time been divided into six culture areas which are exemplified by their main subsistence staple food items (from east to west) : 1. Pacific Northwest Coast of North America (salmon) ; 2. Subarctic (Athabaskan) Northwestern America (caribou) ; 3. Arctic (Eskimo - Aleut) America (sea mammals) ; 4. Arctic Northeastern Siberia (sea mammals) ; 5. Continental Siberia (wild or domesticated reindeer) ; and 6. Amur - Sakhalin (salmon). It is clear, however, that the geographic factor has in at least one case been emphasized over

the cultural factors ; for example, the culture areas 3 and 4 on the eastern and western sides of Bering Strait are in the cultural sense homogeneous. Can the same be said about other culture areas of the North Pacific, namely areas 1 and 6?

2. THE JESUP NORTH PACIFIC EXPEDITION AND THE AMUR-SAKHALIN REGION

Boas excluded the study of the Tlingit, Eskimo, and Ainu from the JNPE project because a certain amount of ethnographic material related to these cultures had already been collected and published in English, but he tried to include the Amur-Sakhalin region in spite of the wealth of data accumulated throughout the 19th century. Reports by Chinese, Japanese and Russian explerers increasingly took the form of professional ethnography, culminating in the major three-volume ethnographic report by Leopold von Schrenck, titled Reisen und Forschungen im Amur-Lande (1881-1892). However, Boas considered the Amur-Sakhalin area important enough to be studied directly under the auspices of the JNPE.

Boas was aware of a prominent ethnologist, Lev Shternberg, currently conducting his fieldwork among the Nivkh (Gilyak), Uilta (Orok) and Ainu on the island of Sakhalin, and hoped to involve him in the Jesup project. Like Bogoraz and Jochelson, he was a political dissident exiled to the Russian Far East due to his activities in the Jewish and socialist movements. By the time Boas was hiring Bogoraz and Jochelson for the JNPE project, Shternberg was still in Sakhalin where it was difficult to communicate with him through correspondence. In order not to delay the project,he hired two newcomers, Berthold Laufer and Gerald Fowke. As a German Jew, considered a persona non grata by the Russian government, Laufer was initially refused a visa but after an arbitration by the Russian Academy of Sciences he finally started his fielwork in Sakhalin in 1898. An orientalist rather than an ethnologist by training, he was Boas' acquaintance from earlier projects of the American Museum of Natural History. He spent his first year among the Nivkh, Uilta and Ainu of Sakhalin, where his research was plagued diseases, near-fatal accidents and especially the lack of mutual trust with his informants who only spoke rudimentary Russian as their second language,while Laufer who spoke Japanese and Chinese but not Russian

relied on Japanese-speaking interpreters. The second part of Laufer's fieldwork was spent in a relative comfort of Khabarovsk near the Russia-China border from which he took trips to nearby Nanai (Goldy) settlements. Laufer's letters to Boas from Khabarovsk reveal his irritation at his lack of funds, overabundance of insects and the fact that only a few old people in the Nanai communities could speak Chinese. Fowke, an American amateur archaeologist, was hired by Boas to work together with Laufer in the Amur region, but the cooperation did not last long. Fowke complained in his letter to Boas about his inability to find any site for excavation and his difficulty to get along with Laufer whom he considered too much of an armchair scholar to conduct fieldwork under difficult conditions. Boas reacted by swiftly dismissing Fowke from the Jesup project, as Laufer was about to become Boas' lifelong protege. Therefore, the Jesup Expedition has no first-hand archaeological material from the Amur-Sakhalin region. Laufer's contribution to the JNPE project was only a thin manuscript on the decorative art of the Amur and Sakhalin peoples, a rather modest result compared with the monumental volumes contributed by Bogoraz and Jochelson from northeastern Siberia. Laufer brought many objects of Amur-Sakhalin material culture and art to the AMNH but he never published any explanation of them. Back in America, he returned to his former interest in Oriental studies (Kendall 1988 : 104, Cole 2001 : 37). Shternberg, one of the most prominent ethnological researchers of the Nivkh and other Amur-Sakhalin peoples, played a complex role in the JNPE project but only after its completion. Boas was aware of Shternberg's ethnological activities in the field as well in the academia and was eager to acquire his findings that would make an important contribution to the JNPE manuscript series and supplement Laufer's work on the Amur-Sakhalin decorative art. Boas met Shternberg several times in New York at the invitation of the AMNH, and they kept a correspondence until the end of Shternberg's life. Boas' relationship with him, just like with Bogoraz and Jochelson, was cordial, based on their common Jewish backgrounds and dedication to ethnological field research, but their cooperation for the JNPE project did not go smoothly. Some of the problems were the same as those with Bogoraz and Jochelson, such as protracted illness, insufficient payment for the research. explosive political situation in Russia compelling many scholars to leave

