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KATANGA EVENKIS

in the 20th century and the ordering of their life-world

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Katanga Evenkis in the 20th Century and the Ordering of their Life-world

Anna A. Sirina

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We are pleased to offer English-language anthropologists a translation of Anna Sirina’s path-breaking monograph *Katanga Evenkis*. This work documents the lives of a group of hunters and reindeer herders living at the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska River at the end of the 20th century. The author argues that the Katanga Evenkis are best described by the flexible and creative way they use the land around them. Her work is unique in the Russian ethnographic tradition in that it makes a strong argument that Evenkis continue to exercise a strong presence on their lands, despite severe pressure by Soviet-era policies and even more devastating dislocations by recent industrial development and privatization. According to Sirina, Katanga Evenkis at the end of the 20th century are best characterized not by what they have lost, but instead by the way they continue to “make a home for themselves in the taiga” using a variety of adaptive strategies and intuitions that reflect what she calls the “outlook of a mobile people.” While based on extensive fieldwork, the book is also supported by an excellent command of the published and archival material on the region. As such, it is a solid reference work on this region and these people, as well as of the complex relationships that one can find in the taiga of Eastern Siberia.

The book is also unique for the fact that it is written by a woman representing a new generation of Russian ethnologists. Anna Sirina was one of the first young Russian ethnographers to travel to international conferences and form strong friendships with European, Australian, and North American anthropologists who were interested in the ethnography of Siberian peoples. She conveys a sympathy for Siberian peoples, and a knack for representing their humanity among all of the structures that have shaped their lives and economy. There is a natural overlap between Anna’s ethnographic style and the birth of a new trans-national project to write an ethnography of Siberia which focuses upon issues of identity and the way that social and economic projects impact upon local societies (Schweitzer 2001; Gray et al. 2003/4). For that reason, an English translation of this well-known work is particularly appropriate.

There is an element in this work that looks towards the Euro-American tradition of social anthropology. I write this somewhat controversially, for I know that Anna herself has a strong sympathy for both the Irkutsk and Moscow schools of Russian ethnography, and that she would undoubtedly see her inspiration as lying with them. It is true that she is faithful to this tradition. Sirina’s book makes careful reference to the typologies and the archaeologically informed models that are characteristic of these two schools. However, a strong emphasis in this book is also on analyzing how Evenkis make decisions and react to circumstance using what anthropologists
educated in a different tradition might call agency. We can clearly read in her typologies of mobile architecture the fact that Evenkis hold to no structural canon on how to build a lodge, or even how to make offerings to the land. She writes that every case presents a new opportunity for elaboration, and that the sheer variety of examples is in itself a proof of the operation of a mobile culture.

Although the examples and the theme of this work look towards Euro-American social anthropology, the work is not worded in this way. The heart of Sirina’s description of the way Evenkis “order their life-world” is a very clever adaptation of models taken from Russian architects to the analysis of how built structures represent a certain “ethnic” ecological inspiration. Had this book been written in a different time and place, we would not be surprised to read her approach described as “ethnoarchaeology,” and to find citations not to architects but to Lewis Binford (1983) and Susan Kent (1984). Indeed, her conclusion to the analysis of Evenki lodges at the end of section 3.2.5 speaks of the presence of “invisible boundaries,” or even “zones,” representing the structured way in which Evenkis use space. Nevertheless we can only find these ideas between the lines. Overtly, the work is worded in the classically descriptive and classificatory tone of Russian ethnology.

The master concept of the book—organizatsiia sredy zhizneideiatel'nosti ‘the ordering of the life-world’—is also a clever adaptation of several Soviet models. It has proven to be an extremely difficult phrase to translate, partly because of the way that English syntax works but also partly because the concept itself is more suggestive than it is definite. The term translates literally as “organization of the environment of life-activities.” As such, it combines two elements that in English-language anthropology we usually like to contrast: the creative agency of “life-activities” and the inanimate structural weight of an “environment.” Mediating the two ideas is the thought that Evenkis quite casually—almost subconsciously—“organize” or “order” both elements in a way that suits them. In this translation, I have chosen a word from the field of phenomenology to represent the “environment of life-actions:” life-world (Schutz & Luckman 1973). I also have chosen to confine it with the verb “to order,” which is the strongest among the possible translations of the Russian word organizatsiia. In support of my latter choice, Sirina clearly defines the term organizatsiia in the introduction as about making things tidy (uporiadochit’) in a planned manner (planomerno). Moreover, there is no doubt that in this text, the concept is more often than not applied to the use of space rather than to the division of labour (as the English term “to organize” usually implies). It is important to state that my decision to use this translation represents a thinking-through of the implications of Sirina’s original term, which are not fully described as such in the text. Instead, the text demonstrates her concept through examples. Evenkis order their life-world by placing skin lodges outside their new stationary cabins, by arranging furnishings within their cabins as if they were tents, or by preparing wood or articles in one place at one time in order to use them in a different
season at some time in the future. They tend not to order their environment by getting elected to local government or retraining themselves to take up a different career. In my opinion, this phenomenological accent given to Sirina’s use of organizatsiia pays respect to a certain sense of agency, implicit in the text, which makes this work unique.

Following on and related to the master concept, the second most difficult phrase in the book captures the author’s important observations on the way that Evenkis move through and occupy the taiga. In Chapter 2, Sirina argues that Evenkis have a “dynamic-logistical model” of using space or ordering their environment. As with the master concept, this category was not easy to translate. The Russian original refers to the dynamiccheskii (lineinyi) sposob employed by Evenkis (with brackets in the original). In literal translation, this would be rendered as a “dynamic (linear) way”—again creating an uncomfortable contrast between a pattern that shifts creatively and one that is locked in a definite, unidirectional trajectory. Again, the meaning of this important term is not self-evident in the text, but it comes out through an important contrast. At the end of section 2.1.2, Sirina contrasts the “static” strategy of Russians staying in fixed cabins with the trajectories, routes, and “rhythms” of Evenki movements all through the taiga. The fact that she sees this motion as a trajectory, rather than a deliberate line, is emphasized by the odd word lineinyi, which carries a broader meaning than the word “linear” in referring to how hunters identify places along a trail. To my mind, this is close to Ingold’s description (1986) of a hunting environment that is organized through a system of paths. My decision to use the term “logistical” to represent this action evokes the English-language literature in ethnoarchaeology, which is not referenced in the original. However, the comparison fits with and sums up the ethnographic examples given in the book. According to Sirina, the dynamic-logistical model is evident in the way that roads are maintained and marked for specific purposes (section 2.4), as well as by Evenki toponymy, wherein the environment is labelled by the resources that can be found there (section 2.3).

I have presented my reasoning for the translation behind these two key categories not only because it helps to understand the text, but also in order to illustrate the nature of the translation that we are presenting. This is a translation done by anthropologists for anthropologists. As such, it adapts the overt meaning of terms to make their deeper meaning understandable. I feel that this less-than-literal translation makes the text more readable—and more importantly, that it puts the author’s intentions in the best light. However, I do admit that it would be hard for someone to learn Russian or English by comparing the two texts side by side.

Before I turn to a more technical description of other parts of the translation, I would like to point out some other important highlights in this book. One of the rare aspects of this book is the great detail that it provides of local practices. It is important to emphasize that the large number of Evenki words in the text are specifically Katanga Evenki words, which differ
from both the literary Evenki language published in the central (Soviet or Russian) dictionaries and the dialects that one might encounter in other parts of Siberia. This aspect makes Sirina’s book an important reference work for the upper reaches of the Lower Tunguska river valley—a region that sits at the intersection of many cultural traditions.

Furthermore, besides putting great effort into describing and mapping the more traditional aspects of Evenki bush life, Sirina also directs our attention to other, completely undocumented aspects. In her eyes, the hanging pole *lokovun* is not simply a pole, but a device that can be erected in several different ways and for different purposes. In her eyes, the smallest details of camp architecture take on significance. This is a welcome departure from standard ethnological description of camps, which focus our attention on the lodge and the main campfire. Linked to this sensitivity to detail is another rare element that regretfully is missing in much Russian ethnography. Although the book is entitled *Katanga Evenkis*, the monograph is actually about a set of cultural practices that are reproduced not only by Evenkis but also, in part, by Jakuts and Russians. Chapter 5 presents the quite radical argument that *Russkie starozhily* ‘Russian settlers’ differ in no significant way from Evenkis, and deserve the same rights and protections that Evenkis now enjoy as members of an “indigenous” nation. The author also demonstrates the now widely accepted phenomenon that Evenkis remain Evenkis even if they drive snowmobiles, use wooden cabins, and cover their meat caches with plastic sheets.

I would like to alert readers to the following aspects of the translation:

1. **Mobile peoples.** In most instances, I have chosen not to use the word “nomadic” for the Russian word *kochevoi*. This is due to the fact that in this work, Sirina places a heavy emphasis on the planned, deliberate nature of motion in this economy. In many places, she describes Evenkis as *neosedlye* ‘non-settled’ (cf. Andrianov 1985). In my opinion, the English word “nomadic” connotes a more random type of motion than the dynamic-logistical model put forward here.

2. **Administrative units.** We have chosen to use the Russian originals for the administrative-territorial divisions encountered in the book. Ordinarily, for example, it would be better to translate *raion* as ‘county’. However, this book covers such a large swath of time that the text would quickly become littered with other county-like identifiers from the Tsarist and early-Soviet periods (*uprava, uezd, okrug*). To help the reader navigate the transliterated terms, we have provided definitions and temporal context in a glossary.

3. **Bush lexicon.** Stemming from the book’s intimate portrait of local skills, there are a great number of terms referring to hunting lifestyles in the Subarctic that have no standard English literary equivalents. We have chosen to use English words that are in common use in
Northwestern Canada to represent these activities. While it is an arbitrary choice to some degree, these terms are taken from a place with great ecological and historical similarities to Eastern Siberia. Thus, for example, *ambar* is translated as ‘cache’ and *profil’* as ‘cut-line’. I would especially like to thank Tom Andrews of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife for his guidance in translating the terms for portable skin lodges and log cabins.

4. **Geographical names.** Unless there is a commonly used English equivalent (e.g., *Manchuria* for *Man’chzhuriia*, Transbaikal for *Zabaikal’e*, and *Siberia* for *Sibir’*), all geographical names have been transliterated using the Library of Congress system (described below). The names Evenkiia, Iakutiia, and Buriatiia are common informal designators of the official Evenki Autonomous Okrug in Krasnoiarsk Krai, the Republic of Sakha (Iakutiia), and the Buriat Republic, respectively.

5. **Evenkis.** It is a clumsy coincidence that the singular form of the word Evenkis use to call themselves—*evenki*—corresponds to the way that Russian-speakers make plurals. Thus, the Russian-language literature renders *evenk* as the singular form and *evenki* as the plural. The literature often implies that this corresponds to the way Evenkis speak. Actually, in the Evenki language, *evenki* is the singular designation, and *evenkil* is the plural. Since this book is written in English, we make full use of the original stem—Evenki—and add an ‘s’ to mark the plural. To Russian-speaking readers, this may make it seem that the word has two plural endings. I would ask those readers to give consideration to the Evenki grammatical forms.

6. **Russian settlers.** The descendants of Russian settlers who came to Siberia in several waves between the 17th and late 19th centuries are often spoken about as a unique group known as *starozhily*. The direct translation of this term would be ‘Russian longtime-dwellers’. One sometimes finds the term ‘Russian old-settlers’ in the English language literature. I have chosen to translate this term simply as ‘Russian settlers’ since the term ‘settler’ itself has a frontier ring to it. However, one should be aware that the Russian settlers written about here differ substantially from the communities of geologists and petroleum workers who moved to Siberia in the 1960s and 1970s. These Russians are often called *priezzhie* ‘newcomers’. The descendants of Russian settlers typically have acculturated to local ways and preserve special creolized or dialectical differences that make them appear to 20th- and 21st-century ethnographers as a qualitatively different type of people than the Russians who arrived during the period of Soviet industrialization.
7. Passive constructions, implicit phrases, and explanatory footnotes.

Russian academic discourse favours passive constructions and sometimes subjectless sentences, which sound more objective. These phrases are difficult to translate in a way that makes them readable, and in the end they violate what I see as the central message of this book about Evenki creativity. In English-language anthropology, it is permissible not only to write about oneself but also to make one’s field consultants the subjects of their own sentences. Thus, in very many places in the translation, we have reversed the order of phrases and added implicit subjects. In the Russian original, Sirina had a tendency to indicate trajectories in her own thought with ellipses (...) and the phrase et cetera (i.e., ...). In most cases, these have been deleted for the sake of clarity. Finally, if the author has referred to knowledge that is implicit to Russians living in Russia, or even to Russians who live with Evenkis, this has been spelled out either in square brackets or in a series of separately numbered editor’s footnotes prefixed by the custom mark §. The set of footnotes by the author has a separate numbering system. For consistency, the author’s footnotes have been renumbered from the system in the original book.

8. Evenki dialects. The Baikal region has an incredible diversity of cultures. As a reflection of this, in the Russian original Sirina often lists three, sometimes four, versions of the same Evenki word to capture all the possible ways that one can hear it in use. This is valuable information for linguists, but somewhat cumbersome for the average reader. With Sirina’s agreement, we have put the emphasis in the text on the northern dialect (kh-sibilant version), with variants listed in the glossary.

The English text itself was produced by several people and evolved in nine discrete drafts. The Editorial Committee of the Baikal Archaeology Project (BAP) hired two people to produce the base translations. Alia Chaptykova prepared the first, founding translation of the entire text from Russian to English. Ksenia Maryniak wrote a base translation of the author’s foreword, prepared an initial draft of the glossary, and formatted the reference list using English-language bibliographic standards. She also reworked the Russian versions of the maps and diagrams, while Darren Shaw reformatted the drawings and photographs into the versions printed here. The BAP Editorial Committee produced the index added to this translated edition.

The BAP Editorial Committee initially asked me to read the translation for accuracy. However, it soon became evident that the text, glossary, captions, and reference list required a literary editing as well. I rewrote almost every sentence, correcting syntax, changing awkward formulations, and then verifying several versions of the text with the original Russian version sentence-by-sentence. Only the fifth, sixth, and ninth versions were produced...
without close line-by-line comparison to the original. Unclear passages were clarified with the author at several points, and she read and corrected the fourth and seventh versions. The eighth version of the manuscript was the most accurate version. In the ninth version, the BAP Editorial Committee removed many square brackets—which alert the reader to departures from the original text—to make the text more readable.

In the course of revising the text, Anna Sirina took the opportunity to correct some small errors and omissions in the original text, to update and supplement the reference list, and in places to add a few sentences to clarify the text. These new passages are clearly marked. To some degree, this translation is a more correct version of the original Russian text.

We all hope that this book will find a welcome audience among English-speaking anthropologists, and that it will contribute to making the life and traditions of the Katanga Evenkis better known. In her foreword to the second Russian edition, Sirina refers to the challenges that await Katanga Evenkis as petroleum exploration increases at the start of this century. We hope that through this text, some of the anthropologists who have worked to protect the local land rights of First Nations people in Canada, Australia, and Alaska now might be attracted to this region.

I conclude this preface by thanking Anna Sirina, both for her patience during the four years that it took to produce this book and for the tireless work she has put into her travels to Evenki and Even communities from Katanga to Kamchatka. In a sense, the text itself embodies the dynamic-logistical type of attention to the environment that so well characterizes the life of a mobile people. This English translation has been my constant companion at conferences, while travelling to Canada to visit relatives, and even during fieldwork based out of Irkutsk. Anna herself has worked on it between her trips to the Far East and in Moscow. I am happy that Anna’s work, with the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, is now reaching a wider international audience.

The book is volume 2 in a series of publications devoted to the archaeology and anthropology of Siberia. As this book goes to press, there are plans to publish an already completed manuscript translation of Mikhail Turov’s (1990) work on Central Siberian Evenkis, which will nicely complement this book.

Note on transliteration and the rendering of languages

This text transliterates Evenki Cyrillic and Russian Cyrillic text with the Library of Congress romanization standard, but without ligatures. The standard for hard and soft signs is respected. Readers should note that the way the Library of Congress standard glosses over the iotized and uniotized Cyrillic e does not serve Evenkis very well. Evenki words very rarely have an iotized e, and thus one should expect that the romanized character ‘e’ represents an э.
in Evenki or in Evenki-derived Russian words. This is especially the case for
the name of the capital of Katanga raion—Erbogachen—and for the people
themselves. Neither is pronounced as Yerbogachen nor Yevenki. However,
the Enisei River is pronounced as Yenisei.

Russian terms are indicated in italics: bania, palatka, shapka. Evenki
terms are indicated in italicised bold type: amaka, delken, golomo. Russian
plural forms are transliterated, as are Evenki plural forms, which are often
consistent with Russian grammar. Note that some Evenki words have become
so widely used by local Russians that they have entered their everyday
lexicon: rovduga, argish, shaman. Proper names, nicknames, diminutives,
and acronyms are transliterated directly.

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Author’s foreword to the second Russian edition

[translated by K. Maryniak]81

The “little-known and most interesting” Lower Tunguska River is a right tributary of the Enisei River in Central Siberia. Another name for it is the Katanga: “Elders say that the Lena [River] was opened by way of the Tunguska. They say the Tunguska is older than the Lena. The Cossacks, who collected iasak, set out from the Turukhan [River], not from the Lena...” (Shishkov 1985).

Central Siberia ranges between the Enisei and Lena Rivers, bordered in the south and southeast by the mountains of southern and southeastern Siberia. Most of this territory consists of the Central Siberian Plateau. Siberian and Daur larch, pine, and cedar grow in its permafrost-taiga and alpine-podzol soils. Fir grows in the river valleys. The forests of the Lower Tunguska are home to moose, wild reindeer, bear, sable, and squirrel. Muskrat was imported from America after the [Second World] war. Much of the terrain is covered with reindeer moss pastures, which is the main forage for wild and domesticated reindeer.

The climate is rigorously continental, with average temperatures of +14 to +17 degrees Celsius in July and –22 to –28 degrees in January in the west, dropping to –35 or –38 degrees in the east. The Siberian high-pressure system dominates in winter, resulting in predominantly calm weather, with little cloud and severe cold. Most of the year—from the end of September or early October to mid-May—the ground is covered in snow, but not to any great depth.