academia for political work, problems with drawings, transcription of native sounds to English, etc. The major obstacle that hindered Boas' cooperation with Shternberg was Boas' insistence on a uniform descriptive style of ethnographic presentation of data followed by all the JNPE contributors rather than following their own theoretical or analytical agenda. Ideally, each monograph was supposed to be an even comprehensive description of every aspect of culture, something that only Bogoraz and Jochelson accomplished in the whole JNPE project. Shternberg was a profound admirer of L. H. Morgan's Ancient Society(1877)and perhaps because of this reason he researched primarily the family organization and social structure of the Nivkh and other Amur-Sakhalin peoples and presented his data in a way to fully match Morgan's models and conclusions. Although he never became a full-fledged evolutionist, Shternberg analyzed the Nivkh kinship terminology as an indicator of a "group marriage" that represented an early evolutionary stage in Morgan's scheme. Boas who spent much of his life criticizing evolutionism had many problems with Shternberg's findings and their protracted correspondence kept delaying the publication of Shternberg's JNPE contribution. Constant delays plagued the manuscript even after Shternberg's death when Sarra Ratner-Shternberg, his widow, took over the editing of his material and correspondence with Boas. Although she managed to edit and publish much of Shternberg's writing in Russian (1933), loose notes of its English translation waiting for publication survived even Boas' death. It has been finally edited and published in 1999, but it has remained as controversial as it was during the days of its inception. Its evolutionist ideas of the survival of the "group marriage" institution were noticed and praised by F. Engels (Grant 1995 : 165). The majority of modern ethnologists, while placing it among ethnological classics, consider Shternberg's work as misleading in its overzealous attempt to fit the Nivkh social organization to Morgan's model that was the core of Marxist doctrines of social evolution. The modern Nivkhs themselves, whose society has changed drastically as a result of Russification and Sovietization, have been reported to be puzzled by Shternberg's data about their grand- and great-grandparents' family relationships, expressing doubts that their society was ever organized in the way presented by Shternberg

(Grant 1999 : 212-213).

3. THE AMUR-SAKHALIN REGION AS A CULTURE AREA

Since the completion of the JNPE project, several generations of ethnologists have devoted their careers to the study of the Amur-Sakhalin peoples and cultures. The data they have provided are massive but in some instances rather uneven; e.g. the data on the material culture are abundant but on kinship structure deficient. Vast discrepancies in interpretation among ethnologists also exist and are related to the questions of totemism, symmetrical or asymmetrical connubium, etc. Some authors regard the Amur-Sakhalin region to be an integrated culture area or, in the Soviet terminology "a historical-ethnographic region", others see it as a part of the large Siberia culture area that has its peculiarities based on local adaptation to its specific geographic environment (in the Soviet terminology an "economic-cultural region" - Cheboksarov and Cheboksarova 1971), and yet others divide the area according to linguistic criteria, linking the Nivkh whose language is an isolect to the "Paleo-Asians" (a quasi-linguistic/ethnological category) of the Kamchatka and Chukchi Peninsulas while associating the rest of the peoples of the area who speak Tungus-Manchu languages with other Siberian Tungus-Manchu speakers such as the Evenk and Even (Taksami 1973, 1980). Nevertheless, the idea of the Amur-Sakhalin region as an integrated cultural area is now dominant and has been endorsed and supported by archaeological and linguistic data (Kreinovich 1955, Okladnikov 1962). The majority of archaeologists point out a direct continuum between the neolithic and contemporary Amur-Sakhalin cultures which has been based on sedentary life in riverine fishing settlements, with prehistoric disruptions such as the introduction of the sea-mammal hunting technology from the north and occasional migration waves of Tungus-Manchu speaking hunters and reindeer-breeders to the region over the centuries (Derevianko 1973, Okladnikov 1981). Language analysts distinguish a strong non-Tungus-Manchu lexical substratum in all the languages of the Amur-Sakhalin region (Smoliak 1980, 1984, 1994), thus confirming the findings of the archaeologists and supporting the notion of a basic cultural unity within the region. Hence, it is possible to outline the cultures of the Amur-Sakhalin region in general

terms instead of treating the culture of each ethnic group separately, and point out the differences only when necessary. The "ethnographic present" used in the short overview below reflects the traditional cultural situation during its final stage at the beginning of the 20th century, before the almost total cultural breakdown that took place throughout the region during the Soviet era. The seven ethnic groups comprising the Amur-Sakhalin culture area are the following : 1. Nanai (Nanay, Nanaitsy, Gold, Goldy) of the Amur river and its tributaries below the present-day city of Khabarovsk ; 2. Ulcha (Ulchi, Olcha) of the Amur river below the Nanai territory ; 3. Nivkh (Nivkhi, Gilyak, Giliaki) of the Amur river below the Ulcha territory, along Tatar straits and in the northern part of Sakhalin ; 4. Negidal (Negidaltsy) along the Amgun river ; 5. Oroch (Orochi, Orochony) of the western side of Tatar straits and the northern part of the Sikhote-Alin mountain range ; 6. Udehe (Udege, Udegeitsy) of the central part of the Sikhote-Alin south of the Oroch territory) ; and 7. Uilta (Orok, Oroki, Orokko, Orocheny) of the central part of Sakhalin south of the Nivkh territory.

The continuous fish runs throughout the summer and autumn in all the major rivers in the region as well as general abundance of fish in lakes, streams and along the sea shore have assured sedentary lifestyle based on fishing in riverine settlements since at least the neolithic era. Over the centuries, many immigrants of various backgrounds came to this region, some of whom were mainly hunters, others reindeer breeders, and later, in the historical age, agriculturalists and raisers of domestic animals such as pigs and chickens, influencing in various ways the indigenous population, yet in each instance the original sedentary fishing subsistence pattern prevailed. The principal fish is the salmon, especially the Siberian salmon, humpback salmon and summer salmon, each species with its own specific period of ascent to its spawning grounds between July and October when the rivers freeze. This is the most productive time of the year and often the period of several days of fishing using various forms of traps and nets yields over one thousand fish to a single family. Other species of fish that can also be caught in other seasons or all year round include the pike, carp, catfish, sturgeon and numerous others. Tools such as the seine, floating and fixed net, weir, underwater fence, spear, line and hook are used. Hence, fish is

the staple food and is prepared in many forms : sun-dried, smoked, boiled, fried, salted, fermented. Raw fish is considered the main delicacy. Numerous kinds of evidence, such as the neolithic pottery decoration made by imprints of fishnets as well as pre-Tungus-Manchu terminology related to fishing tools and technology, indicate a great time depth of the Amur-Sakhalin fishing culture.

The cultural dependence of the Amur-Sakhalin peoples on fishing is reflected in many other aspects of culture. The settlements are selected according to the features of the rivers or lakes, based on such considerations as bends, shoals and currents that facilitate the construction of traps and weirs and layout and distribution of nets. The settlement size, generally about five to fifteen households (pithouses or north Chinese-style dwellings with heated benches in winter and raised-floor houses in summer), reflect the fishing capacity of the particular place, and the relative position of dwellings up- or downstream coincide with the social position of their inhabitants. Windows and smoke hole coverings are made of fish skin. Lighting in the house is manufactured from melted bones, innards and heads of fish which is the same material as that used to make the cooking oil. Fish also provides glue used in woodworking, house and boat building and manufacture of clothing and footwear. It is especially the clothing that has earned the Amur-Sakhalin peoples epithets such as "fishskin barbarians" in old Chinese travel reports and "fishskin Tatars" in Owen Lattimore's and other European and Chinese writings. Fishskin is the basic material for clothing of both sexes in all four seasons and is only supplemented by other material such as fur of dogs and other animals. Raingear, hats, pouches and other objects are manufactured by using processed fishskin as well.