For its first thousand kilometres, the Lower Tunguska flows from south to north, and then it changes its course sharply westward. The river is frozen over from the first part of October until May, with flooding starting in May or early June. The waters of the Lower Tunguska flow with moderate speed, at 1–5 kilometres per hour. In spring, this flow triples, and the depth at this time reaches an average of eight metres. The Lower Tunguska meanders greatly. The local population calls the river’s many bends megi. The most important [left-bank] tributaries are the Upper, Middle, and Lower Kochema, the Teteia, the Great and Small Erema, the Great Chaika, and the Nepa. The Chona and Vakunaika are on its right bank. There are many lakes and marshes. Local residents catch fish in the rivers and lakes.

The upper course and start of the middle course of the river fall within the administrative borders of Katanga raion, which is the northernmost district of Irkutsk oblast'. The territory of Katanga raion covers 139,043 square kilometres, which represents at least twenty percent of the oblast', while the population itself numbered 9,500 according to the 1989 census [Goskomstat

81 The abbreviated English translation of the foreword in the second Russian edition has not been reprinted here. —Ed.
By [2000], the population had fallen to 5,647. Katanga raion adjoins the Republic of Sakha (Yakutiia) in the north, northwest, and northeast; and in the south, southwest, and southeast it adjoins Ust'-Kut, Lower Ilim, and Kirensk raions of Irkutsk oblast’ [Russian Federation].

The Tungus people were renamed Evenkis by the Soviet state. The Katanga Evenkis call themselves ile ‘human being’. They continue to live in these places, but through the years of Soviet rule, nearly all of them changed to a settled way of life. Today, no more than 30 Evenki reindeer herders remain, who live most of the year in the forest. I was drawn to the Lower Tunguska for the first time in 1981, not so much because of the Evenkis as by the call of a completely “different” way of life. In those years, there were flights to Erbogachen every day, although it was nevertheless necessary to worry about getting tickets in advance.

Before the establishment of permanent connections by air, the only way to get to the Lower Tunguska was by river and sledge path in winter. The Cossacks, who preferred to travel overland from the Lower Tunguska river system to the Lena River, knew about the portage at Chechuisk. The distance from the village of Chechuisk on the Lena to the village of Podvoloshino on the upper course of the Lower Tunguska is 40 versts [42.7 km]. The old Chechuisk portage served as the crossing point for over two-thirds of the freight in the past. The Cossacks would wait for the river to rise and would float the freight downstream. Even today, this route is crucially important with regard to provisioning Katanga raion. The sledge and riding trails through the taiga took many days and were not without danger. Now, one can fly from Irkutsk to the raion capital of Erbogachen in 2.5 hours.

[Our flight in 1981 made] a brief stop in Kirensk. It was a small, old city situated at the picturesque junction of the Lena and Kirenga rivers. [After Kirensk] the landscape gradually changed, with the huge tracts of ploughed land replaced by taiga and many lakes and marshes. Sometimes, when the weather in Erbogachen was not conducive to travel in AN-24 planes, passengers would be transferred to “Annushka” [AN-2] biplanes in Kirensk. From these, one could observe the land, its mosaic of marshes and lakes, the winding little streams, and the occasional drilling rig. And below the airplane, the Lower Tunguska meandered like a silver ribbon, evoking the mythical Tungus dragon Dzhiabdar as it made its way quietly and inexorably northward, to the sea.

It seemed that the entire village came to watch our airplane land at Erbogachen Airport. The airport was built on old pasture lands that had been claimed from the forest through the efforts of Russian peasants. In the businesslike hubbub of greetings and farewells, we were strangers. We had arrived in this unknown place, and were the only ones who had no-one to meet them. Having loaded its Irkutsk-bound passengers, our airplane waved its silvery wings, as if to say goodbye, before flying off. Then, a deafening silence fell. The only sound was the whine of the mosquitoes. We had been left by ourselves and did not know what to expect. In a sense, that was fine, because
we did not have any preconceptions or stereotypes. Our main objective was
to collect all possible ethnographic data, with a particular focus on children’s
drawings. The managers of the Laboratory of Archaeology and Ethnography
at Irkutsk University, which was dominated by archaeologists, had set this
topic for us. In the fall, at the end of the field season, the archaeologists
would charge into the university, all suntanned and smelling of campfires,
with new discoveries and stories. This attracted the first-year students. In
their efforts to fathom primitive thinking, they turned to [Lucien] Lévi-Bruhl,
and to the research on aboriginal children’s drawings carried out in Irkutsk
during the 1920s by P. F. Trebukhovskii, B. E. Petri, P. P. Khoroshikh, and
others (although this work was left unfinished) (Vinogradov 1926: 30–2).

We stayed in the wooden, single-storey Erbogachen Hotel, located
next to the airport. The raion capital was also the base for an oil exploration
company [ekspektisii]. Most of the hotel tenants were businessmen whose
work was connected to geology. The façade of the hotel was decorated with an
Evenki pattern made of pine-cones, while the corridors and sitting room were
decorated with woodcut pictures of the local taiga residents—bear, moose
(or sokhatyi, as they are known locally), and wood-grouse. Another panel
showed a slant-eyed man with a tired smile sitting near a winter campfire in
the taiga, his trusty laika hunting dog by his side.

At the entrance to the canteen, which was always overcrowded, a poster
exhorted the people to hand over “More Soft Gold [furs] to the Motherland!”
The raion specialized in trapping furs, and had two [state] hunting enterprises—
the Katanga Promkhoz and the Preobrazhenka Promkhoz—with subdivisions
in smaller settlements.

Erbogachen village is located on the sandy, high right bank of the Lower
Tunguska River. The river quietly channels its waters to the Enisei and the
Arctic Ocean. The water is rust-coloured from iron oxalates, and brackish
in taste. Drinking water is taken from artesian wells that were bored by the
geologists. The oldest street, Naberezhaia, has wooden log-houses along
the river, with garden plots running down towards the water. Until recently,
old wooden houses still stood here, blackened and tilted from age, while in
the courtyard of the promkhoz shop a trader’s ambar ‘storehouse’ still stood.
Once, furs hunted by Evenkis and Russian settlers would be exchanged here
for provisions and equipment. Even the shop (lavka) of Kulberg, a political
exile and trader, was still standing 15 years ago [in 1981]. Then, it was still
being used as a store.

Both the architectural face of the village and the anthropological features
of its residents testify to the ancient roots of human life in these places. One
may glimpse an Evenki babushka in the pretty blonde woman with slightly
tilted blue eyes and broad cheekbones, or a Cossack ancestor gazing roguishly
at the world through his great-great-great-grandson. Living as neighbours
for three centuries, the Tunguses [Evenkis], Russians, and Iakuts, who make
up the bulk of the population, came to know one another well, borrowed
cultural traits, and some intermarried. Gradually, a unique social environment developed at the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska River.

Hunting is the main activity that unites the local population, both in the past and in the present. Perusing the personal registration cards of hunters at the local branch of the [state] hunting association, it occurred to me that there was something special in their facial expressions, which marked them as hunters. It was not their nationality, which could differ even between brothers and sisters, and not their racial type, which in this region is not always clearly marked.

Now, when one travels down the Lower Tunguska, one no longer encounters very many old Russian villages, hamlets, and homesteads. Mobile Tunguses, or Evenkis, are almost all gone, as well. At the headwaters of the river, they have been settled for almost half a century now, and do not keep reindeer anymore.

During the 1980s, a town built by geologists sprang up about two kilometres from the old village. Its atmosphere was markedly different from that of Erbogachen. People received good and stable salaries, and enjoyed social benefits. Some of the new arrivals became “addicted” to hunting, and even became hunters. But there were not many of those.

During this visit [in 1981], we met Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin, an old Evenki from the Pangarakai clan. He and his entire family lived in the taiga, and only rarely came into town. Along with his son, nephew, and stepson, Vasilii Pavlovich worked as a tenured hunter in the local promkhoz. He invited us to visit their camp, and we lived in the taiga for about a month. After that, our acquaintance grew into a long-standing friendship.

His summer camp was located 20–30 kilometres from Erbogachen. We had to walk to get to this home in the taiga, for the old man had let his reindeer go when he came to town. First, a Russian man who knew Vasilii Pavlovich took us in his motorboat across to the left bank of the Lower Tunguska, which had become shallow in the dry summer. We arrived in the settlement of Zarech’e, consisting of a few wooden izbas. After Zarech’e, the taiga began. Evenkis usually left their reindeer here before going into the village. It seems to me that for them, this was the border between the taiga and town, between two lifestyles. I felt this for the first time when we returned from the camp. It was late in the evening, and suddenly a whole constellation—a sea of lights, as I recall—appeared where there was only dark space before. That was Erbogachen. Joy, excitement, and some kind of strange timidity came upon us. The feeling of a border was compounded by the necessity of crossing the river, which is regarded in the folklore of all nations as a final frontier.

Evenkis showed up on their reindeer in town during winter and summer, especially for the Soviet-era festival called the Day of the Reindeer Herder (which coincided with a local Russian holiday marking the end of winter). At those times, the border disappeared for a while. Even the river was frozen. Mobile Evenkis arrived from the taiga dressed in their winter national costumes, and harnessed their reindeer in festive harnesses (Fig. 1).
All the people gathered on the ice of the Lower Tunguska River, where the festival took place. Prizes were given for the winners of reindeer races held on the snowdrift-covered ice of the river. In those rare days, something like an equilibrium prevailed, a hope for the possibility of various ways of life to coexist, and for mutual understanding. To be sure, everybody drank—drank a lot—and that was always a concern.

Vasilii Pavlovich became noticeably happier and more lively when we left the village and passed through Zarech’e. At first, we walked on foot along a road, which ended abruptly. Then we followed a cut-line and, after that, a seemingly invisible trail through the forest. We stopped for a rest and made some tea, but there were not enough cups. Vasilii Pavlovich swiftly made one out of birch bark, joining the edges with a twig that also served as the handle. The hot tea out of this cup did not scald one’s lips, and smelled tastily of birch and smoke. For some reason, I have remembered the smallest details of this first trip: a faded calico kerchief tied in an Evenki fashion around Vasilii Pavlovich’s head; his soft and silent strides in the taiga, not at all those of an old man; and his exceptional attentiveness and ability to orientate himself [Fig. 2].

When we finally arrived at the camp, it was completely dark. Our guide caught the smoky scent of the smudges from afar, and maintained his silent stride with poorly concealed incomprehension at our noisy stumbling through the taiga. The dogs set to barking, having smelled strangers at a distance. Sparks flew from the burning fireplace into the black night sky, while the smouldering logs in the smudges glowed with a mysterious, flickering light.
We heard reindeer that had strayed from the herd, calling out. We also heard human conversation. A young man came out of the conical lodge [Russ. *chum*]. While we crouched by the fire, exhausted, introductions were made. This first meeting was unforgettable—the expectations, the long and hard walk, and the “others”—people who were different from us. Their way of life was disappearing fast, like [Balzac’s magic] *chagrin* skin. It was not so easy to see and understand it. Probably the only way was to experience it for oneself.

Today, it is obvious to me that we began our research so naively. We did not have sufficient professional training or preparation. On the other hand, the freshness of our impressions and the direct contact with Evenkis played a positive role, such that one could say that my ethnographic university was there, in the taiga, among the tributaries of the Lower Tunguska [Fig. 3].

Later, there would be other expeditions. By comparison, this first one would undoubtedly be evaluated as the poorest for ethnographic results. However, it sparked my interest in the way of life of hunters and reindeer herders, which has burned till this day. I made friends among the Evenkis, and our meetings are always pleasant.

The Kaplin family is a typical Evenki family, having survived various socioeconomic experiments of the Soviet era, such as collectivization, the imposition of atheism, and agglomeration of settlements [Fig. 4]. Marina Petrovna [Egorchenok] was born on the Tetere River, a right tributary of the Podkamennaya Tunguska River. She married Vasilii Pavlovich [Kaplin] of the Pangarakai clan, who lived among the left tributaries of the Lower Tunguska. They were registered in Teteia when a kolkhoz [collective farm]
was established there. They worked and recorded their “labour-days”\(^{82}\) with the rest of the formerly nomadic Evenkis. After the [Second World] war, diamond prospecting began. Evenkis were hired as porters and guides for the Amaka Company, since there were no roads. After the kolkhozes were disbanded and promkhozes were established at the end of the 1950s, Evenkis achieved a relative independence. Those who kept reindeer and could live permanently in the forest automatically became tenured hunters [with the promkhozes]. This period did not last long, but it seemed to be, in my opinion, one of uneventful calm [zastoi] and relative prosperity. It was during this time that I began my research.

Vasilii Pavlovich and Marina Petrovna had three grown children, each of whom had different biological fathers because Vasilii Pavlovich could not have children. Nikanor, Tania, and Katia considered Vasilii Pavlovich to be their only and true father, and called him *papa*. However, they also knew their own [biological] fathers and were included in their kinship networks. This was particularly obvious during their important rites of passage. In this family, everyone loved and respected one another in their own way. Vasilii

\[^{82}\text{A “labour-day” [trudoden’] was a unit of work on collective farms, from which enterprises calculated a worker’s entitlement to a proportion of the profits of the enterprise. A worker’s entitlement to a state retirement pension also came from this figure. This became controversial in the 1960s and 1970s, when changes in prices and the cost of living effectively eliminated the value of pensions calculated on labour-days. In Siberian ethnography, it is important to note where labour-days were used in order to indicate quality of life. —Ed.}\]
Pavlovich was illiterate and spoke Russian poorly. He did remember shamanic performances. He fit the famed descriptions of Tunguses written by travellers during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Vasilii Pavlovich and Marina Petrovna visited me and my family in Irkutsk several times. A born hunter, Vasilii Pavlovich knew only life in the forest. He amused my father, who never held a weapon in his life, by greeting him with the question, “How’s the hunting been?” He dismayed my mother by sitting on the floor, ignoring the chairs and crossing his legs under him in a dignified manner.

In those days, it seemed that our friendship would last a very long time, if not forever. But life makes its own decisions. Starting in the 1990s, I began losing my friends, starting with the younger members of that family.

The first to leave for the other world was the eldest, Nikanor. He was getting ready to go into the taiga with his cousin, Petia [Fig. 5]. Younger men lived as bachelors [in the taiga]. Town girls did not aspire [to marry into a taiga lifestyle] after being brought up in boarding schools and living in town. They were also cautious with young men, knowing their weakness for vodka. Marina Petrovna sewed for Nikanor and Petia, gave them clothes, and cooked for them. But the two men also knew how to do these formerly exclusively female traditional tasks themselves. I learned of Nikanor’s death in 1990, when I was doing research in the southern part of the raion. I was flying back from Preobrazhenka to Erbogachen, and by chance landed nine days after his death. Local Evenkis mark this date with a wake, according to the Russian

Figure 4. The author with the Kaplin family, 1989.
custom. Nikanor drowned in the Lower Tunguska River while returning from Erbogachen to the taiga. What was he thinking when [some time earlier] he threw his sweater into the river as a gift on his way to a rendezvous? Did he foresee his death? After his death, the family’s taiga lifestyle [khoziaistvo] began to fall apart. Broken-hearted with grief, Marina Petrovna began taking solace in the drink more and more often.

Business brought me to Erbogachen [again] in 1993. The Shishkov Regional Studies Museum [of Katanga Raion] was planning to move into a new, specially built building beside the older one, which was built at the start of the [20th] century. I was supposed to create a new exhibit in it. It was March, and it was cold, with a lot of snow. I stayed, as usual, in the same single-storey wooden hotel, which now had no guests because [state] financing for geological exploration had ceased. It was early evening, and I planned to spend the rest of it visiting my Evenki acquaintances. It had just snowed, and it was incredibly quiet. I had a conversation with the floor housekeeper about life’s problems, about inflation, about mutual acquaintances. From her, I found out that Katia, the Kaplins’ daughter, had crashed her Buran [snowmobile] when driving from Erbogachen to the geologist’s town, three kilometres from the village. Katia had been the same age as me. She had married early and had two children. It was hard to believe that the happy, lively, and hardworking Katia was no longer among us. Before she went to school, she had grown up in the taiga, and afterward she had spent every summer and all her vacations in the forest, as did her brother and sister. Vasilii Pavlovich, who was hard of hearing (even his nickname was Kuiki ‘deaf one’), would take Katia as a little girl hunting with him, asking her to “listen to the dogs” [for him]. Katia had

![Figure 5. Petia Kaplin, 1989.](image)
organized one of the first [native] co-ops in Erbogachen. She sewed with fur very well, and she was an excellent hostess. It seemed that she was equally at home in the taiga and in town.

I went to see Marina Petrovna, both wanting to see her and at the same time dreading the visit. The old couple lived on Naberezhnaia Street, not far from the boarding school. They now lived in a new, strong house, built of squared timbers and set on the same spot as their old log house. That house had dated to the start of the [20th] century. Nimble mice used to run around the floor at night. Among the ordinary dishes on the wooden kitchen shelf was a lovely plate from the Kuznetsov Porcelain Factory. It was a real museum piece. How many sables had they given for it, and to which trader? In better times, guests were immediately offered everything the hosts had in their refrigerator, including various delicacies from the forest. On this visit, the refrigerator was empty, and there was only bread and tea on the table, obtained on credit [pod zapis’] from the store.

We were both glad to see one another. We sat near the stove on low wooden stools. Marina Petrovna smoked and told her story, wiping away tears.

All the family members and neighbours had helped with the funerals. Help also came from the lesnye liudi ‘forest people’. This was how Evenkis called those who live in the forest tending reindeer and who rarely show up in town. One such family gave them a large piece of moose meat, and money. Kolia (nicknamed Moriak ‘Sailor’) gave them a deer carcass. Another family gave them money. Relatives from Teteia sent them fish.

Marina Petrovna was a good mother, a hardworking woman, and an excellent craftsman [Fig. 6] She could sew gurumi ‘winter boots’ from

Figure 6. Stretching hides in a summer camp, 1989.
reindeer leg skins [kamys], olochi ‘summer footwear’ from moose hides (rovduga), hunting parkas, hats made of fur taken from the heads of reindeer calves, often with antler buds, and children’s snowsuits made of fur. The villagers asked her to sew unty ‘winter boots’, and paid with potatoes, pork or beef, and cooked food, only sometimes with money.