The fishing economy produces much surplus of fish which is preserved by the sun-drying method and is used to feed dogs. There are many ways dogs can be utilized by the Amur-Sakhalin peoples. As mentioned above, dogs' fur is used as winter clothing. The meat is used for food. The dog can be utilized as a draft animal, in winter pulling sleds loaded with cargo and passengers, or pulling men standing on skis and holding straps, and in summer pulling boats in rivers while running on the river banks. The number of dogs each household keeps is considered to be an indicator of wealth. Especially among the

Nivkh but among other groups of the region as well, an average household keeps 30-40 dogs. They may be used as payments for shamans' curing services, fines compensating for criminal acts, and gifts such as the bridewealth. Some religious rituals such as the bear ceremony are accompanied by dog races and most ceremonial occasions require several dogs to be sacrificed to the deities who are believed to be of human forms and hence in need of dogs as well. Dogs are bred meticulously and their patrilineal exogamy is maintained whenever possible, thus conforming to the descent rules of the human society.

In addition to being fishermen, all the Amur-Sakhalin ethnic groups also are hunters of forest animals, and the degree of importance of this activity depends on the specific features of their physical environment such as distance of their area of inhabitance to large rivers and lakes. Most of the groups such as the Nanai, Negidal and Oroch include population segments that rely on hunting more than on fishing. This is especially true of the Udehe whose entire population occupies the highlands of the Sikachi-Alin mountains and mainly subsists on food obtained from hunting rather than fishing. Elk, deer, boar, bear and other large animals are mainly prized as food sources and were hunted with a spear and bow and arrow until the beginning of the 20th century when firearms became the norm, except for bear hunting which is considered a ritual activity and traditional weapons are preferred in killing the animal, in the same manner as during the bear ceremony. The bear ceremony is one of the most prominent ritual activities practiced by most of the Amur-Sakhalin peoples, and also, in an almost identical form, by the Ainu of Sakhalin and Hokkaido. It involves raising a bear cub for several years until its adulthood and killing it in order to release its soul and send it back to its supernatural master known as the Master of the Mountains. Thus, the bear ceremony cannot be considered a sacrificial ritual but rather a ceremony of gratitude addressed to the supernatural for the gift of the bear meat as well as the meat of other animals obtained during hunting expeditions. Being a ritual of gratitude, giving presents to all the relatives and guests that have been invited to the ceremony always accompanies the bear ceremony, and it represents a redistribution of surplus property that has bee accumulated while raising the bear or manufactured for the occasion. Outside Sakhalin where it is absent, the tiger is regarded as sacred as the bear, but there is a strict

taboo against killing it and against eating its meat even if it is killed accidentally. Trapping of small animals is a non-subsistence economic activity resulting from pressures exerted by the Chinese and later Russian governments that demanded payment of taxes in the form of furs. Trade in furs has reamained a source of cash. The Amur-Sakhalin peoples have also been in contact with Evenk and Even nomadic reindeer-herders who occasionally came to the area with their animals, but since there are few places covered with tundra-like lichen, reindeer-breeding remains only a distant memory in the oral traditions of some Nanai and Negidal clans. On the other hand, reindeer-breeding economy thrives among the Uilta of central Sakhalin, parts of which are covered by vegetation of the tundra type.

An important part of the subsistence economy of the Nivkh, Uilta, Ulcha and Oroch who occupy areas on or near the sea coast is hunting of sea lions, seal, white whales (beluga) and other sea mammals. Based on location, some communities specialize on seal hunting, with fishing only a supplementary activity. Especially during the summer in Sakhalin, hundreds of seal that lie on the beach are routinely clubbed, which leads to frequent surpluses of seal meat and consequent redistribution of it to populations that have no access to seal hunting grounds. Sea mammal hunting is a year-round activity. In winter, holes are cut in the ice in the hope that an animal will appear for breathing while in spring, when the ice begins to break, animals climb to the edge of the ice and camouflaged hunters approach them holding spears. Summer sea mammal hunting activities are organized on a large scale involving joint participation of hundreds of hunters recruited from among agnatic relatives and affinally allied clans. Many boats, nets placed in inlets between cliffs and harpoons of many types are used. Like in the bear hunt, numerous prayers, offerings, rituals and taboos accompany a hunting expedition aiming at a white whale. The killer whale is an animal ritually as important as the white whale, but like the tiger it is economically useless as it may not be killed or eaten.

The subsistence pattern based on fishing and hunting is reflected in the social organization of the Amur-Sakhalin peoples in that many, if not most, descent groups are symbolically associated with a certain animal or fish. Beaver, elk, wolf, salmon, pike and other animals and fish are the basis of many clan names and often are believed to be the

clan ancestors. The bear and tiger clans appear among most of the Amur-Sakhalin ethnic groups and often have a dominant status. In some cases, these two animals represent not only clan but also tribal ancestry, such as the bear among the Oroch and the tiger among the Udehe, leading some researchers to suggest a possibility of the Oroch and Udehe having originally been totemic moieties of a single ethnic entity in the past. All the ethnic groups of the Amur-Sakhalin region consist of exogamous patrilineal descent groups that are linked with each other in two ways. One is the "dokha" or alliance of several clans whose members are prohibited to marry each other and who share numerous social and economic obligations, and the other is the inter-clan alliance based on marriage exchange which can be symmetric, i.e. involving two descent groups, or asymmetric, i.e. comprising three or more descent groups. The distinction between a clan and an ethnic group often is blurred. Among the Ulcha, for example, some clans trace their origins from the Evenk, others from the Manchu, Nanai, Nivkh, Ainu and others, while others trace their origins to an animal and may constitute the core of the Ulcha. The same Ainu or Manchu clans, and the same bear or tiger clans may reappear in several ethnic groups. Social stratification is relatively informal and appears to be based on uneven distribution of wealth resulting from the 17th and 18th century trading.

The importance of fishing and hunting among the Amur-Sakhalin peoples is mirrored by the prominence of two supernatural beings, the Master of the Water and the Master of the Mountains, in their belief system. Although they are conceptualized as beings in human forms, they present themselves to the people in the shape of fish and sea animals represented by the salmon or killer whale or forest animals represented by the bear or tiger, respectively. Similarly, ceremonies directed toward these two major supernatural beings generally involved the mediation of the above fish and animals. The salmon, killer whale, bear and tiger are believed to enter conjugal relations with the human beings, generally a male animal or salmon with a female human which explains some of the totemic ancestry mentioned above. This belief is repeated in hundreds of stories collected among all the Amur-Sakhalin ethnic groups. They also are structurally identical to origin myths of in some other peoples that live in the vicinity, most prominently the Koreans and Ainu (Levin

and Potapov 1964, Taksami 1973, Smoliak 1984, Black 1988).

This brief outline of the Amur-Sakhalin cultures evokes evident parallels with some other North Pacific coastal and riverine cultures ; most notably those of the Northwest Coast of North America such as the Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Kwakiutl and others, whose subsistence is also based on sedentary salmon fishing activities supplemented by hunting of sea and land mammals. Totemism, relatively rare elsewhere in Asia but common in aboriginal America, large-scale mortuary rituals accompanied by gift-giving and redistribution, and other aspects of non-material culture also indicate similarities between the two culture areas. All these similarities may be a result of common origins or historical connections, but with no hard data they can only be explained by parallel adaptation to an almost identical physical environment. Significant cultural differences between the Amur-Sakhalin and the Northwest Coast peoples also exist. While the descent groups of the former are patrilineal, those of the Tlingit are matrilineal. Amur-Sakhalin rituals stress the animal aspect of the supernatural, the Northwest Coast ceremonies mainly involve masked humans. Status on the Asian side is relatively informal while on the American side they are strictly defined. No lexical items indicate a genetic relatioship between Asian and American languages. Archaeological data supported by ethnological and linguistic evidence unequivocally indicate that the basis of the Amur-Sakhalin culture was formed in situ during the neolithic. Later cultural influences are all results of Asian movements. First, the core fishing culture was affected but not significantly modified by nomadic hunting intruders coming from the Siberian taiga regions during the late neolithic. Later influences can be attributed to the specialized sea-mammal hunting culture spreading from the Bering strait area in the north along the Pacific coast of northeastern Asia in the southern direction coming to a halt in the Okhotsk Sea area (hence known as the Okhotsk culture). Finally, archaeological, historical and ethnological data indicate that some groups were superficially influenced by agricultural and domestic animal raising cultures of Manchuria, such as the Bohai, Jurchen and Manchu (Taksami 1980, Smoliak 1980, Kono and Fitzhugh 1999).