Before, her children had restrained her drinking. It was [concern for] their well-being and happiness that restrained her. The taiga also helped. They literally escaped the town there. Now, all the restraints snapped. Of all her children, only Tania was left, and she had her own family.

Vasilii Pavlovich had lived the past two years in the village [Erbogachen]. Although he was ill a long time, he was constantly planning to go into the forest. He had nothing to do. He smoked his pipe incessantly, or went out, leaning on a cane and wearing glasses, to meet the “Ilimpeia people”. These were close or distant relatives and acquaintances, whom he used to meet while travelling in the taiga or at shamanic performances. There were, of course, no Ilimpeia people there. As Marina Petrovna complained, he was hearing voices. These people stopped visiting with their reindeer long ago. The old man was reliving his youth, and it was obvious that he would not last long. When I came to Erbogachen on business again in 1995, I found out that Vasilii Pavlovich had passed on.

These people had accepted me instantly and treated me as one of their own. This attitude was not one I had necessarily earned. It was only an integral part of their cultural tradition, which has remained strong. Today, I miss that openness. I have still not gotten over the fact they have passed away. In a way, a part of me went along with them. The caches, lodge poles, and smudges still stand abandoned in the taiga. Is it possible that the land misses them, in the same manner as people do? Does it remember its former masters?

I had had the opportunity to compare the behaviour of my Evenki acquaintances in town and at home. Their true home was the taiga, where their space was not enclosed by the walls of permanent dwellings. There, they were in their element. In the Soviet period, new realities restricted their movements: sport hunters took their hunting areas; large tracts of the taiga were burned; and the as-yet-infrequent drilling rigs began appearing.

This is what I have tried to understand—their life-rhythm under these new conditions. Because Evenkis travelled constantly, they had to learn to exploit many different types of places [ugod’ia]. In summer, they travelled often. In fall and spring, they spent more time in one place, to allow the reindeer to have their autumn rut and to calve in spring. Moose hunting was another factor that tied them to one place. Evenkis embraced hunting with their “body and soul”, and it inevitably affected their character and psychology.

From that time up until today, I have been intrigued by these transformations, which are part of an ongoing lively cultural tradition. It was not an abstract tradition, one that existed unto itself. Here, real people refused to reject their “uncivilized” way of life. This was how their parents had lived, but they also wanted to live the same way (or had grown up living
that way). They made this choice even after studying in boarding schools, or living in towns or cities. Thanks to the taiga, they were independent to a certain extent of the state executive and legislative bodies. It helped them to avoid the management and administration systems that curtailed initiative. This independence, even though it was very relative, gave them a measure of moral superiority over the settled Evenkis. Only the hunters could measure up. But their independence had a short-term quality—limited by licenses, inspections, hunting associations and permits, and by their vacation entitlements. Theirs was an attractive life, just the same. It was inevitable that the real independence and autonomy, or call it the “differentness”, of the taiga people could not fail to provoke the dissatisfaction of the authorities, resulting in efforts to assimilate them. At the same time, it was obvious that the “forest people” were tightly bound to the towns by thousands of familial, economic, socio-cultural, and everyday ties. This complicated life on the frontiers of different worlds exacted an enormous moral and ethical price on Evenkis.

Much changed after these mobile people were incorporated into the sphere of influence of the Russian (and particularly the Soviet) state. For Evenkis who keep reindeer, the taiga still remains their home. There, they recover their confidence, dignity, and rejoice in life. Why cannot the townsfolk see them there? It is they, the townsfolk, who have developed the not unfounded stereotype that Evenkis represent poverty, alcoholism, and social apathy.

It was only after defending my dissertation that I came across the research done by Australian anthropologists on the land claims of the aborigines in the Northern Territory of Australia (Sirina 1998). I found out that for a long time, they had been collecting even more detailed information about the social structure of the aborigines, sacred sites, and particularities of land use, striving to establish the borders of the territory they had occupied in the past. Although so far there have not been any visible signs of a larger geological boom in the area of my studies, it is completely possible that this time is still to come. Then, this book will represent not only a page from the cultural history of the Katanga, but it might be of practical use in confirming the land rights of those Evenkis who still hunt on reindeer and travel in the taiga in the 21st century, or who plan to return to their traditional occupations.

1 [New footnote by the author] The author would like to extend her thanks to Deborah Bird Rose and Darrell Lewis of the Australian National University for introducing her to this research.
Introduction

The main obstacle to studying Tunguses is that these people wander about lost in obscure dense forests almost all year round.
—I. I. Mainov [1898]

Throughout the huge territory of Siberia, some 30,000 Evenkis live in more or less compact groups. These groups differ linguistically and culturally due to the effect of the varying natural and ethnic environment in which they live. Focusing research on a specific Evenki group allows us to form a clearer idea of what is general and what is special in Evenki culture.

The 1989 general census [of the USSR] recorded 1,369 Evenkis and 731 Tofalars in the rural areas of Irkutsk oblast' (Table 1).

This book is devoted to elucidating the characteristics of the distribution of a group of Katanga Evenkis, and how they order their life-world. The Katanga Evenkis had a population of 546 in 1989, and lived within the boundaries of Katanga raion in Irkutsk oblast'.

Geographically, their territory ranges across the taiga drainage between the Enisei and Lena rivers, and includes the headwaters and start of the midstream region of the Lower Tunguska River. The term katangskie as applied to Evenkis originates from the toponym Katanga, which is also a name for the Podkamennaia Tunguska and Lower Tunguska rivers. The toponym predates the Tungus occupancy and was adopted by the local population. It is now used for both the name of Katanga raion (est. 1930) and the name of the group of Evenkis living there. Gradually, the term katangskie ‘from the Katanga [River]’ became more widely applied to Evenkis than kirenskie ‘from Kirensk’, kureiskie ‘from the Kureika’, or kondogirskie ‘from the Kondogir’.

Katanga Evenkis call themselves ile ‘human being’ (Vasilevich 1962, 1969). They exhibit a high degree of acculturation, resulting from long-standing and rather close contacts with Russian settlers [starozhily] and Iakuts, and also from their relatively sedentary lifestyle. Only about 30 people of the 546 (approx. 5%) lead a mobile lifestyle. To what degree can we call their life “traditional”? What has it in common with their former “traditional” way of life? How does it compare to what is found in literary, archival, and oral sources?

I use the term “the ordering of the life-world” [organizatsiia sredy zhiznedeiatel’nosti] to mean the systematization or organization of the relationships of an ethnus (or ethnic group) to its environment by means of everyday economic and cultural adaptations. To be more exact, it means relating the above factors to the process of organizing one’s living space. This term refers mainly to traditional material culture. Recently, another term—

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2 [This holds even] if N. V. Ermolova’s hypothesis is correct about the long-term convergent development of Evenkis and Orochon-Evenkis (Ermolova 1993).
Table 1. The distribution and population of places where Peoples of the North reside in Irkutsk oblast’, 1989.

<table>
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<th>Raion</th>
<th>Rural Council (Admin.)</th>
<th>Village name</th>
<th>Total population*</th>
<th>Population of Northern Peoples*</th>
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<td>Of’khon</td>
<td>Elantsy</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>35</td>
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</table>

Source: 1989 census (Goskomstat 1992). [*Numbers following the slashes reflect somewhat different census data, from the Association of Peoples of the North.—Ed.]
“subsistence system”—has been used with a parallel meaning. However, the intrinsic problem of differentiating culture as a system and a phenomenon is still considered to be “complicated and obscure” (Arutiunov 1989: 129). From my point of view, the advantage of my term lies in its emphasis on the creative aspect—how people order space in close connection to their physical and spiritual realities. It thus enables us to gain a deeper understanding into the mechanism by which ethno-cultural phenomena persist.

I understand ordering [organizatsiia] to be both a systematic, thought-out structure and a process. “To organize” means to put things in proper order (Ozhegov 1990: 456). The terms organizatsiia prostranstva ‘spatial organization’ and organizatsiia sredy ‘environmental organization’ have long been widely and successfully used in the field of architecture to describe how the ordering of architectural space affects the environment. This is an intelligent, creative process, expressed in definite rules and norms (Zabel'shanskii 1985; Orfinskii 1989). Similar terms are found in philosophical and sociological research (Vinogradskii 1988). These kinds of terms have not been widely used in ethnographic research until recently (Karlov 1991; Stepanov 1988; Chesnov 1987).

Ideas about the environment [sreda] are associated with the study of the interactions of persons (environmental subjects) skilled in specific practical activities with their surroundings. An ethnos lives and acts in a natural environment, which is exposed to considerable changes. These are caused by both objective factors that are intrinsic to the environment itself, and subjective or anthropogenic factors connected with the economic and cultural activities of the ethnos. As a result of these changes, the environment acquires an artificial or secondary quality.

In comparison with other Siberian peoples, Evenkis are more inclined to practice a mobile economy (Rychkov 1917, 1922–23). For example, they often substitute words meaning ‘to go’, ‘to stride’, or ‘to move’ for the word meaning ‘to live’. Their active, dynamic way of using space has also influenced specific qualities, such as their excellent ability to orient themselves, as well as their penchant to change locations. These things have to a great extent promoted their perception and philosophy of space. Because of their mobile, nomadic way of life, Evenkis have developed a specific attitude to space, and a way of exploiting it that extends along their travelling trajectories. It can be called a dynamic-logistical method of ordering space. S. A. Tokarev’s contrast between “home” and “everything outside the home” can be re-interpreted in the Evenki lifestyle as the contrast between “one’s home territory” and “everything beyond it.” However, this apposition should not be understood as a strict division (Tokarev 1970). Their attitude to space and their ways of appropriating it have become essential features of the Evenki ethnic image. In my research, I have tried to single out and analyze the components of this relationship.

This book has three major themes, grouped by chapters. The first considers how the social, economic, and political changes of the Soviet period
impacted the population, clan structure, and settlement dynamics of Evenkis and their overall way of life. I pay special attention to the work of the Kirensk branch of the Committee of the North, as reconstructed through archival data. The second [and third] chapters explore how contemporary mobile Evenkis order their life-world using dynamic-logistical and static techniques. In order to analyze the dynamic way Evenkis order space, I present a thorough study of their hunting and herding lifestyle—including their land tenure systems, ethno-toponyms, seasonal rounds, and a typology and description of their mobile camps. The ethnic quality of their architecture is evident not only in the layout of their camps but also the unique form of their structures. An Evenki long-term camp [stoibisheche] is a special type of living space. It is an environment [deliberately] organized by people in order to provide the optimal conditions for performing a variety of activities [zhiznediatelelnost]. An important part of this book is the description of the secondary, physically ordered environment, and indeed what might be called the static way that a camp’s local environment is formed. Finally, [the third theme in] Chapter 4 demonstrates by what means and from which elements Evenkis organize their spiritual awareness [osmyslenie] and communion with the land.

This project was built upon the results of my [ethnographic] fieldwork, as well as on archival and bibliographic sources.

The first ethnographic information about Katanga Evenkis was collected in the 18th century by D. G. Messershmidt and I. G. Gmelin of the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences. Messershmidt travelled from the mouth of the Lower Tunguska to the village of Podvoloshino, at the portage to the great Siberian river Lena. He took notes on Tungus mobility and briefly described their dwellings. His description includes a conical lodge, covered with birch bark in summer and with niuk ‘reindeer skins’ in winter. He recorded the Tungus self-designation khundysal ‘master of dogs’ that was used by the Tunguses at the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska. It is not used today (Novlianskaia 1962). In a brief article, Gmelin described the locations and movements of the Erema Tunguses, as well as their household activities, dwellings, food, and a brief account of their mortuary rituals (Titova 1978). At the end of the 18th century, V. S. Popov participated in an expedition from Viliuisk to the Lower Tunguska to do topographic research of the district. Later, he described the Tungus way of life on the Lower Tunguska, its tributary the Chona, and the Ilimpeia (or Limta) River (Strelov 1916).

During the 19th century, expeditions to the Tunguska were led by A. F. Middendorf in 1843–44, by A. L. Chekanovskii and F. F. Miller in 1873–75, and by I. D. Cherskii in 1882. Later, Middendorf (1878) described the Ilimpeia Tunguses, and Miller (1895) published his material about the economy and everyday life of the Erbogachen, Nakanno, Verkhneviliuisk, and Olenek Tunguses. However, near the end of the 19th century Cherskii (1885) had written that the district had yet to be thoroughly investigated ethnographically, especially as regards the Tungus people and the Russian settlers.
At the beginning of the 20th century, V. Ia. Shishkov did a hydrographic study of the Lower Tunguska. (If it was not for the assistance of a group of mobile Tunguses, his expedition could have ended tragically.) He recorded some interesting facts about his trip: “The people on the Lower Tunguska do not live on *khleb* ‘grain’. They live by fishing and hunting … every household has 5–7–10 hunting dogs, and 7–10 rifles. The izbas have rugs made of reindeer and moose skin on the floor, and the trunks are also covered with wild animal skins. In a corner of these dwellings you can find spears, or the Tungus *pal’ma* ‘bear-spear’” (Shishkov 1985). That trip, and meeting the “hardworking and most pleasant people” of the Katanga, radically changed his life, and he became a writer.

S. K. Patkanov analyzed the data of the 1897 census concerning the number of Katanga Evenkis, and presented his analysis in a chapter titled “Irkutsk Guberniiia.” In connection with the peculiarities of Tungus group settlements, the author remarked: “The exact locations of their camps are not known … neither are the locations or the names of their camps and movements indicated at all in the census material” (Patkanov 1906: 106). By 1917, K. M. Rychkov had visited the Ilimpeia Evenkis (northern neighbours of the Katanga Evenkis). He published an interesting work containing valuable information on practically all aspects of Evenki life—including the main types of economic activity, their mobile way of life, and the principles governing their travel patterns (Rychkov 1917, 1922–23).

During the Soviet period, Evenkis in Katanga district came under the administration of the Kirensk branch of the Committee of the North. In 1929, the Kirensk Expedition of the Siberian Land Administration did research in the district. The expedition was headed by an economist, I. P. Kopylov, and staffed by A. A. Pogudin, a game warden [*okhotoved*], and N. Ia. Romanov, an official in charge of licensing the use of land [*zemleustroitel’*]. It had a mandate to organize land use along the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska, which were close to other densely populated Siberian rivers—the Lena and the Ilim. Their very detailed report contains valuable information about the settlement, land tenure, and economy of both Evenkis and Russian settlers of that time (GAIO R538-1-183). I used that source extensively in writing this book.

In 1930, the museum researchers P. G. Poltoradnev and P. P. Khoroshikh travelled down river, collecting artifacts of Evenki ethnography in order to expand the collections of the Irkutsk Regional Studies Museum. Along with fulfilling the main task of the expedition, Poltoradnev (1932) also collected and published some ethnographical material about Evenki reindeer herding on the Lower Tunguska. Khoroshikh (1950) published his collected materials about Evenki orientation markers.

G. M. Vasilevich began her research as a student with the Katanga Evenkis in 1926, and later she became a recognized authority in Tungus studies (Vasilevich 1926, 1930a/b/c). She was the first scholar to study every Evenki territorial group. In one of her articles, she introduced and analyzed
a wide variety of issues concerning Evenki ethnography: their origins, distribution, clan structure, economy, and material culture (Vasilevich 1962). Iu. B. Strakach (1962) wrote another interesting article about Tokma Evenkis during the Soviet period. He collected his material while working as a member of the Evenki division of the Northern Expedition of the AN SSSR Institute of Ethnography, which was supervised by Vasilevich.

V. A. Tugolukov (1965), in an article based on archival materials, summed up the economic and social changes in the life of the Evenkis of Irkutsk oblast' during the previous one hundred fifty years. However, the Katanga Evenkis were not covered in this work. In the late 1970s, M. G. Turov of Irkutsk State University did research in the area. His field notes (1990) are a useful source for reconstructing the economy of the Evenkis living in the taiga zone of Central Siberia [Figures 22 and 38 are by him].

My field studies were done in 1981, 1987–91, 1993, 1995, 2000, and 2001 in Katanga and the neighbouring Kirensk and Kachug raions of Irkutsk oblast' (Fig. 7). My research in Katanga raion during 1986–88 was financed by the oblast' Ministry of Culture, while I was on staff at the Regional Studies Museum of Irkutsk Oblast'. The materials of Evenki ethnography that I collected during expeditions are kept in the museum, as are artifacts from the Russian settlers [IOKM fondy 13402, 13411, 13430, 13615, 13619, 13619, and 4869–74]. Two expeditions (in 1990 and 1991) were financed by the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. My research in 2000 was organized with my own money, while in 2001 my expedition was supported by Finland’s Alexanteri Institute.

During these expeditions, I was able to study almost all the settlements in Katanga raion that were inhabited by Evenkis. Most of the work was done in their seasonal camps, where Evenkis lead a life close to their traditional mobile one. I had the good fortune to visit many Evenki families that had reindeer, and to take part in seasonal travel, mainly in summer and autumn. My results include documentary expedition materials, plans and layouts of the camps, routes drawn on maps, and photographs (Sirina 1992, 1993, 1995, 1999).

Archival materials are used widely in this work, and many are analysed practically for the first time. These materials, dating back mostly to the 1920s–30s, are stored at the State Archives of Irkutsk oblast' (GAIO) in the collections of the Siberian Committee to Aid the Peoples of the Northern Frontiers of Siberia (R538), the Eastern Siberian branch of the [Imperial] Russian Geographic Society (R565), the Eastern Siberian Territory Land Administration (R440), and the Kirensk Committee of the North (R528). Archival material was also used from the collections R1468, R50, R600, [R729, and R2375]. Some unpublished material of the Siberian branch of the Scientific Research Institute of the Agriculture of the Far North was used, as well as other documents stored at the archives of the Katanga Raion

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§3 These accession numbers, as well as the references to GAIO document collections R729 and R2375 below, were added by the author to this edition. —Ed.
Administration (former Raion Executive Committee), and also at the Shishkov Regional Studies Museum of Katanga Raion. Data of the [1989] All-Union Census concerning the raion under consideration, and statistical data from the Association of Peoples of the North, were used in this research. I am grateful to the staff of the above-mentioned museums, archives, statistics boards,
libraries, and the editorial staff of the [Katanga raion] newspaper *Pravda Severa* for providing access to the necessary material, and for our fruitful co-operation.