4. BOAS' AND OTHERS' LISTS OF COMMON NORTH PACIFIC CULTURE TRAITS

As mentioned above, Boas was reluctant or unable to summarize and analyze the results of JNPE in a comprehensive manner, and only briefly listed the traits that he felt were common to most or all the North Pacific cultures that cannot be explained by a chance or by a convergence resulting from common geographic environments. These trait lists complement rather than overlap each other and are found in two short papers (Boas1940, 2001). Because of his numerous assertions of historical rather than accidental connections (e.g. : "So, it seems that the native Siberians and the Americans of Northwest Coast constitute one entity" - Boas 2001 : 22), it is necessary to examine them as well as those suggested by others in relation to the Amur-Sakhalin region in order to discern any relevance.

1. Dog traction : Dogs pulling sleds are universal in the North Pacific region. Dogs pulling boats floating in rivers and men standing on skis are specific to the Amur-Sakhalin area.

2. Birch bark as material to make containers, canoes and dwellings : Universal in and beyond the North Pacific area. Boas says that this cannot be due only to the presence of birch trees throughout the region because the forms of the containers, boats and dwellings are also "practically identical" (Boas 1940 : 351). In the Amur-Sakhalin area, birch bark is less typical than wood to manufacture the three objects.

3. Flat drum consisting of a hoop covered by a single head : Universal throughout the North Pacific region including the Amur-Sakhalin area but also found in other parts of the world. Boas cosiders the circum-Mediterranean tambourine structurally different and hints at independent invention.

4. Slat armor : Sporadically found in the North Pacific area. Boas acknowledges its similarity to the Chinese and Japanese armor and cautiously suggests a possibility of its diffusion to the North Pacific from East Asia.

5. Sinew-backed bow : Universal in the North Pacific area but not limited to it. Again, Boas suggests its possible diffusion from Asia to America.

6. Bear ceremonial : Boas notes that the bear ceremonialism is distributed throughout

the solid area of boreal forests of Siberia and North America where the bear is treated with respect, elaborate rituals take place following its killing and various honorifics are used in prayers addressed to its soul. The parallel ceremonial details lead Boas to conclude that "it is hardly admissible to assume that the cult of the bear has developed independently all over this country on account of the fear inspired by this animal", adding that "these particular ceremonials are not found in regard to other dangerous animals" (Boas 1940 : 352), but unfortunately without specifying what animals in Siberia and North America are more terrifying to the human beings than the bear. In the Amur-Sakhalin area, the tiger and the killer whale are believed to be as sacred as the bear and ceremonies held for these three animals are generally identical, except for the ritual taboo against killing the tiger and the killer whale and eating their meat, which is not applicable in the bear's case. All these three animals are believed to marry human beings and produce human descendants, an idea limited to the Amur-Sakhalin region. More significantly, the peoples of this region, including the Ainu of Hokkaido, have the specific type of bear ceremony briefly described above (involving raising a bear cub in a cage and ritually killing it in a major winter ceremony after several years), which is not found anywhere else in northern Eurasia and North America where the bear is killed immediately after it is encountered in the forest. Among the Ulcha, Negidal, Nivkh, Oroch, Uilta and Ainu, this ritual is the most important of all. Similar in character are the "potlaches", or redistributive winter ceremonies of the American Northwest Coast inhabitants, but they lack the bear ceremonialism as their basic symbolic feature. While the bear, along with the tiger, are considered to be the principal totemic animals associated with core clans or entire ethnic groups, among the Northwest Coast inhabitants the bear does not even represent the moiety totem. In fact, according to Hallowell (1926), Eurasian bear ceremonialism shares more elements in common with the Algonquin tribes of northeastern North America whose cultures have not been included in the JNPE plan.

7. "Wood-shavings, grasses, and shredded bark as religious symbols which characterize the ceremonials of the Ainu, Koryak, Chukchee, and the coast tribes of British Columbia and southern Alaska"(Boas 1940 : 352), but also a multitude of other ethnic

groups around the world. Prayer sticks and similar ritual objects reflect very elementary religious concepts that easily transform themselves into symbols of comparable forms. "Wood-shavings, grasses, and shredded bark" seems to be a category too heterogeneous to be utilized in a comparative analysis that would allow postulating any meaningful culture-historical hypotheses. On the other hand, the wooden prayer sticks with elaborate shavings known as inau, ilau, nau, etc. among the the indigenous peoples of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Amur region have identical forms and functions, and they figure prominently in every ritual activity such as the bear ceremony. Similar ritual objects are found also in parts of Japan such as northern Honshu, Amami Oshima and some other islands in the northern part of the Ryukyu chain. Shternberg relates these objects to vaguely similar ones found in southeast Asia and concludes they must be of southern origin (Shternberg 1933). Other scholars claim the wooden prayer stick with shavings originated in prehistoric Japan from which it diffused to northeastern Asia and in a modified form to North America (Obayashi 1991). In any case, it can only be said with certainty that the inau-type object is identical in form and function in Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Amur region, but its affinity to prayer sticks, "wood-shavings, grasses, and shredded bark" is highly hypothetical if not downright doubtful.