I usually do research by myself, but I hope that my friends Elena E. Antipina and Tatiana V. Liakh do not regret having taken part in the expeditions of 1981 and 1988, with their memorable cheerfulness, patience, and sense of humour.

This book was written at the Department of Ethnography of the Peoples of Siberia and the Far North of the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology. I am very grateful to my scholarly supervisor, Prof. Zoia P. Sokolova, for her exacting and benevolent guidance, and also to my esteemed referees, Prof. Viktor V. Karlov, Prof. Iurii B. Simchenko, and Tatiana B. Uvarova, Candidate of Historical Sciences. I am also grateful to Mikhail G. Turov of Irkutsk University, who developed my interest in Evenki ethnography.

Enormous gratitude goes to my friends from Krasnoiarsk, the architects Elena and Gennadii Trubinov, as well as Tatiana Alimova, who made most of the diagrams and drawings published here, based on my photographs and sketches. [Two Evenki artists also participated: Figure 29 was drawn by Lazar Petrovich Sychegeir; and Figures 19, 21, 47, 67, 70, and 75n by A. Ia. Veretnov. P. K. Kaplin contributed Figures 3 and 4.] My sincere thanks go also to my countrymen, the Irkutsk archaeologists Vladimir I. Bazaliskii, Aleksei V. Tetenkin, Andrei A. Tiutrin, and especially Evgenii M. Ineshin, for their valuable advice and assistance. My heartfelt gratitude goes to David G. Anderson for supporting the publication of the second [Russian] edition of my book [(Sirina 2002), which forms the basis for this translation].

Overall, the text of the [second Russian] edition has remained unchanged [from the first Russian edition] (Sirina 1995). However, it has been supplemented with a foreword and an afterword, a new section called “A Hunter’s Diary,” excerpts of my field notes from 1987–95, and some archival material. The final, fifth chapter was written with financial support provided by the Jubilee Fund of the Bank of Sweden. It is devoted to the changes that have taken place in Evenki culture in the last ten years, based on statistical data and field observations from 1995 and 2000–2001. The book is also illustrated with maps, drawings, and photographs. Unless another photographer is mentioned, they were all taken by me.


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3 [New footnote by the author] The Swedish financing came from the project “Post-Soviet Political and Socio-Economic Transformation among the Indigenous Peoples of Northern Russia: Current Administrative Policies, Legal Rights, and Applied Strategies.”
M. N. Sychev, L. P. Sychev, A. P. Sychev, V. D. Kaplin, G. G. Apkin, Mr. Boldakov, the Gordeev family from Tokma, Z. V. Monakhova, A. V. Krivoshapkin, V. P. Konenkin, and many other people living in the Katanga who helped me to carry out this research.
1.1 Ethnicity and population dynamics in the first quarter of the 20th century

From the 17th century until the first quarter, and even the middle, of the 20th century, the population of the Katanga comprised three major ethnic groups—Tunguses (Evenkis), Russian settlers, and Iakuts [Fig. 8]. The first two groups had a relatively stable population, while Iakuts appeared in the second half of the 19th century. The groups were not isolated, and were subject to intensive processes of acculturation and assimilation.

Katanga Evenkis were already intermixing with Russian settlers in the 17th century, and with Iakuts in the 19th century. As a result of acculturation, Evenkis living in the southern part of the Katanga district took on a more settled lifestyle. They kept livestock and farmed, but still preserved hunting as an important aspect of their lives. Russian settlers adopted many traditions from Evenkis. These were mainly in the areas of hunting and fishing technique, and other forms of environmental adaptation. “The intrusion of Russian farmers into the taiga, and their annual visits to Tungus camps, had both positive and negative consequences. The negative ones impacted upon hunting. The Russians ran down reindeer with dogs, looted storehouses, and trespassed onto Tungus hunting grounds. The positive influences were connected to Evenkis’ general social progress, by making them develop the qualities necessary to adapt to the current economic situation” (GAIO R538-1-183: 66).

The descendants of Russians and Evenkis who married three and four generations ago have turned out to be so profoundly integrated into the Russian culture and its system of values that it would be fair to say they are not so much acculturated as assimilated. As Kopylov wrote in 1927 about the Tunguses in the southern part of the district, “One occasionally comes across a pure métis who can be differentiated from a peasant from the Ilim or the Lena only by his govor ‘dialect’” (ibid.: 59).

Historically, Evenkis living in the northern part of Katanga district had closer contacts and cultural co-operation with the Iakuts, who migrated from the banks of the Viliui, Chona, and other rivers. These contacts intensified in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Acculturation occurred despite the relatively small number of Iakuts in that area. Part of the Evenki population shifted to a semi-settled way of life, concentrating mainly on raising livestock, while part of the Iakut population started to herd reindeer (as well as to keep cattle, as was traditional). [Changes in the style of pastoralism created conditions which also] promoted mixed marriages. Bilingualism and mixed identities became characteristic of Evenkis living in the northern part of Katanga district.
Figure 8. The approximate regional population distribution in Katanga raion at the end of the 1920s.
By the time of the Polar Census of 1926–27, there were about 4,425 people living in the district. Among them were 1,115 Evenkis and 80 Iakuts. The rest were mainly Russian settlers. Below we shall consider the process of formation of the ethnic composition of the population before the Polar Census of 1926–27.

1.1.1 Evenkis

In the 17th century (1682), approximately 55% of the Evenki population of the Lower Tunguska were concentrated at the river’s headwaters, around the Nepa, Kureika, and Kondogir iasak posts. The other Evenkis (approx. 45%) lived in the middle and lower sections of the river, at the Ilimpeia, Turyzhsk, and Letnee posts.

Based on his analysis of the 1897 census, S. K. Patkanov noted that the Tunguses (Evenkis) of Irkutsk guberniia were distributed primarily in the eastern portion of the Upper Lena okrug, and only partially “in the forested and mountainous parts of the huge Kirensk okrug.” There were three independent Tungus [administrative-territorial] departments in Kirensk okrug, called the Kirensk-Khanda, Kureika, and Kondogir Alien Upravas [inorodnye upravly]. The majority of the Tunguses were nomads. In Kirensk okrug, 1,283 of 1,399 people of both sexes were nomads (Patkanov 1906: 108). Outside Kirensk okrug, there was also the Lower Ilim Alien Uprava, at which 167 male persons were recorded as having paid iasak ‘tribute’ in 1837.

The Kureika and Kondogir Alien Upravas had existed since 1822, within Preobrazhenka volost' of Kirensk uezd in Irkutsk guberniia. The Kondogir Alien Uprava encompassed the Tunguses living in what is now the northern part of Katanga raion, Irkutsk oblast', with boundaries stretching from Preobrazhenka village in the southeast to the mouth of the Ilim River in the northwest. In 1837, the head of the Kondogir Alien Uprava was Ivan Farkov. That year, he collected 705 rubles in taxes (GAIO R729-1-1) from 47 male persons (GAIO R729-1-4: 3v) as iasak for the office of His Imperial [Russian] Highness, and also for volost'-level taxes. By 1880 the Kondogir Alien Uprava had 279 subjects, who possessed 668 reindeer, 8 horses, and 11 head of cattle (GAIO R729-1-5: 12).

The Kureika Alien Uprava brought together Tunguses to the south [corresponding to the southern part of today’s Katanga raion], in a territory within Preobrazhenka volost' that was situated approximately 500 km from Podvoloshino village. Some of the aliens [inorodtsy] in the Kureika Alien Uprava of Kirensk okrug lived along the Vitim River. In 1837, the Kureika Uprava collected iasak from 141 males. In 1879, it collected 626 rubles 88 kopecks (GAIO R729-1-4: 1v). In 1880, there were 506 persons in the Kureika Alien Uprava. There, it was observed that “most of the aliens lead a nomadic life, only 3 people are engaged in tillage” (GAIO R729-1-5: 1). Those Tunguses were governed from the administrative capital, situated in the Russian village of Iur'eva [Iur'eva] on the Lower Tunguska River
The Kondogir and Kureika Alien Upravas seemed to be artificially created “administrative” clans. Nevertheless, the division of Katanga Evenks into Kondogir and Kureika groups became entrenched in the scholarly literature.

Kondogir Tunguses lived close to Kureika Tunguses in the south and southeast. In the east, they lived beside Viliuisk Tunguses and with Iakuts, while to the west they lived with Kezhma Tunguses of Enisei okrug. In 1897, there were 293 Kondogir Tunguses [Fig. 9].

![Figure 9. “These are two families of mobile Tunguses. They have a hewn gule-izba, where they live for part of the winter, travelling for the rest of the time. At left, the two girls are holding lassos.” Photo and text by V. Ia. Shishkov, 1911 (KRKM No. 11).](image)

The population of Kureika Tunguses was 303 people of both sexes. They lived at the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska, with their territory bordering Makarov volost on the Lena River. Their neighbours were Russian settlers and Kirensk-Khanda Tunguses in the south and southwest, Kondogir Tunguses in the north, and Iakuts and Bodaibo Tunguses in the east and southeast. Kirensk Tunguses were distributed between Russians in swathes along the Aikta and Tira rivers. They were Russified, engaged in cereal agriculture, and had lost their own ethnicity: “Some of them married Russian women, administrative clans were a phenomenon common to Tsarist times after the 1822 reforms of Mikhail Speranskii. Tribute (iasak) was collected by the Russian state according to kinship relationships as perceived by the state. Since aboriginal people inevitably reorganized their regular hunting, trading, and fishing activities alongside this obligation, over the decades this administratively formed social unit became organic. Here, Dr. Sirina observes that the divisions between these groups in this particular part of Siberia were more artificial than real. —Ed.
while others even forgot their own mother tongue and were only formally considered to be people of “Tungus origin” (GAIO R538-1-183). In 1897, S. K. Patkanov noted a decrease in the number of Kureiaka Tunguses [reflected in the census of that year].

The Polar Census [of 1926–27] classified Evenkis into 5 territorial groups—Nakanno, Erbogachen, Erema-Teteia, Preobrazhenka, and Tokma. Judging from their location, the Erbogachen Tunguses corresponded to the former Kondogir group and the Tokma Tunguses corresponded to the former Kureiaka group. Table 2 shows the population of each group by the places where they gathered to trade (Tugolukov 1985: 103–4).

**Table 2. Population of Evenki groups along the upper and middle courses of the Lower Tunguska River, according to the Polar Census of 1926–27.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trading post</th>
<th>No. families</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>No. reindeer</th>
<th>Gathering place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Ust'-Ilimpeia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>Ilimpeia town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Ilimpeia</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>Tunor town on the [Ilimpeia] River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakanno</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>Nakanno town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erbogachen</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>Erbogachen village</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erema-Teteia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>Teteia town on the Teteia River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preobrazhenka</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>1,636</td>
<td>Tokma town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>1,336</td>
<td>3,327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to B. O. Dolgikh [1946], the Nakanno territorial group occupied an area covering the Lower Tunguska basin from its bend below the mouth of the Lower Kochema River to the rapids above the mouth of the Kuderanka River, including the upper Eiko River and the upper and middle courses of the Munkaty River (tributary of the Eiko). It bordered on the Iakut ASSR in the north and east, and on Krasnoiarsk Krai in the west. Their territory on the Lower Tunguska included the following villages: Ankacho [Angacho], Apka, Tynliakit, Kanka (Nakanna [Nakanno]), Aiakan, Simenga, Diavdiavdiak [Devdevdiak], and Inarigda. §5

The territory of the Erbogachen group encompassed the Lower Tunguska basin from the hamlet of Ankula (below the mouth of the Teteia River) to the bend of the Lower Tunguska below the mouth of the Lower Kochema River. It included the entire basins of the Lower Tunguska tributaries—the Ingaulti and Middle and Upper Kochema rivers—as well as almost the entirety of the Lower Kochema, part of the Chona River basin, and downriver parts of the

§5 In the next dozen paragraphs, the names of settlements are given as recorded by Dolgikh (1946), with contemporary spelling given in square brackets if it differs. —Ed.
tributaries of the Chona and the Vakunaika rivers. The following settlements were in that territory: Erbogachen village and the hamlets Ankula, Shivera, Silgisa, Potakui, Kulinda, Podkamennyi, Bugorkan, and Sanara. Russians lived mainly in Sanara, while settled Evenkis and Iakuts lived mainly in Erbogachen and settlements close to it (Chupa and Iarmanga hamlets).

The *Erema-Teteia group* occupied an area including the basins of the rivers Eromo [Erema] and the Teteia (left tributary of the Lower Tunguska), except for the parts of their river heads in Krasnoiarsk Krai and the headwaters of the Teteia.

The *Preobrazhenka territorial group* occupied an area embracing the southeastern part of Katanga district. The southern and eastern borders of the area coincided with those of the raion, and included the Lower Tunguska from the rivers Antonovka and Kuduin down to and including the hamlet of Nivniuk [Nevniuk], the lower course of the Nepa River, the mouth of the rivers Teteia and Eroma [Erema], the basin of the Chona River from its source to the mouth of the Buada River, and the upper Vakunaika River. This area included the following entire sel'sovety ‘rural councils [RC]’ [all villages are *derevni* except *Iur'eva*, indicated as *selo*—Trans.]:

1. On the Lower Tunguska River—
   - Sosnino RC ([consisting of] Sosnino and Logashino villages and a number of hamlets: Listvennichnyi, Antonovskii, Baikal, and others)
   - Nepa RC (Nepa and Gazhenka villages)
   - Martynova RC (Martynova, Melnichnaia, Potemkina [Potemina], and Danilova villages)
   - Verkhniaia Kalinina RC (Verkhniaia Kalinina, Nizhniaia Kalinina, Bokovikova, and Fedorova villages)
   - Preobrazhenka RC (Preobrazhenka village, Iur'eva *selo*)
   - Moga RC (Moga and Zhdanova villages)
   - Erema RC (Erema and Luzhki villages)
   - Os'kino RC (Os'kino and Kur'ia villages; Kameshok, Krivoi, and Nivniuk [Nevniuk] hamlets);

2. On the Nepa River—
   - Aian RC (Aian and Bazurina villages; Berezin, Viska, and Kur'ia hamlets; and Dotkon [Dotkan] village);

3. The upper part of the basin of the Ichera River (tributary of the Lena), where the hamlets Kliuchi and Bor were situated.

The *Tokma group* occupied a territory that included the upper courses of the Podkamennaia Tunguska and Lower Tunguska rivers (the Nepa river basin), and the upper and middle Kuta and Tira rivers (Lena tributaries), where the Tokma Native Council [*tuzemnyi sovet*] was established in 1928.
This territory included the basin of the Nepa River from the town of Ika inclusive; the Lower Tunguska river basin from its junction with the Lower Gul'mok River; the Podkamennaia Tunguska river basin from the mouth of the Chula River; the Kuta river basin upriver from the village of Maksimovo; the Tira river basin from the mouth of the Small Tira River; and the Tetere river head (tributary of the Podkamennaia Tunguska) to the mouth of the Neimukon River.

The Russians founded the Bur Rural Council in Kirensk raion, along the middle course of the Nepa River (including the village of Bur and the towns of Ika and Ust'-Shurinda [Surinda]); and the towns of Tokma, Bul'dzak and Luktukon along its upper course, subordinated to the Makarov Rural Council of Ust'-Kut raion (Dolgikh 1946).

G. M. Vasilevich proposed a classification of the Katanga Evenkis into four groups: two northern—Nakanno and Erbogachen—and two southern—Nepa and Tokma. This division was based on characteristics such as inter-clan marriage ties and clan settlement patterns, as well as ethnographic and language features (Vasilevich 1962: 99).

According to the extant information, the clan structure of the above-mentioned groups appeared as follows.

B. O. Dolgikh identified seven clans as the Kondogir Evenkis [surnames listed in round brackets—Ed.]: Putugir/Pangarakai (Uvachan, Kaplin, Monakhov, Dondin, Kazansky), Mongol', Galel', Sichogir [Sychegir], Khachakagir (Popov), Oshikagir, and Okarigir—for a total of 629 people. It should be noted that over half of these Evenkis had the surname Kaplin (Dolgikh 1946: 598–601; Tugolukov 1985: 137). According to G. M. Vasilevich, this Evenki clan structure had undergone changes by 1962, with the above-mentioned clans being joined by the Udygir, Kombagir (most of whom were living in Ekonda [Ekon] of Ilimpeia raion in the Evenki National Okrug at that time), Chapegir, Kungnokogir (Monakhov and Kaplin), and Brangat (a group of Evenkis in Nakanno) clans. The Erbogachen group of Evenkis expanded to include some families of the Podkamennaia Tunguska clans Khorbo, Kochoni, and Niushkagir; the Nakanno clans Uvochan and Putugir; the Nepa clans Maugir (who had lived on the Eromo [Erema] River) and Siligir (who had lived on the Chona River); and the Vitim clan Chilchagir (Vasilevich 1962).

Kureika Evenkis [according to Dolgikh (1946)] had a larger number of clans. Each had a Russian surname which was usually given when baptized: Vaku vagir, Lontogir (Salatkin), Voiagir/Voiair, Mugdokogir, Tugochal (Davydkin), Korshil'/Korchi (Irgineev, Boldakov), Momol' (Konenkin), Muchugir (Serditkin), Mouil', Urgatyl' (Boiarshin), Kungnokogir (Sharoglavoz), Putugir, Chimeir-Chimdiagir (Vakorin, Barnaulov, Panteev), Tom mogir (Kolobovshin), Taliir, Khaikogir (Kachin, Slobodchikov, Apkin, Belosliudtsev, Podgornunskii), Khangnadagir (Davydkin), Churakair (Os'kin, Bablokin, Karelin), Chemdal' (Gorbunov), and Cheronchin. There were a
total of 651 Kureika Evenkis, and they had 1,626 reindeer (Dolgikh 1946; Tugolukov 1985). The rapid growth in the number of Kureika Evenkis in the 1920s could be explained by the migration of a large group of Baikal Evenkis to the Lower Tunguska, which then merged with the Tokma territorial group. Tokma Evenkis married women who had come from the Ilim, Angara, and Teteia rivers, and from around Chemdal'sk in Krasnoiarsk Krai, as well as from Chita oblast’. According to G. M. Vasilevich, the migration of a significant portion of the Baikal Evenkis to the upper course of the Lower Tunguska was one reason for the variety of ethnonyms and dialects so characteristic of this territory. These differences were also linked to an accelerated disintegration of administrative clans and blood clans, and the formation of associations based on territorial proximity as a result of contacts with the Russian and Iakut population. Thus, for example, Evenkis living in the southern part of the raion exhibited Tokma and Nepa native dialects of the Evenki language, while Evenkis in the north spoke Nakanno and Erbogachen native dialects [Fig.10].

Figure 10. Playing reindeer at a summer camp. Photo by P. G. Poltoradnev, c. 1930 (IOKM No. 469-278).

[State-enforced] amalgamations began before the [Second World] war, around 1936. For example, the Evenkis of the Tokma territorial group used to live in the following places: the Apkins and Cheronchins on the Khodolkit River; the Gorbunovs and Os'kins on the Urokan River; the Sharoglazovs on the Icheda River; and the Boldakovs on the Iamny River. Before consolidation,
the population of the small hamlets had been on average from 40 to 80 persons, ninety percent of whom were Evenkis. They lived in izbas as well as conical lodges, and kept reindeer. At first, Evenkis from the Icheda and Urokan were made to move to the town of Khodolkit. Other Evenkis were made to move to Volokon. During the second consolidation, the Evenkis from Khodolkit and Volokon were made to move to Tokma. Some Evenkis did not want to move to Tokma, and some of the Sharoglazov, Silkin, Chenchin, and Os'kin families moved to Maksimovo village in Ust'-Kut raion—from where, apparently, they had originally come to the upper part of the Lower Tunguska during the 1920s.

1.1.2 Russian settlers

There have been few ethnographic studies of *russkie starozhily* ‘Russian settlers’ on the Lower Tunguska. They have lived there since the 17th century, when Siberia was explored by groups of Cossacks, *guliashchie* ‘vagabonds’, *promyshlennye liudi* ‘commercial trappers’, and peasants from the Turukhansk Monastery who came upriver along the Lower Tunguska from the Enisei River. The settlement of this area began first on the Lower Tunguska and then on the Lena. The remoteness of the raion assisted the ethnographic preservation of the so-called *velikorossy* ‘[arch.] Great Russians’, most of whom originated from the northern guberniias of [the Russian Empire]. Their ethnographic features were preserved until recently. Living among the natives, who significantly outnumbered them, they acquired new features due to acculturation, especially with the adoption of local hunting traditions [Fig. 11].

![Figure 11. Several generations of Russian settlers in Katanga district, 1993.](image)
By the end of the 19th century, Russian settlers numbered about 1,600 (GAIO R50-9-76). By 1926–27, natural growth increased these numbers to 2,500–3,000 (Gurvich and Dolgikh 1970: 442–3). In the 1880s, the average family size was 10.2 persons. By the late 1920s, it had decreased to 6–7. The division/dispersion of extended families resulted in migration, which took place mainly within the raion. Kinship relations in such families can be traced both within the raion itself and with the Russian settlers who lived in the upper and middle parts of the Lena river valley (mostly within the borders of what is currently Kirensk raion, Irkutsk oblast'), as well as partially with the Kureika Tunguses and the Iakuts.

Table 3. The distribution, population, and family size of Russian settlers along the upper course of the Lower Tunguska River, 1880.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>No. households</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Surnames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preobrazhenskoe [Preobrazhenka]</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>110 Zyr'ianov, Iur'ev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iur'eva</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>107 Iur'ev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nizhnekalinina</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>73 Verkhoturov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verkhnekalinina</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>135 Verkhoturov, Permiakov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokovikova</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66 Bokovikov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martynova</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44 Ineshin, Diadkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danilova</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38 Diadkin, Novosel'tsev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potemina</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13 Permiakov, Bokovikov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepa</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>109 Ineshin, Verkhoturov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazhenka</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36 Zarukin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logashino</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9 Ineshin, Vlasov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sosnino</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34 Safiannikov, Iur'ev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moga</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>103 Safiannikov</td>
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<td>Zhdanova</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74 Zhdanov, Iur'ev</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erema</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>61 Farkov, Mungalov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luzhki</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34 Farkov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Os'kino</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>92 Farkov, Iur'ev, Kladovikov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankula</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18 Kolesnikov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erbogachchen</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38 Farkov, Mungalov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1,275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GAIO R50-9-106.
Data on the distribution, population, and family names of the population of Russian settlers are shown in Table 3. This information excludes the Russian population of the Nepa river valley and Podvoloshino village (apparently at least 300 people), which did not belong to the Lower Tunguska parish of Preobrazhenka, whose records were used to compile the table (GAIO R50-9-106).

Villages usually had representatives of only one or two (rarely more) familii ‘patrilineal surname lineages’. Mainly, they were the Saf'iannikov, Verkhoturov, Pinigin, Ineshin, Kuzakov, Zhdanov, Iur’ev, Farkov, and Bokovikov families. V. Ia. Shishkov noted: “The surname lineage Pinigin [Pinigin] is deeply rooted in the village of Podvolochni [Podvoloshino]. Of the 32 households in the village, 18 Pinegin families are blood relatives … There are two villages, Verkhniaia and Nizhniaia Korelina [Karelina], whose residents have the same Korelin surname” (1914: 57).

The specificity of the settlement of Russians in the district, and their kindred and economic relations, created close connections and interdependence among the population. These features were also prevalent in other regions where the two ethnic groups lived close by—for example, in northwestern Manchuria (Lindgren 1938).

The Russian settlers on the Lower Tunguska call Evenkis tungusy or tangusy (as they were called in old times), and the place where they live Tungusia or Katanga. In observing the culture of their ethnic neighbours, they describe them according to the formula distribution–occupation–way of life.

A resident of Podvoloshino village, T. V. Pinigina (b. 1921), sketched the following “portrait” of the Tungus people: “They are clever, meek, not belligerent.” She remembered that in the late 1920s, two or three Tungus families lived on the outskirts of Podvoloshino—in Shurynda (Surinda), 12 kilometres away from the village, in a tiny izba and a lodge. The Tunguses also lived on the left bank of the Lower Tunguska, opposite the village. Riding reindeer, they hunted with their entire families, including the children. Pinigina’s father rode a reindeer to hunt with the Tunguses, up to 80 kilometres away from the village. When the Soviet government began establishing kolkhozes, the Evenkis moved away—one family to Gazhenka and another to Tura in Krasnoiarsk Krai.

[In response to my question about Tunguses,] another woman, T. A. Kuzakov, shrugged her shoulders and said: “[They are] ordinary people. Good people.”

In 1987, V. I. Potapov, who lived on the Lena River, was 80 years old. He was born in Federiashino village, near the head of the Lower Tunguska where the village residents cut hay. Potapov provided the following description:

In those places, the tangusy lived in birch-bark lodges, and they kept reindeer. Near Federiashino village was a small river, the Moiseevka. As far as I can remember, the tangusy were already living on the Tunguska then. They would come to the village for pokruta (food and goods on credit, to
be paid back with the harvest of the hunting and fishing season—Auth.) on reindeer, with birch-bark torsuki ‘saddlebags’. They would saddle their reindeer and pack two bags on them. One tungusikha ‘Tungus woman’ would lead 10–12 reindeer. At that time, they lived in the gul’maki ‘headwaters’ of the Lower Tunguska—five or six families. Some six kilometres from Federiashino is Shamanskii Creek. The tngusy would gather specially at the creek, on the hill, when they came for pokruta—in summer and autumn, when the grain ripened. They shamanili ‘shamanized’ at the creek. We were small children then, and would run there to watch. The tngusy made a fire, sat around it, and the shaman sat in the middle. They killed a reindeer. The shaman jumped around in all kinds of different ways. Obolochenyi ‘dressed to the hilt’, he was. Beautiful clothes on him, all adorned with glass beads, and everything made of leather… Then everyone sat and made merry. The shaman cut the reindeer meat and gave everyone a piece. The tngusy stopped coming to the creek when the Soviets were in power. At first, they were taken to the kolkhoz in Tokma, to force them to live in izbas. Their reindeer were collectivized. I remember one Tungus, Fedor, who was persecuted as a kulak. The Karelina villagers tore down his izba. He brought in meat from the forest, and we gave him flour. He lived at the headwaters.

M. I. Mungalova from Preobrazhenka village said that Evenkis from as far away as the Podkamennaya Tunguska River would come to the village on St. Peter’s Day (12 July) to buy food and go to church. They camped in their lodges near the village on the high bank of the river (‘na viske’). Once, two Tungus women crawled about two kilometres to the Church of the Transfiguration [Preobrazhenskaia] on their knees. They were followed out of curiosity by small children, including the young Mungalova, who showed the women the shortest way. In the church, “they laid furs and shawls on the altar, which was their way of showing obeisance.”

Leonid Fedorovich Golovchenko was born in 1924 in Preobrazhenka village. His forebears had been exiled to the Lower Tunguska at the end of the 19th century. In 1990, he recalled:

Tngusy lived on the Erema River—many of them, and also along the Chaika, a tributary of the Erema. At Ust’-Chaika there was a reindeer kolkhoz, and 90 kilometres up the Chaika was the purely Evenki town of Khomokashevo. Now, only a few zimov’ia ‘winter cabins’ are standing there. There was plague, and many Tunguses died. Those remaining left the Khomokashevo sel’sovet ‘rural council’ and came down to Ust’-Chaika. Preobrazhenka Evenkis also lived in Ust’-Chaika. They hunted in their traditional places even while living the settled life in the village. The Russians followed the Evenki example while hunting, and lived in lodges. Evenkis were buried separately from the Russians, in a borok ‘small pine grove’ about two kilometres away.

Valia Verkhutovurova was born in 1957 in Kalinin village. Later, she moved to Preobrazhenka village. She remembered two Evenki families from her childhood. One Evenki family lived in the village, and the other family lived in a lodge on its outskirts. She recalled:

They did not bury their dead at the village cemetery. They buried them in the forest, separately, not far from the village. They buried them in the
ground, and stuck poles in alongside that had colourful ribbons tied to them. Those who lived in wooden houses in the village had traditional lodges in the yard—the women smoked and tanned hides there.

A. D. Gordeeva, a Russian woman from the town of Tokma, said:

… Evenkis used to live well. They always had plenty of meat. But they also worked hard, as hard the Russians did. Not only did they hunt, they also hayed and carpentered. Pure Evenkis were kinder than the [mixed bloods] are today. They’d give you the shirt off their back, and they were obliging and honest.

A characteristic feature of the Russian settled way of life in the taiga conditions of Central Siberia was the strategy of “valley colonization.” This was employed when Russian agriculturalists settled along the banks of the Lower Tunguska and its tributary the Nepa. The majority of the Russians lived in the southern part of the raion which was the best area for agriculture. They considered the village of Erbogachen as their frontier. They engaged in a variety of economic activities that included northern-taiga agriculture, raising livestock (cows, sheep, horses), fishing, growing vegetables, and collecting berries and mushrooms. In spite of the severe climatic conditions (early frost, very cold temperatures, poor soil), the Russian settlers living on the Tunguska, the Nepa, and the Kuta always had harvests of oats, barley, rye, and even wheat: “Russian farmers [russkie zemledel'tsy] have been determinedly growing cereals here, and from time to time they have an excellent harvest” (GAIO R538-1-183: 39v).

Another reason that Russians chose to settle there was the opportunity to hunt and fish. No money changed hands in trading with merchants. Rather, it was a straight exchange of goods by barter, and most of the local population owed the merchants a constant debt (Shishkov 1985: 396–403). Many Russians hunted together with Evenkis with whom they had certain economic or kinship ties. Gradually, a process of mutual adaptation occurred, along with the borrowing of techniques, tools, and methods of hunting, and familiarization with the features of a given locality, which brought the two ethnicities closer together.

During the fur-hunting season, Russian commercial hunters came from neighbouring districts, especially those along the Lena, to the Katanga. They contributed up to one-third of all the revenues generated from the hunting season. In 1929, it was observed that “… the hamlets located upriver from Bur are a kind of base for hunters who come from the Lena” (GAIO R538-1-183: 123).

The Russians established ownership of land by encroachment [zakhvat]. They cleared new land in the river valleys for ploughing, haying, and pasturing, which forced Evenkis to move deeper into the taiga. The first step to permanent appropriation of territory was to construct a balagan ‘turf hut’ and seize the pastureland around it, to feed the horses used for hunting. If conditions were favourable, such temporary places became permanent sites, where the families of the hunters would be based along with their livestock.
A specific factor motivating [the Russians] to move deeper into the taiga was the practice of *tungusnichanie*—the unequal barter of fur for alcohol from Evenkis.

According to I. P. Kopylov, in the southern part of what is today Katanga raion there were 1,624 Evenki and Russian hunters, of which 126 were Evenkis, 370 were Russians living in the taiga, 358 were Russians from the Lena, and 770 were Russians from the Ilim (GAIO R538-1-183: 180). In the 1920s, they trapped and settled remote areas in a very active way, because of higher prices for squirrel and the bad harvests in those years. New settlements and holdings were founded as far as 200–300 kilometres away from the established villages. “In old times, when moving into native territories, the Russians gave a pittance, but at least they paid the Tunguses for their land, recognizing them to be the owners. After the law on hunting was introduced (1923), all those principles were violated, and now anybody goes hunting wherever he likes,” noted Kopylov (GAIO R538-1-183: 162).

There were various types of settlements: [1] villages on the banks of rivers; [2] hamlets and holdings with hay fields (for horse fodder while hunting), where part of the hunters’ families lived in winter and where livestock was kept; and [3] *zimov’ia* ‘winter cabins’ and *balaganil* ‘turf huts’ in the taiga, which served as temporary shelters during when hunting for pelts, as well as during haymaking. Temporary holdings could be made into permanent sites if the owners began cultivating the land.

In the regions where hunters and farmers bordered one another, relations were established on the basis of both social and economic contacts between Russians and Evenkis (Lindgren 1938; Kaigorodov 1968, 1970a, 1970b). On the Lower Tunguska, the institution of keeping *druzhki* ‘pals’ was common, and essentially equivalent to the idea of *andaki* (from the Tungus *anda* ‘friend’) that was observed by E. J. Lindgren and A. M. Kaigorodov among Evenkis and Russians in Manchuria. The practice of *goshchenie* ‘hospitality’ was also widespread. Lindgren wrote, “The extent to which the Russians identify with their Tungus *andaki* is illustrated by the reply which Trader H’s son made to my inquiry about the number of people in his family. He said: ‘Fourteen – not counting our Tungus’” (1935: 59).

The peculiarities of landownership in Siberia entailed in the existence of huge tracts of free land, as well as communal property for pasturing. There were also hay fields, inherited along the male line according to common law. As with Evenkis, the hunting grounds of the Russian settlers were inherited along the male line. These ownership patterns can be traced to the present.

### 1.1.3 Iakuts

The eastern neighbours of Kureika and Kondogir Evenkis were Viliuisk Tunguses (Evenkis) and Iakuts. The appearance of Iakuts in northern Siberia in the 17th century was met with “energetic resistance” on the part of Evenkis. But as S. K. Patkanov wrote, despite this “… Iakuts gradually occupied more
and more Tungus hunting grounds, driving them farther into the back country, sometimes even making them pay for using their former lands” (1906: 91). At the end of the 19th century, there were 1,038 Tunguses (Evenkis) in Verkhneviliuiusk uezd. They mainly lived along the upper Viliui and Chona rivers. According to Patkanov, Kureika Tunguses from Kirensk okrug (Irkutsk guberniia) would also travel to the mountainous divide between the two rivers in Suntar uezd, east of the Chona. Acculturation and inter-ethnic pressure resulted in the appearance of the Emidak and Brangat (Branat) clans on the territory of the middle course of the Lower Tunguska. Evenkis recollected that they had “come from somewhere around Iakut country.”

The arrival of Iakuts to the banks of the Lower Tunguska increased particularly at the turn of the 20th century, as they migrated from the Viliui, the Chona, and the Olenek rivers. In the 1820s, there were only 25 Iakut males in Kureika okrug of Irkutsk guberniia. By the time of the Polar Census [1926–27], there were 80 Iakuts of both sexes there (Patkanov 1906; Dolgikh 1946).

Northern Iakuts have the following surname-lineages: Egorov (Nortai clan), Romanov, Illarionov, Argulov, Petrov, Ivanov, Gromov, Ignat’ev, Grigor’ev, and Maksimov (Iktoko clan). In mixed marriages, the children were often registered as Evenkis, mainly because of the system of privileges prevalent during Soviet times. In the late 1920s, observers noted that “Iakut influence is showing on the [Evenki] natives of the Angacho Native Council. They know the Iakut language, marry Iakut women, and borrow Iakut farming methods (livestock raising)… Disputes and animosity with the Iakuts are a constant problem. In the autumn of 1928, the lands of the native population were poached 150 times by Iakut hunters” (GAIO R2375-1-38: 65).

Iakuts came to Nakanno (30 km from the border with Iakutiia) during the Second World War, from a place called Tuoi-Khaiia ‘White Mountain’ in Iakutiia. Today, Evenkis of mixed Iakut-Evenki origin live in the towns of Khamakar and Nakanno. Iakuts are also found in the genealogy of the nomadic Sychegir and Galin families.

In general, Iakuts led a semi-nomadic or settled way of life. They engaged mainly in raising cattle and horses. Iakuts also fished and hunted, and some kept reindeer and led a nomadic way of life, like Evenkis. Once in the late 1920s, this fact is known to have put an official of the Committee of the North, who was completing his inspection tour of the district, in an awkward position. He was asked by D. K. Egorov: “Indeed, I am a Iakut… but how will I be classified by the tuzsovet ‘Native Council’? … I have no horses or cows, only reindeer, and I nomadize all the time” (GAIO R528-1-9: 21). Some Iakuts in the southern part of the district practiced small-scale farming. Thus, Iakuts had many different patterns of distribution and settlement.