8. Fur clothing : Boas tortuously includes this element while admitting that the North Pacific region is characterized by severe winter conditions. Nevertheless, he claims that fur clothing in the North Pacific region can only be explained by cultural diffusion, because cold climate does not automatically "produce adequately protective clothing, as is shown by the scanty covering of the north-west coast of Tierra del Fuego" (Boas 1940 : 351). In any case, this argument is irrelevant in relation to the peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region who use dog furs only as a supplement to their fish-skin clothing which typifies and sets them apart from other regions of the North Pacific.

The activity surrounding the exhibition Crossroads of Continents resulted in expansion of the common North Pacific trait lists and added a certain optimism to further research ; however, most of the traits are prominently distributed only in the regions attached to both sides of Bering Strait. In the Amur-Sakhalin region, their presence is

limited and may not necessarily be explained solely by common origins or historical connections. They include bolas with feather handles, types of spear throwers and fishnets, methods of hollowing trunks for dugout boats, techniques of weir fishing, and ways of cleaning and preserving fish, all of which are distributed from North America to the Amur-Sakhalin region. The use of snowshoes is associated with North America and Chukotka and Kamchatka peninsulas, while most parts of western and central Siberia are characterized by skis. In the Amur-Sakhalin region, both snowshoes and skis are used for different purposes. Winter pithouses with sod covering are excellent for keeping the interior warm and are common in prehistoric or contemporary cultures of most parts of North Asia and North America including the Amur-Sakhalin region (Gurvich 1988 : 18, Dzeniskevich 1987 : 136, Dzeniskevich 1994 : 57-58). The same may be said about summer raised-floor dwellings that isolate the living space from moisture. Besides these elements that may or may not have a historical significance, there are also those that are so intimately related in form and function to each other that the only possible explanation of their relationship can be historical, not environmental, including a type of a trap, straight line or geometric ornamentation, a mythological complex focused on the raven, and a mask type. Their existence has been known since the 19th century, but scholars still cannot found the consensus regarding the place of their origin. Their distribution does not include the Amur-Sakhalin region.

Of all the comparable cultural traits that exist in the Amur-Sakhalin region (including Hokkaido) and the Northwest Coast are those related to salmon fishing. It has already been mentioned that many tools and techniques related to salmon fishing are similar and in some cases the similarity does not appear to be a result of independent invention but rather a result of some kind of historical connection, such as the use of the toggling harpoon or toggling spear which are used continuously along the North Pacific Coast. There are also some beliefs and rituals related to salmon fishing in both regions where the salmon is staple diet ; namely, the so-called first-salmon ceremony held at the beginning of the fishing season and the last-salmon ceremony at the end. In the Amur-Sakhalin region and Hokkaido, members of the community wait for the arrival of the first salmon of the season

ascending the river. As soon as the first fish appears, offerings are given and prayers are said to it. Similar rituals are held for the fish believed to be the last of the season. The salmon is believed to be a messenger that transmits the people's wishes, offerings and expressions of gratitude to the Master of Water who is conceptualized as a being in human form. Among the ethnic groups of the American Northwest Coast, the first salmon of the season is ritually caught, cooked and eaten, while prayers are said to it. The bones and other inedible parts of the fish are then placed in the river again where it is believed the salmon revives and swims back to its master who has a human form and who sends a multitude of fish to the people again during the next fish run. Similarities between the Asian and American versions are apparent, but they become even more strikingly similar when seen within the context of animal cults in general : 1. Like the bear, the salmon comes and presents itself to the people voluntarily, being a gift from its master who is a supernatural human to the people. 2. Like the bear in both continents, the salmon's soul is immortal and thus killing it releases its soul to return to its master. 3. The salmon often reappears in the form of twins who even as human beings are believed to be endowed with supernatural power. Similar beliefs are found among the peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region (Gunther 1926, Obayashi 1996, Roche and McHutchison 1998 : 94, Kono and Fitzhugh 1999 : 119).

CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, the JNPE research had varying levels of success depending on each region. For example, while the results of Bogoraz' and Jochelson's work among the Chukchi and Koryak are of superior quality, there is no treatise of the Eskimo (Inuit) culture because of Boas' insistence on its exclusion and only a very short monograph on the Aleut was published in the JNPE series, thus making impossible any attempt of a meaningful comparative analysis that would indicate similarities and historical interconnections among the cultures on both sides of Bering Strait.After extensive archaeological and ethnological investigations throughout the 20th century, it is now certain that based on not only environmental considerations but also provable historical connections, the Chukchi, Koryak, Itelmen, Aleut and Eskimo cultures should be included in a single broad culture

area rather than two separate ones as has been customary in traditional classifications. Similarly, while the JNPE series includes a monograph on the Yukagir hunters of the east Siberian taiga/tundra region, its Athapaskan counterparts of America are absent. Therefore, it can be said that because of the limited budget, short period of time allowed for field research,and insufficient availability of trained fieldworkers, the scope of the JNPE project was overambitious. Cultures of the ethnic groups that occupy regions attached to Bering Strait should have been studied in the first phase, and only after a thorough analysis of the data the research should have proceeded to culture areas more distant from Bering Strait.

The Amur-Sakhalin part of the JNPE project in particular cannot be considered successful. There are several reasons for it : 1. Among the six ethnic groups of the region (or seven if the Sakhalin Ainu were included), only the Nivkh, Nanai and partly Uilta were studied. 2. The researcher appointed by Boas to be in charge of the research of this region, Laufer, was incompetent as a field ethnographer (though talented as an art historian), contributing only a short monograph on the Nanai decorative art to the JNPE series. 3. The other scholar contacted by Boas to work on the JNPE ethnological research, Shternberg, was unable to cooperate effectively due to his closely defined theoretical approaches, as well as due to his concerns with the revolutionary movements in Russia that distracted him from his ethnological studies. 4. Boas was aware that interdisciplinary approaches utilizing archaeology and other fields in addition to ethnological data to ascertain whether similar cultural traits among different ethnic groups are historically connected, yet he engaged very few archaeologists in the project. The archaeologist employed to study the prehistory of the Amur-Sakhalin region, Fowke, was terminated by Boas apparently on an impulse before being given a chance to prove himself. 5. No working hypothesis was ever postulated that would determine the methodology or direction of research in the Amur-Sakhalin region. No reason was given for the inclusion of the Amur-Sakhalin region in the JNPE project, beyond a general list of culture traits common to the whole area of the North Pacific.

The intention of this paper was not to dismiss attempts at cultural-historical comparisons of the Amur-Sakhalin region with other areas of the North Pacific. Comparisons, however, must be done within a limited and strictly defined framework.

Culture-historical sequences within a given culture area must be distinguished first in order to establish a chronological perspective. In the Amur-Sakhalin region, the earliest cultural stratum, prominent throughout the neolithic era, coincides with the core of the contemporary cultures and is defined by sedentary life based on fishing with hunting as a secondary activity. Upon this basis, additional cultural layers or superstrata can be distinguished, and they are related to late neolithic and postneolithic ethnic and cultural movements and influences from various parts of northeastern Asia. It is thus possible to study the Amur-Sakhalin culture area as a part of cultural continua that run in various directions ; e.g. along the coast toward the south and southwest, which is evident in such traits as the ubiquitous spiral ornament, summer house architecture, etc., along major rivers toward the interior of Siberia, evident in skis, hunting tools and techniques, elements of shamanism,etc., and along the coast toward the north and northwest. This latter cultural connection is well documented in archaeological studies and involves a series of sea mammal-hunting cultures that chronologically originated in the arctic regions of the extreme northeast of Asia, not too far from Bering Strait from which they gradually spread toward the south and southwest modifying themselves in time and space. The southern terminus of this cultural movement is known as the Okhotsk culture which strongly affected the cultures of the Amur-Sakhalin region. Hence, the basic premises of the JNPE project are still valid, but they must be seen within a complex framework of multiple places of origin and multilineal diffusions. Methodologically, the archaeological skeleton must be established to which ethnological data can be attached in order to arrive at reliable culture-historical reconstructions.

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