The ethnic composition of what is currently Katanga raion, Irkutsk oblast’, has been relatively stable for a long time. The population has included Evenkis, Russian settlers (mostly in the south), and Iakuts (mostly in the
north). In such an ethnically diverse area, land use and settlement patterns have also varied, including both agriculture and hunting/fishing. Active processes of acculturation and assimilation have taken place, causing gradual changes in the social environment. Such changes have manifested in the mutual borrowing of certain forms of culture and custom, and in shifts in ethnic self-identification, especially among Evenkis in the southern part of the raion. However, these changes were not significant before 1926–27, and even until the middle of the 20th century. They continued developing in a measured, natural way, as Evenkis living in the southern part of the raion gradually proceeded to a semi-nomadic or a settled way of life.

Developments during the second half of the 20th century, however, brought rapid population growth and changes in the prevailing ethnic composition. The resulting socio-political and socio-economic effects intensified the assimilative and acculturative pressures on the Evenki population. The next section provides an analysis of the above-mentioned factors and their consequences for the demography of the area.

1.2 A summary of the political and economic history of Katanga raion

During the 17th century, Katanga raion was part of the huge Mangazeia (Turukhansk) Uezd [in the Russian Empire]. By the middle of the 17th century, a network of sixteen permanent iasak posts was established in Mangazeia Uezd on the Lower Tunguska River. They functioned until the beginning of the 18th century. Administrative changes occurring in the late 18th and early 19th centuries resulted in the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska being separated from Turukhansk Krai. [What is today Katanga raion] was first included as a part of lakutsk uezd, and then it was a part of Kiresk uezd in Irkutsk guberniia (Dolgikh 1960) until [the revolution] in 1917 and after. Kiresk uezd comprised the entire northern half of Irkutsk guberniia.

In the early 1920s, raions in Irkutsk guberniia were formed according to ethnic-territorial lines. [As a result of a short-lived reorganization] in 1925, the territory of what is currently Katanga raion came under Preobrazhenka volost' and Makarov volost' (raions) in Kirensk okrug, Irkutsk guberniia.

In August 1927, native (clan) councils [tuzemnye sovety, or tuzsovety] were established in the basin of the Lower Tunguska as part of Preobrazhenka raion, Kirensk okrug, in Sibir' Krai (whose capital city was Novosibirsk). These were the Kondogir Native Council (with its seat in the village of Erbogachen) and the Upper Katanga Native Council (with its seat in the village of Nepa).

In 1927, the Upper Katanga and Kondogir native councils were split off from Preobrazhenka raion and formed the Katanga National Raion, which was subordinated to Kirensk okrug. In June 1928, the Nakanno and Angacho native councils were established as split-offs from the Kondogir Native Council. They were soon amalgamated as the Nakanno Native Council. In
January 1929, the Tokma Native Council was founded (with its seat in the village of Tokma).

1.2.1 The Kirensk Committee of the North

Native councils were established by the Committee of the North [Komitet Severa], which was founded on 2 March 1927 under the Kirensk Okrug Executive Committee. During that time, the Irkutsk, Tulun, and Kirensk okrugs were set up to replace the former Irkutsk guberniia. Thus, the Irkutsk Committee of the North was dissolved and replaced by the Kirensk Committee of the North, and two representatives [of this committee] were assigned to the Irkutsk and Tulun okrug executive committees (GAIO R538-1-24). The Kirensk Committee of the North was mandated to serve the most populous group of Katanga Evenkis, which lived on the Lower Tunguska and its tributaries—the Nepa, the Upper, Middle, and Lower Kochema, the Chaika, the Erema, the Teteia, and the Apka.

There were three officials on the Kirensk Committee of the North—chairman A. A. Ivanenko (a departmental head in the raion executive committee) and members Ia. N. Shebashev (head of the okrug land administration) and Rovinskii (head of the okrug department of education). Later, A. S. Demchenko (head of the Okrug organizational department) worked on the committee. There was also a temporary staff of the committee that was supposed to work locally—A. P. Kochura (who worked there from 15.06.27 until 02.11.28), S. S. Vilenchuk (15.09.28–20.06.29), [Mr.] Ust'iantsev (21.05.29–20.01.30), S. D. Permiakov (10.12.27–15.10.28), and A. Aksamentov (08.08.28–01.01.29). Most of these people were not specially trained to work among the peoples of the North, and some of them had “absolutely no idea” of the duties of an authorized representative of the Committee of the North (GAIO R528-1-9: 12). Regardless, in the absence of experienced cadres, they were charged with conducting the “Sovietization” of the natives, organizing the suglar ‘clan councils’ and communes, and collecting information about Evenkis.

Organized by the Kirensk Committee of the North, the first native conference in Katanga raion took place on 23 July 1928 in the village of Erbogachen. Twenty-two delegates attended the conference in the village’s St. Nicholas Church, which had been converted into a House of the Native. There were two delegates from the Nepa area, two from Tokma, eight from Angacho, and ten from Erbogachen. Evidently, the conference was timed to correspond with the regular visit of Tunguses emerging from the taiga to buy food in the village (12 July is St. Peter’s Day). The conference decided to organize a native raion executive committee [RIK]. A presentation was made by A. P. Kochura (from the Committee of the North). The new RIK was called the Katanga Native Raion Executive Committee, with members

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56 In the next five paragraphs, the terms okrug and raion have essentially the same meaning, being county-level entities. —Ed.
V. P. Salatkin, V. K. Putugir, N. I. Kaplin, P. P. Cheronchin, V. I. Kaplin, N. K. Putugir, and N. V. Sychev. During the conference debates, many questions were asked about shamans and kulaks being deprived of the right to vote: “There are no kulaks among us, everybody is a labourer. Why do shamans not have the right to vote?” asked one of the delegates (GAIO R528-1-9: 36v).

The second raion native conference took place on 25–29 December 1928 in the village of Erbogachen. It was timed for the winter visits to the village by Tunguses emerging from the taiga to sell fur and buy food and ammunition (19 December is Winter St. Nicholas Day). There were 34 delegates to the conference, which heard reports from the Committee of the North, the Katanga RIK, and the Integral Co-op [run by the state], and addressed issues about local natives, the hunting season, voluntary rate-paying, marriage and family problems.

In 1929, P. I. Lytkin was appointed chairman of the okrug planning department and Head of the Kirensk Committee of the North. He noted in one of his letters: “Many people took an active part in the summer suglan in both Nakanno and Tokma, as well as the plenary meeting of the Katanga Native RIK. The Tunguses expressed fair criticism/self-criticism of the native councils… The Tunguses have started anticipating us in some matters, they are very active, and they are making more demands for better leadership” (GAIO R1468-1-24: 163).

During the time that the Committee of the North was active, it established national (native) councils (four in the raion), founded the native raion executive committee (Katanga), and convened native conferences (which were, in fact, the former suglar). A network of grain warehouses was established and maintained, and the co-operative system was developed. A campaign was launched against illiteracy. Children were educated for the first time, and steps were taken to provide medical services to the native population. Also, measures were taken against tungusnichanie [the unequal barter of alcohol for fur with Evenkis].

Following the overall federal Russian policy, one of the first undertakings of the committee was to organize land registration in areas where indigenous peoples resided. The aim of the program was to demarcate territories for land usage according to ethnic or national lines. Priority was given to indigenous peoples, as lagging behind in their development and being exploited by neighbouring nations.

The official policy of that period was ambiguous and inconsistent. On the one hand, the nomads were being forced to settle, and on the other hand, attempts were made to preserve and revive their traditional way of life. For example, projects existed on paper to resettle the strongly assimilated groups of Kirensk and Upper Lena Evenkis to areas around the Tutura and the middle course of the Lower Tunguska rivers, where they could live in isolation without being influenced by neighbours, and could revive their traditional occupations (GAIO R1468-1-29: 133; GAIO R528-1-2: 119).
In 1930, in connection with the breaking up of Siberian Krai [Territory] into smaller administrative units and the founding of the Eastern Siberian Krai (with its capital in Irkutsk), Katanga raion became an independent administrative-territorial unit. The relevant decision of the Presidium of the Eastern Siberian Territory Executive Committee was taken on 3 March 1931, pursuant to a resolution of the Presidium of the [RSFSR] Central Executive Committee dated 10 December 1930 (GAIO R600-1-165: 18). According to this decision, the territory of the Katanga National Raion comprised the whole territory of Katanga raion and part of the Iakutsk ASSR, in the basin of the Lower Tunguska and Chona rivers. The following [territorial-administrative entities] became part of the raion: the Upper Katanga Clan (National) Council with its capital in Nepa village, the Kondogir Clan (later—National) Council with its capital in Erbogachen village, the Angacho (later—Nakanno) Clan (National) Council with its capital in Nakanno town, and the Ust'-Ilimpeia Clan (National) Council with its capital in Ilimpeia town. The latter entity [was created after being] split off from the Kondogir National Council that year. At the beginning of 1935, the Nepa, Bur, and Preobrazhenka Rural Councils and the Tokma Clan (National) Council were added to the Katanga [National] Raion.

Thus, in the mid-1930s Katanga raion was subdivided into the Tokma, Upper Katanga, Kondogir, Nakanno, and Ust'-Ilimpeia National Councils and the Bur, Nepa, Preobrazhenka, Os'kino, and Erbogachen Rural Councils, and included 69 population points. (From 1940 until 1965, the Bur Rural Council, which united the territories of Ika and Aian villages as well as Bur village, was called the Ika council, although its administrative centre continued to be located in the village of Bur. In 1972, the Ika Rural Council split off from the Bur Rural Council.) In 1936, the Upper Katanga National Council was split into the Khomokashevo and Upper Chona National Councils. Then, half of the 11 rural councils were national [i.e., native].

The present Katanga raion exists with approximately the same boundaries, with the exception of the Ust'-Ilimpeia National Council, which became a part of the Evenki Autonomous Okrug in Krasnoiarsk Krai.

In 1938, the sel'skie ‘rural’ and natsional'nye ‘national’ sovety ‘councils’ [RC and NC, respectively, in Katanga raion] were made up of sela ‘villages’, derevni ‘villages’, poselki ‘towns’, and vyselki ‘hamlets’ as follows (AKRA 12-1-6: 71–2):

- Ust'-Ilimpeia NC: Ust'-Ilimpeia town, Tunor hamlet;
- Nakanno NC: Inarigda town, Angacho hamlet, Nakanno town, Tukala hamlet, Aiakan town, Devdevdiak hamlet;
- Kondogir NC: Bugorkan town, Teteia town, Markhaia town, Tokma village;
• Erbogachen RC: Kulinda hamlet, Potakui hamlet, Sil'gisa hamlet, Erbogachen selo, Shivera hamlet, Ankula hamlet;
• Os'kino RC: Nevniuk hamlet, Kur'ia hamlet, Kameshok hamlet, Os'kino village, Krivoi village, Luzhki village, Borok hamlet, Erema village;
• Preobrazhenka RC: Zhdanova village, Krasnoiarova village, Moga village, Preobrazhenka selo, Nizhne-Kalinino village, Verkhne-Kalinino village, Kokorino hamlet, Iur'eva village;
• Nepa RC: Potemina village, Danilova village, Nepa village, Gazhenka village, Dotkan hamlet, Uzhmun hamlet, Logashino village, Fedorova hamlet, Sosnino village, Baikal hamlet, Listvichnoe hamlet;
• Ika RC: Zubovo hamlet, Aian village, Verkhnii Lug hamlet, Il'kon hamlet, Kur'ia village, Ika village, Chiniagda hamlet, Listvinki hamlet, Bur selo;
• Tokma NC: Korotkovo hamlet, Volokon hamlet, Irishki hamlet, Nematchak hamlet, Iuktukon hamlet, Lamnoe hamlet, Tokma village, Khodolkit hamlet, Urokan hamlet, Chula hamlet, Icheda hamlet, and Talaia hamlet;
• Khomokashevo NC: Khomokashevo town, Tetera hamlet, Ika hamlet; and
• Chona NC: Chona town, Nepa village.

The capitals of the National Councils had branches of the Integral Co-op, Gostorg [state procurement agency], Krasnyi Chum ['Red Tent', a mobile school], medical stations or hospitals, and primary schools or boarding schools. These economic and cultural features attracted Evenkis to the administrative and trading centres, in the same way that the capitals of the former Alien Upravas and Russian villages on the Lower Tunguska River had previously done.

[1.2.3 Collectivization]

As everywhere else in the North, the formation of collective institutions [kooperirovanie] in Katanga raion began in 1926–28. Members of the Committee of the North hoped that this process would be planned and tested using scientific principles. The process of organizing kolkhozes in the North had two stages. The most important institutions formed during the first stage (1932–38) were the so-called simplest production associations [prosteishie proizvodstvennye ob"edinenia] (PPOs). People were reorganized into task-based co-operatives, which did not involve collectivizing the means of production. Later, the PPOs were converted to agricultural or fishing artels
[artely] by collectivizing the productive capital (Tugolukov 1969). Today’s researchers consider the agricultural artels of this type to have been “an ideal form for organizing economic life,” since they were compatible with local collectivist traditions of production, distribution, and community life. In fact, they say, the 1940s–50s could be regarded as a “golden age” in the development of the traditional branches of the economy. In practice, however, the collectivization process was frequently imposed, and people were forced to conform to abstract and [inappropriate] templates (Karlov 1991).

On the territory of the national and rural councils of Katanga raion, the PPOs included members of both the local Evenki and the Russian population. Archival documents and the minutes of open public meetings of the different national councils illustrate varying attitudes of the local population to these events. The majority of the Tutura-Ocheul Tunguses (in what today is Kachug raion, Irkutsk oblast’), who were hunters and fishermen, were “against any kind of collectivization” (GAIO R1468-1-29: 18) [Fig. 12].

Evenkis in the southern part of the raion wanted to join the Russian communes. From the minutes of the Upper Katanga Native Council’s meeting dated 30 December 1929: “There is no benefit in organizing independent aboriginal communes [tuzkommuny] in the Upper Katanga Native Council.

Figure 12. I. S. Kaplin, a Tokma Evenki, visiting an old campsite, 1989.

In the original text, the terms PPO ‘simplest production association’, artel ‘work-unit’, and kommuna ‘commune’ are often used interchangeably. In essence, these early Soviet economic institutions were not well defined. Many existed on paper only, while people continued to hunt and trap as they always had done. The real substantial change came in the late 1930s, with the formation of the kolkhozy ‘collective farms’. —Ed.
It would be better and easier to join the functioning Russian communes” (GAIO R528-1-49: 10). By contrast, Evenkis living in the northern part of the raion preferred to form their own separate communes.

Most Evenkis did not understand this new initiative. Forming a commune was discussed at a general meeting of Evenkis of the Nakanno National Council that took place in 1929 in the town of Nakanno. Evenkis asked many questions during the discussion of the presentation given by the representative of the Committee of the North. G. F. Udygir asked, “The commune won’t make things worse, will it?” “If I have 60 reindeer and I join the commune, whose will they be—mine or communal?” “Say for example I hunted a lot of fur. How will it be divided in the commune, or will it simply counted as my income?” (GAIO R528-1-11: 70). The questions were not only about property rights in the future commune, but also about what would be done if there was disagreement within a family about joining the commune. V. N. Kaplin asked, “If my father and mother are old and don’t want to join the commune but I want to, can they be left on their own?” A. Uvachan asked, “If my husband doesn’t want to join the commune, and I want to, can I take all our children and join the commune, and leave him to do as he wishes?” (GAIO R528-1-11: 70). After “exhaustive replies were given to all the questions,” the majority of Evenkis present at the meeting voted for founding a commune.

At the same time as communes were being established on the territory of Katanga raion, independent families of hunters and reindeer herders [edinolichniki] continued to exist.

Evenkis who were members of PPOs engaged mainly in hunting, reindeer herding, and fishing. People were united into PPOs according to kin and territorial relationships, within the framework of their former clan territories. With the organization of PPOs and mixed production artels, small new Evenki settlements were established in the raion: Diavdiavdiak [Devdevdiak], Nakanno, Inarigda, Bugorkan, Markhaia, Khomokashevo, Ust'-Chaika, and others. At first, they were small settlements of about 10–15 izbas and lodges. These new towns built around collective farms did not always remain in their planned locations. In the 1930s–40s, the locations for the new towns were changed several times. For example, the first settlement location for the Nakanno group of Evenkis was chosen between Nakanno and Angacho. According to S. D. Permiakov, the raion representative of the Committee of the North, Angacho was not suitable as a settlement location, because the forage meadows were far away, and there were no native homes nearby. But in Nakanno, “The ridge is straight, just above the river, and there are five Tunguses living there already, with some buildings... there are lakes, high banks, and forage for the livestock... the land can be ploughed for forage and gardens” (GAIO R528-1-20: 12, 57). By early 1936, 721 households with a population of 3,477 people were collectivized in Katanga raion (63% of all raion households).
In 1942, the following production artels existed in settlements (AKRA 12-1-25):

- “Lenin’s Way” in Nakanno, with 22 households (16 Evenki, 5 Iakut, 1 Russian) and 668 reindeer;
- “Red Hunter” in Inarigda, with 17 households (16 Evenki, 1 Iakut) and 296 reindeer;
- “Lenin’s Way” in Diavdiavdiak, with 15 households (13 Evenki, 2 Iakut) and 54 reindeer;
- “Northern Red Hunter” in Bugorkan, with 34 households (23 Evenki, 8 Iakut, 3 Russian) and 81 reindeer;
- “New Labour” in Teteia, with 26 households (all Evenki) and 400 reindeer;
- “Red North” in Ust'-Chaika, with 21 households (all Evenki) and 158 reindeer;
- “Victory” in Tokma, with 19 households (10 Evenki, 9 Russian) and 69 reindeer; and
- “Ilich’s Way” in Khodolkit, with 34 households (all Evenki) and 559 reindeer.

It is now commonly recognized that it was a flawed decision to bureaucratically consolidate households and agglomerate people from small, widely dispersed settlement patterns into larger settlements, with the goal of converting nomads to a settled way of life (Sokolova 1990; Karlov 1991). As a whole, the mass conversion of Evenkis to a settled way of life within a short period of time was connected with the collectivization process [throughout the USSR], and implemented under its framework.

In 1953, the first kolkhozes were amalgamated—“Tractor” in Fedorova village and “Red Ploughman” in Bokovikov village. All small population points, Russian as well as Evenki, were also to be amalgamated. The methods were the same everywhere. First, the schools, shops, and medical stations were shut down in the communities slated for amalgamation. As a result, the small settlements—and the vast majority of settlements were small—ceased to exist. In 1961–70 alone, the number of settlements of all types in Katanga raion decreased from 34 to 18. Of these, 8 medium-sized Russian villages were liquidated.

Deliberate state policies aimed to change the mobile way of life to a settled one. This was to be done through the reorganization and amalgamation of households and population points in the 1930s, and the conversion of kolkhozes into promkhozes [promyslovye khoziaistva ‘state-run hunting enterprises’] starting in the mid-20th century. The entire process relied upon a wholesale reorientation to alien and culturally inappropriate values and
symbols, whose sense and meaning Evenkis did not understand. In fact, these policies constituted forced assimilation. This period was characterized by abrupt and radical changes in the organization of the environment and settlement patterns, as well as forced migration, which set the stage for the accelerated disappearance of the traditional economy.

The Katanga Promkhoz was founded in 1958, with 14 branches and 5 production units. In 1965, by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR, all the kolkhozes in Katanga raion were subordinated to the Katanga Promkhoz, and this included all the former kolkhoz workers. By 1969, the extreme distances and the “unmanageability” of the Katanga Promkhoz led to it being split into a Katanga enterprise (with headquarters in the village of Erbogachen) and a Preobrazhenka enterprise (with headquarters in the village of Preobrazhenka) [Fig. 13]. The Katanga Promkhoz had branches in Erema (later transferred to the Preobrazhenka Promkhoz), Os’kino, Erbogachen, and Nakanno, and production units in Khamakar, Teteia, and Inarigda [Fig. 14]. The Preobrazhenka Promkhoz had six branches and one production unit, in Preobrazhenka, Nepa, Podvoloshino, Tokma, Bur, and Ika. This structure remained until 1978, when the agricultural farm of the Podvoloshino branch was transferred to the subsidiary farm of the Markovo Raion Supply Department, and the Podvoloshino branch was reorganized as the Podvoloshino Production Unit, the task of which was to procure the products of hunting/fishing, as well as gathering [berries and mushrooms].

The total number of workers at koopzveropromkhozy ‘hunting co-ops’ in Katanga raion varied between 440 and 625 in different years, with 72–189 tenured hunters among them (Turov et al. 1995: 143). These co-operative promkhozes were mainly engaged in the procurement of raw meat and fur, and, to a lesser extent, in agricultural production. During the 1980s, all the hunters in the raion annually harvested about 40,000 squirrels, 11,000 sables, and 50,000 muskrats (Bashmakov 1990: 10). Most of the revenues of the hunting co-ops came from the sale of pelts from hunted animals. In the 1980s, this represented up to 96% of the revenues at the Katanga Promkhoz and up to 94% at the Preobrazhenka Promkhoz. The proportion of ungulate meat (mainly moose) did not exceed 10% of total revenue, while the provision of medicines or other natural resources brought in 0.5–27% (Ragulina 2000: 132). The koopzveropromkhozy also felled and processed timber, annually about 22,000–25,000 hectares’ worth. They existed as such until 1992, when state enterprises underwent reorganization. The central farm of the former Katanga Promkhoz became a joint-stock company. Today, the raion economy is almost entirely focused on hunting (trapping).

1.2.4 The geologists

Until recently [before 1990], industrial development of the region was among the most significant new factors having a great impact on ethnic and demographic processes, the types of economic action, and the way of life of
Figure 3. The border demarking the territories of the Katanga and Preobrazhenka promkhозes [hunting enterprises], 1969–92.

Figure 13. The border demarking the territories of the Katanga and Preobrazhenka promkhозes [hunting enterprises], 1969–92.
the local population. The first industrial wave arrived in the 1940s–50s with a boom in diamond prospecting. In January 1947, the Tungus Geological Prospecting Exploration company [geologo-poiskovaia ekspeditsiia] was organized at the initiative of M. M. Odintsov. In the autumn of 1948, it was renamed the Amaka Exploration company [amakinskaia ekspeditsiia] (from the Tungus amaka ‘bear’). It started prospecting in the valleys of the Lower Tunguska and of the Podkamennaia Tunguska tributaries—the Tetera and Chunia rivers—and at the headwaters of the Lena-Enisei watershed. There were three groups in the exploration company. The Strelka group prospected in the valleys of the Umotka, Teteia, and the Southern and Northern Chunia rivers, and in the watershed dividing the basins of the Lower and Podkamennaia Tunguska river systems. The Vanavara group worked south of there, and the Ilimpeia group worked north of there. The headquarters of the exploration company were located in the old Russian village of Erema, situated on the right bank of the Lower Tunguska, several dozen kilometres upriver from the village of Erbogachen. The headquarters of the Amaka group were located in Erema during 1946–53. The first diamond in the Siberian platform was found in a sample of pebbles from a terrace of the Small Erema River during the 1947 field season. The exploration company rented its reindeer, and hired Evenki drivers and guides. Exploration company teams camped on the Small Erema, [Great] Erema, and Chaika rivers, and the Sinen'kii Ridge. A seismographic group prospecting for oil was based in Erema in 1955–59.

One of the Amaka Exploration company’s teams was also located in Nakanno. Local [kolkhoz] reindeer were used for transporting goods and

Figure 14. The office of the Katanga Promkhoz [hunting enterprise, Erbogachen]. A hunter prepares to depart for his trapline, October 1995.
people for the exploration company. Man-hours were logged for doing this work, and the kolkhoz was paid by the exploration company. The geologist G. Fainshtein recollected this time as follows: “It was especially hard work for the reindeer. One could not help feeling sorry for them when, heavily loaded, they shook their heads and were disobedient, and at night they ran away to the lakes and rivers, seeking respite. After such nights, the team started out several hours late, because the drivers had to look a long time for the reindeer” (1988: 20).

The second, longer period of development occurred in the 1970s–80s [when oil and gas deposits were found]. It differed from the previous period in the extensive use of planes and helicopters, and there was no more need for reindeer transportation or local guides. This development boom dissipated and does not exist today, because during the 1990s capital investment by the state in geological exploration was drastically reduced. The Nadezhdinsk Oil and Gas Prospecting Exploration company (NNGRE) and the Nepa Geophysical Exploration company (NGE) were located and worked actively in the raion, but now they can hardly sustain themselves.\(^4\)

The NNGRE was founded in 1973 as a prospecting group of the Lena Exploration company, and was located in PreobrAZhenka village, Katanga raion. In 1975, the group became an independent exploration company and moved farther south. A new settlement of geologists appeared in the taiga, close to the Podvoloshino–Chechuisk road (4 km from Podvoloshino village), with a garage and repair bays, a building site, a helicopter landing pad, three kindergartens, a secondary school, medical station, cafeteria, two dormitories, and two hotels, along with its own subsidiary farms in Podvoloshino and Mironova villages, Kirensk raion. The NNGRE was mandated to explore for oil and gas. Since 1973, two large deposits have been found on the territory of Katanga raion—the Upper Chona and the Danilova Oil-and-Gas Condensate Deposits. The major volume of the work was done by the NNGRE in Katanga raion, from Podvoloshino village in the south to Erbogachen village in the north. Along with hydrocarbon minerals, the world’s largest deposit of potassium salts—the Nepa Deposit—was found in the southern part of the raion.

The NGE was located on the territory of Katanga raion, 1.5–2 kilometres from Erbogachen village. It was charged with preparing sites for deep drilling. The exploration company has functioned since 1980, when it was formed as a prospecting group of the Angara-Lena Exploration company. In its work, it explored the entire north of Katanga raion.

In addition, about six other exploration companies worked in the territory of the raion in summertime. They were also prospecting for oil, gas, and diamonds. Some of them duplicated the work being done, thereby increasing the amount of unreclaimable land (and thus spoiling the ecology). Moreover, these exploration companies did not pay taxes to the raion budget, despite the fact that they were required to pay up to 50% of their payroll to local

\(^4\) See Chapter 5 for more recent data. —*Auth.*
authorities as land usage fees. As a result, on 15 August 1990 the legislative assembly of Katanga raion adopted the law “Limits to the pace of geological prospecting on the territory of Katanga raion.” In the last few years, the volume of geological works in the raion has decreased considerably because of the deteriorating economy in the country, cutbacks in the financing of geological works, and the search for new investment markets.

In 1989, the population of Katanga raion numbered 9,500. It was concentrated in small and medium-sized population points, grouped into 11 rural councils [sel'sovety]. All of them were located in the valley of the Lower Tunguska River and its tributaries (the rivers Nepa and Teteia). In fact, they were all old Siberian villages (located mainly in the southern part of the raion) or towns that were founded in the 1930s–40s. The raion capital was the village of Erbogachen, located in the middle of the raion on the right bank of the Lower Tunguska. In 1989, there were 12 schools of different types, 13 libraries, 6 hospitals, and 10 midwifery stations in Katanga raion.

1.3 Evenki population distribution and ethno-demographic processes

The size and ethnic composition of the population of Katanga raion changed considerably during the Soviet period, influenced by the ideological and economic policy of the state. In general, similar processes affected all nations of the North. Massive migratory and assimilative forces changed population distribution patterns, and all ethnic groups were affected without exception.

The first trend, also shared by other [indigenous] Northern nations, was a decrease in the proportion of Evenkis in relation to the general population living in the raion. This happened in spite of an increase in the total number of Evenkis during the [1980s] (Goskomstat 1992). In 1979–89, the number of Evenkis living in Katanga raion of Irkutsk oblast' increased by 1.9%, but their proportion to the total population decreased from 8.3% to 5.8%. The same trend was present in neighbouring Evenkiia. During the same period, the number of Evenkis there increased by 8.5%, but their proportion to the total population decreased from 25.3% to 14% (Boiko and Kostiuk 1992).

Table 4 provides data on the population dynamics of three ethnic groups in Katanga raion.

The population of the raion decreased due to the ill-conceived policy of amalgamating villages and small settlements into bigger units, especially during the 1960s–70s. This led to in-migration and assimilation, as well as increased mortality among Evenkis resulting from numerous accidents related to drunkenness and alcoholism. An overall decrease in the population of the raion during that time was connected with cutbacks in diamond prospecting when that industry relocated to neighbouring Iakutiia.
Different ethnic groups had differing migration strategies. The Russian population migrated both southward, to the towns and raion centres of Irkutsk oblast', and northward, to Evenkiia. At the same time, there was also migration within the raion, facilitated by kinship relations. This [internal] migration has never been documented statistically. For my information I relied mainly on the verbal accounts of numerous informants. Out-migration was especially strong during the period when the kolkhozes were amalgamated and reorganized into hunting enterprises. As the settlers say, “There was no livestock then, and no people. Everybody just dispersed.”

Evenkis had the following migratory patterns. Those Evenkis who had previously been inclined to lead a settled way of life and had either no reindeer or only a few (5–10 under private ownership) settled in villages in the valley of the Lower Tunguska and its tributaries, the Nepa and the Teteia. They continued to hunt, herd reindeer, and fish, and sometimes raised livestock and grew vegetables on a small scale. People assumed a settled way of life more easily in the southern part of the raion than in the northern part. This was because of the south’s long historical coexistence with the Russian settlers and the [implicit] dynamics of the Evenki economy. By the turn of the 20th century, these Evenkis had already begun proceeding to a semi-nomadic or settled way of life. Becoming settled was a natural continuation of a historical process, facilitated by mixed marriages.

Thus, in the late 1920s it was observed that “the local native population is moving towards a settled way of life.” This was illustrated by the fact that half of the population (in the southern part of the district) had permanent wooden dwellings—izbas—in the towns, and winter cabins [zimov'ia] at their winter camps. Evenkis stayed in each place for several months of the year, and over one-third of all families kept horses (GAIO R538-1-183: 67). Evenkis of that period could already be divided into two groups: mobile Evenkis (kochevye evenki) and those who lived a semi-settled life for extended periods in izbas (polukochevye/poluosedlye evenki). “Of course such a division is only broadly relative, because there are families in the first group who are planning to build such izbas in the near future and raise horses, and have even stockpiled some timber for building. In the same way, the desire for a semi-nomadic way of life

Table 4. Population dynamics for Russians, Evenkis, and Iakuts in Katanga raion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Russians</th>
<th>% Russians to total pop.</th>
<th>Evenkis</th>
<th>% Evenkis to total pop.</th>
<th>Iakuts</th>
<th>% Iakuts to total pop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>6,636</td>
<td>5,555</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>4,844</td>
<td>4,034</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>6,076</td>
<td>5,201</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>9,482</td>
<td>8,003</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: All-Union Censuses, 1959–89.
is not equally pronounced in the second group. Some people have this vision
to a greater extent, others to a lesser extent. Among them there is even one
family that has changed completely to a settled way of life (on a riverbank),
but they are living in someone else’s winter cabin (that of a Russian family).
In some cases, one can also find families where some members nomadize,
travelling with the reindeer herd and staying in an izba for only two–three
months a year, while other members live in an izba all the year round. In
building their izbas and winter cabins, Tunguses follow the instructions and
advice of Russian peasants, building according to their standards,” wrote I. P.

In the years to come, the natural process of sedentarization accelerated.
It led to the rapid curtailment of the traditional economy. A considerable
number of Evenkis settled in towns and villages, and became neighbours
with Russians. They represented an increasing proportion of the population
of these settlements. Some Evenkis kept to a pattern of seasonal migration for
fishing and hunting purposes, but the territory they covered became smaller.
Evenki dwellings also changed. At this time, new types of dwellings appeared
that are characteristic of the transition period from a nomadic to a settled way
of life. They combined elements of mobile dwellings and those of log cabins.
In a few cases, these dwellings have no analogues anywhere else.

In 1929–30, the government began designing standardized dwellings for
the peoples of the North who were moving to a settled way of life. Z. Gaisin,
a planner [instruktor] for national minorities with the Siberian Territory
Executive Committee, distributed a design to local branches of the Committee
of the North that consisted of a 40-metre communal wooden residence,
with one kitchen, intended for 36 people. (This was evidently based on the
Iroquois long house, researched by L. H. Morgan.) In his evaluation of the
design, Irkutsk Committee of the North employee B. E. Petri said: “Given
the particular way of life of the natives, who are used to solitary life in the
taiga and living in individual lodges, the life of 36 people under a single
roof, grouped into households of 1–6 people, would be unacceptable for the
natives…” (GAIO R1468-1-18: 172).

The minority of Evenkis who did not want to settle in the recommended
places often went north, northwest, or southwest. Some were led by their
shamans. They did not choose the routes randomly. They made choices in
accordance with their kinship ties. Evenkis from the southern parts of the
raion intermarried with the Evenkis of Ust'-Kut raion and with Evenkis in the
headwaters of the Podkamennaya Tunguska (Strelka-Chunia, Chemdal'sk, and
Vanavara towns), and they migrated mainly in that direction. For example,
the Evenkis of the Icheda group living at the source of the Nepa River, 90
kilometres southwest of Tokma, had refused to resettle to Tokma in the late
1930s and early 1940s, when amalgamations were taking place. Instead, they
moved to Maksimovo village on the Kuta River (Ust'-Kut district), from
where they had probably first arrived in the early 1920s. Those were the
Sharoglazov, Silkin, Cheronchin, and Os'kin families (Strakach 1962: 123;
AIEA Sirina Field Notes 1990: 21, 23). Evenkis of the northern part of the raion migrated to Kislokan, Tura, and Ilimpeia [in Evenkiia] for the same reason. It is no coincidence that more Evenkis move to Evenkiia from Katanga raion, Irkutsk oblast', than from anywhere else (63.8% of all migrants). They settled in Ilimpeia and Baikit raions (Boiko and Kostiuk 1992).

In addition, migration occurred out of Katanga raion to other cities and raion centres of Irkutsk oblast'. The urban Evenki population increased from 20% in 1970 to 27% in 1979, with a jump of 43% in the largest, rapidly growing cities during this period. At the same time, the rural Evenki population was constantly decreasing. The number of Evenkis in Katanga raion decreased from 613 to 498 during that period (Goskomstat 1992). The tendency towards an increased urban population, as well as moving away from their national territories, was typical for all peoples of the North (Gurvich and Sokolova 1991: 9).

Evenkis also migrated within the raion. Below, I will give a detailed analysis of the factors that influenced their numbers, clan structures, and distribution, based on the data of the All-Union Population Census of 1989.

It should be noted that the census data for Katanga raion is not complete, since it reflects only the places where Evenkis lived in high concentrations. Thus, only the so-called Kondogir Evenkis (in the northern part of the raion) are represented. I also have materials from the Association of Peoples of the North in Katanga raion, which carried out an identical census of the Evenki and Iakut populations of the raion [in 2000; see Table 1]. On the basis of these data, as well as my own field studies, I will trace certain trends in the settlement patterns and size of the Evenki population.

The overall decrease in the percentage of Evenkis in all areas where they live, even when their population increased, can be explained by the massive immigration of people connected with industrial development. For example, in the Evenki areas of Buriatiia (North Baikal, Baunt, and other raions), the total population increased by 2–13 times, in connection with the construction of the Baikal–Amur Railroad [BAM]. In 1970–89, the population of the Evenki Autonomous Okrug doubled in connection with geological exploration (Sanzhiev and Atutov 1988; Boiko and Kostiuk 1992).

The great increase in the immigrant population during the 1970s–80s undoubtedly had an influence on ethno-cultural development. In-migration started in 1959, with diamond prospecting, and continued with oil-and-gas prospecting in 1975. In both cases, the newly arrived population in Katanga raion of Irkutsk oblast' was varied in its ethnic make-up. Table 5 presents the composition of the most numerous ethnic groups of the raion.

The immigrant population settled mainly in the exploration company towns and in raion capitals. For instance, in 1990 there were representatives of 27 nationalities living in the town of Nadezhdinsk. The population included Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Germans, Belarussians, Buriats, Chuvashes, Poles, Lesgins, Armenians, Kalmyks, Georgians, Udmurts, and others. There were more men than women in the geological settlements by a large degree.
The average age of the working population was 37 (according to the data for Nadezhdinsk). The attrition rate was enormous in such towns, with 677 people leaving and 328 people arriving (to take up employment) in 1989 alone. The population of Katanga raion has increased considerably since 1985, from 8,326 that year to 8,821 in 1986; 8,854 in 1987; 9,357 in 1988; and 9,482 in 1989.

Most of the newly arrived population considered their life in the North to be temporary. Many specialists kept their employer-provided, state, or private flats back in their hometowns. Some people planned to move later to the European part of Russia, or to the cities or raion capitals of Irkutsk oblast'. They did this as soon as the exploration work began to slow down.

Until recently the population tended to increase rapidly, to be ethnically diverse, and to be concentrated in the largest settlements of the raion. Such towns naturally drew people from smaller settlements, including Evenkis. They were attracted by the possibility of getting a job, the high wages in comparison with what they could get locally, and several other advantages. This phenomenon significantly affected ethno-demographic processes. Industrial development as a factor had an inevitable impact on mobile Evenkis, as well.

In 1990–91, the discontinuation of state financial support for geological and prospecting work caused these workers, who made up half of the population, to leave the raion. This out-migration was mainly from Erbogachen and Nadezhdinsk, where most of the newly arrived geologists had lived. These same migratory phenomena were characteristic all over

### Table 5. The population of Katanga raion by nationality, 1959–89.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>5,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evenki</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iakut</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarussian</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buriat</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuvash</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mordvin</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuanian</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: All-Union Censuses, 1959–79.

The average age of the working population was 37 (according to the data for Nadezhdinsk). The attrition rate was enormous in such towns, with 677 people leaving and 328 people arriving (to take up employment) in 1989 alone. The population of Katanga raion has increased considerably since 1985, from 8,326 that year to 8,821 in 1986; 8,854 in 1987; 9,357 in 1988; and 9,482 in 1989.
the Russian North in the early 1990s, and particularly for Evenkiia, which bordered Katanga raion. Though it was a temporary process, the number of people who left those regions was considerable.

According to the latest data, Evenkis are distributed unevenly in Katanga raion, with patterns that are obviously different from those of 1926–27. Firstly, the Evenki population in the southern part of the raion decreased. Data from 1989 and 2000 showed not a single reindeer-herding group (though reindeer husbandry did exist there until the late 1960s). The population numbers are given in Table 6.

Table 6. The distribution of the population (including Evenkis) in settlements in the southern part of Katanga raion, 1989.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Native population*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepa</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erema</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>21 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preobrazhenka Rural Administration, incl. Preobrazhenka, Verkhnebalinina, and Moga</td>
<td>1,038</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podvoloshino Rural Administration, incl. Podvoloshino village and Nadezhdinsk town</td>
<td>3,376</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bur</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokma</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>61 (55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,862</td>
<td>130 (147)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: All-Union Census of 1989. *Data in parentheses are from the Katanga branch of the Association of Peoples of the North [2000].

Overall, the number of the formerly called Kureika Evenkis was 130 [1989 data] (or 147 [2000 data]), which represented a decrease of 499 (482) people compared to 1926–27 data, or of 173 (176) people since 1897 (the [older] figure seems to be more reliable). These facts testify to the virtual completion of the assimilation that has been underway in the southern part of the raion for almost three centuries. The fact that Evenkis are few in the south, and that some of them have moved to the north, shows that migration is still continuing. Evenkis from the south have moved to the northern part of the raion, as well as to places outside the raion. Another reason for the decrease in the Evenki population could be, in part, the high rate of mortality because of hard drinking and alcoholism.

I recorded the following Evenki surnames in the southern part of Katanga raion as of 1990 (most of these Kureika Evenkis do not remember their clan names): Apkin, Boiarshin, Boldakov, Konenkin, Kaplin, Mongo, Nemtushkin, Pikunov, Serditkin, Utkin, and Cherchinin. If we compare the present Evenki clan structure with that given by B. O. Dolgikh [1949], we can see that most representatives of the former family clans have remained
mainly within their traditional territories. At the same time, I recorded the family names Boiarshin, Konenkin, Kolobovshin, Salatkin (Lontogir), and Putugir among the northern (Kondogir) group of Evenkis.

[This paragraph incorporates Table 7 from the original.—Ed.] In the late 1990s, most of the Katanga Evenkis (422 people in total) lived in the northern part of the raion, including 212 in the Erbogachen Rural Administration (Erbogachen and Teteia villages), 73 in the Kondogir Rural Administration (Khamakar town), and 4 in the Os'kino Rural Administration [data unavailable for the Nakanno RA].

Evenkis classified as Kondogir Evenkis by their place of residence decreased in population by 213 as compared to 1989. The reasons for the decrease were mainly the same as for the Kureika Evenkis. Their numbers did recover somewhat by 2000, although this was due to special local factors.

Mixed Evenki-Iakut and Iakut-only populations live in the territories of the Nakanno and Kondogir Rural Councils, closely bordering Iakutia. G. M. Vasilevich (1969) noted that Evenkis who marry Iakut women more often than not formed new clans, with names of Evenki origin. For instance, the Sychegir Evenki family of the Erbogachen group traces its origins to the Evenki P. V. Sychegir, who married a Iakut woman (M. M. Sychegir). His wife’s maiden name was Branat. She was born to a large, poor family in Tuoi-Khaiia, Iakutia, and from her early childhood she was raised by her future mother-in-law. Evidently, this explains the origin of the Iakut population in the towns of Nakanno and Khamakar. According to the 1989 [USSR] Census, there were 76 Iakuts living in the raion, most of them in the north. There were few in the centre of the raion. According to a questionnaire distributed by the local Association of Peoples of the North, there was a small number of Iakuts in Nakanno. In Khamakar, practically nobody called themselves Iakuts, though according to my field notes, at least one-third of the population came from mixed families. Parents register their children of mixed marriages as Evenkis, not least because of the privileges accorded to Evenkis but not to Iakuts. This inevitably promotes the preservation of Evenki self-identity, and influences population statistics.

The breakdown of traditional, micro-ecological settlement patterns and the decline in inter-clan marriages resulted in unfavourable marriage prospects among Evenkis. This problem was aggravated by a decrease in the male Evenki population due to the [Second World] war and to frequent deaths from alcoholism. Most of the people who migrated into the area were non-native men. Moreover, among Katanga Evenkis there was an unfavourable ratio of men to women, with there being 260 men for 286 women (of a total of 546 people). If we add to this the fact that Evenkis consider mixed marriages to be prestigious, we have to conclude that the general situation favoured mixed marriages. There are many instances of this kind registered in my field notes. While in the early 20th century the Kureika Evenkis married mainly Russians and the Kondogir Evenkis married mainly Iakuts, today the choice of marriage partners has become wider. Belarussians, Ukrainians, Russians,
Latvians, and others [are now marrying] Evenkis. According to the 1989 census, 47.4% of newborn Evenki children had fathers of other nationalities (Ragulina 2000: 130). The self-awareness and choice of nationality of the children of mixed marriages vary. Sometimes the children of a single family of this type register themselves as being of different nationalities (according to the nationality of their father or their mother), or they have even been known to change their nationality several times during their lifetime [Fig. 15].

On the basis of his sociological research on the Evenkis of the Evenki Autonomous Okrug in 1989–97, V. P. Krivonogov (2001: 103) concluded: “Evenkis are transforming into a group of Russian-speaking métis that have preserved their former ethnic self-awareness and some elements of their material and spiritual culture.” It seems to be the case that Evenkis assimilate easily. Many researchers who have studied Evenki culture and everyday life have noticed this. Contacts with different cultures that arise from their nomadic way of life and far-flung distribution have encouraged Evenkis to adapt not only to Russian culture and the Russian language, as in Evenkiia, but also to the language and some elements of the culture of the Iakuts in Iakutiia, of the Buriats in Buriatiia, and so on. However, it must be emphasized that Evenkis still maintain their sense of identity.

[An Evenki woman who was brought up in a mixed Iakut-Evenki family in Bodaibo raion, Irkutsk oblast', explained this phenomenon from the point of view of culture itself:

We do not have this complex that only Evenkis are human beings, the way Iakuts or Russians think about themselves. We know that all people are
human beings, and all our children are treated as our own. Everything has changed. My grandmother was against marrying a relative, she would say: “How can one marry a relative? It’s better for you to marry a Russian man, for it would be a great sin to marry a relative.”[8]

In 1989, 247 of the 546 Evenkis in Katanga raion were employed, mainly in low-paid unskilled jobs as security guards, cleaning staff, nurse’s aides, furnace stokers, etc. About 50 people were employed by the exploration companies, 27 worked in public education, and others in the fields of healthcare and culture. Evenkis from Katanga raion who have a university education often move to the neighbouring Evenki Autonomous Okrug, where they are employed as white-collar workers. There, they mainly live in Tura, the capital. Almost half of the Evenkis there come from Katanga raion, Irkutsk oblast’ (Krivonogov 2001: 59). Many employable Evenkis are jobless. The employment problem is serious, especially for women living in small settlements. It is one of the reasons for the internal migration directed at the major towns of the raion, where there is a greater chance to start a new life. Such trends are also characteristic of Evenkis living in other regions (Buriatiia or Evenkiia).

In 1989, most male Evenkis (112) were employed as tenured (salaried) hunters by the local promkhozes. This testified to their keen interest in traditional activities. Some of the tenured hunters owned reindeer privately, and their families led a way of life that was close to the semi-nomadic tradition. There were about 30–35 people in this category, including women and children. There are about 350 reindeer in private ownership in the raion (AIEA Sirina Field Notes 1988–91). About 5% of the population of the raion is Evenki. Of this number, around 6% lead a traditional lifestyle. This figure represents 0.4% of the general population.

The families of these mobile Evenkis live mainly on the left bank of the Lower Tunguska—along the Dagaldyn and the Upper, Middle, and Lower Kochema rivers, in the central and northern parts of the raion. However, this is not a stable family type, either. There is continuous pressure on them to adopt a settled way of life. In the period of 1981–91, this population of nomadic Evenkis decreased by three families (8 individuals). Their reasons for proceeding to a settled way of life vary. V. D. Kaplin’s family (2 people), consisting of a retired couple, settled in the village of Erbogachen in 1988 because they had to bring up their small granddaughter after the death of her mother (their daughter). Ia. P. Veretnov’s family (3 people) once consisted of a couple and their grown son. After the death of the older couple, the son was left to lead his own life [in the taiga]. The third family also had to settle in the village, because of the death of V. P. Kaplin’s eldest son, who had been responsible for all the reindeer and hunting activities of the family. There are more examples of this kind, and in all probability the number of nomadic Evenkis in the raion will decrease further.

[8] This text was added by the author to the English edition. —Ed.
The challenges faced by Evenki families in general can be illustrated by the problems of a small group of reindeer [olennye] Evenkis. The challenges faced by reindeer Evenkis are even more serious. It is most common for them to have broken families. Three-generation families are almost completely absent. There is a striking tendency towards a decrease in the number of family members. There are more aged Evenkis in this group than young people. In the camps, there are more men of marriageable age than women. Most of the men are single. In fact, there are no marriage partners available to them, since most Evenki women of marriageable age live mainly in town.

It should be stressed that the nationality of potential marriage partners is not an important consideration for Evenkis. It is more important that the potential partner agrees to share the spouse’s way of life. There are some mixed families among the reindeer Evenkis. The non-Evenki partners in these cases are Russians, Ukrainians, or Iakuts who have accepted the Evenki (mobile) way of life.

The reindeer Evenkis who use the land today are organized either in extended family groupings or in coalitions of territorial groups of non-relatives or distant relatives. In the first case, these are groups of close relatives that have formed independent (although often broken) families. In the second case, the coalitions are of owners with small numbers of deer (5–10 per person).

The composition of such nomadic units influences many aspects of how they order their environment. It influences the size (actual space) of the territory used; the time, direction, and tempo of travel from place to place during the year; and the built landscape [use of corrals] in spring/autumn periods. The structure of forest camps also follows from these demographic features, and in particular the size, number, and layout of household structures.

Among the mobile Evenkis are families that have few reindeer (5–15) and medium-sized herders with more (30–70 reindeer). The number of reindeer influences the organization of social units. Evenkis who have fewer reindeer temporarily unite into larger groups during summer and spring/autumn to pasture their reindeer. Not even all the members of this [enlarged] group participate in the herding. The others together lead a settled way of life in town, or in the forest on the riverbank, and can engage in fishing. In 1988, there were 3 nomadic units of relatives and other reindeer owners in the group of Teteia Evenkis, with about 2–15 reindeer in each unit. The number of reindeer influences the amount of household work needed to be done, as well as the intensity of travel from place to place and the volume of hunting and fishing done by the family. Evenkis who have few reindeer lead a way of life that is more similar to the settled one, and they are more closely connected to town. Evenkis who have enough reindeer can hunt and fish practically on the whole territory. Thus, they are more stable in their choice of travel routes. During the 1980s, the most important reindeer herding families were the families of L. P. Sychegir, V. P. Kaplin, and E. P. Sychegir. For example, Lazar Petrovich Sychegir had about 80 reindeer in 1991,
while Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin and Ekaterina Petrovna Sychegid had about 50 reindeer each. Among the “average” reindeer owners were the relatives Egor and Aleksandr Veretnov, as well as the families of the Galin brothers. Sometimes they bring together their reindeer for summer pasturing.

1.3.1 Town life

Out of 14 settlements in Katanga raion, Nakanno, Khamakar, Inarigda, Teteia, and Tokma are considered to be Evenki towns. Other than Tokma, they are all situated in the northern part of the raion. They are mainly inhabited by métis—mixed marriages of Evenkis with Iakuts in Inarigda, Nakanno, and Khamakar, and with Russians in Teteia and Tokma. In other villages and towns of the raion, the Evenki population is in the minority, and Evenkis live there alongside representatives of other nations.

Most settled Evenkis live in state-owned housing. Very few of them have their own houses. There is an acute housing problem for settled Evenkis. This is illustrated by the data of the Katanga branch of the Association of Peoples of the North. The houses built in the 1930s–40s, during the period of sedentarizing the herders, have decayed and do not meet basic sanitation standards. For example, the Evenkis in Tokma village live in 23 houses, 6 of which are classed as uninhabitable, while 12 Evenkis do not have their own homes and live with relatives. Of 31 Evenki families in Nakanno town, 9 live in houses that are condemned and 6 live in houses requiring repairs. In Khamakar town, 10 Evenki families live in substandard houses. The average living area per person in Khamakar is 6.2 square metres.

In 1989, the management of the local promkhoz started building new houses for Evenkis in the town of Teteia. So far, about 6–7 houses have been built for the families of Evenkis employed by the promkhoz. The most intensive construction is being conducted in the village of Erbogachen, due to its status as the raion capital and the greater availability of building materials. Most of the new houses built for Evenkis are multi-room or one-room houses with standard layout, made of squared timbers and built by imported teams of builders.

The change to living in houses was not easy for Evenkis, nor for other nations of the North who had led a mobile way of life (Sergeev 1955). It was difficult to get used to a four-cornered izba, a “Russian” stove [pechka], the necessity of stockpiling wood, regulating the temperature, and so on. “The discomfort that elderly people feel in town is comparable to that of urban dwellers in the taiga,” noted I. E. Maksimova in her research on the Sym-Ket Evenkis (1994).

Evenkis who have changed to a sedentary lifestyle still exhibit and preserve their unique ethnic qualities in how they order their new environment. I noted that during the initial phase of settlement, they occupied fringe, “no man’s” lands at the outskirts of or nearby Russian and Iakut population points. They also set up traditional lodges (diu or golomo) near their permanent log cabins.
(or at some distance from them), which were used as alternative dwellings. Often they built the Evenki *guluvun* ‘fire pit’ close to the house, where they cooked food in summertime (Fig. 16). Evenkis widely use larch bark as a building material.

Some traditional elements have been preserved in the inner layout of Evenki dwellings, as well as in the terminology of their separate parts. The kitchen is called the *chonga* and is usually placed close to the entrance of the house, to the right or left of it. The place opposite the entrance to the house is usually the *malu*, considered to be the most honoured place and usually furnished in a better way. The left and right sleeping quarters are usually partitioned off (sometimes these are rooms) and are called *be*. Some of the traditional utensils can still be found in the interior of these dwellings (Fig. 17).

Similar ways of ordering their environment can also be found in other settled Evenki groups, as well as other formerly nomadic nations. For instance, the North Baikal and Transbaikal Evenkis usually constructed their lodges on the outskirts of town or a small distance away. Sanzhiev and Atutov (1988) explain this by the shortage of building materials, financing, and builders. However, another reason for the continuation of elements of mobile life in Evenki settled culture is that they help people adapt to new cultural realities.
For example, conical forms of housing, and the shape of a cone in general, now stand as symbols of their mobile heritage.

Traditional values and symbols continue to have great inner significance for settled Evenkis. In addition to the features listed above, settled Evenkis preserve a fond memory for their traditional ecological knowledge, the way they order the environment, and on the whole, for the places they used to call their home. This is demonstrated by numerous examples of their psychological adaptations to new ways of life and of culture.

Figure 7. Interior layout of the [semi-detached] house of Mitrofan Nikolaevich Sychegir (Evenki), Teteia village, 1988.
Chapter 2. A dynamic-logistical technique for ordering the environment

2.1 The economic activities of contemporary hunter–reindeer herders

In the past, Katanga Evenkis represented one of the most widely dispersed examples of the Siberian Evenk hunting and reindeer-herding type of economic and cultural [adaptation] for the taiga and alpine-tundra. “Most of the native aliens have a wandering lifestyle… their only occupation is hunting and fishing, the proceeds of which allow them to pay state taxes and to meet their own needs” (GAIO R729-1-5: 1).

Their traditional economic system was based on a combination of three major types of economic activities—the so-called “northern triad” of hunting for fur and meat, fishing, and reindeer herding. There was no fixed proportion of these activities for local Evenki groups. This testifies to their flexibility and adaptability to specific ecological situations. When one activity would be de-emphasized, one of the others would take its place. When the Russians arrived, the Tungus economy reoriented itself towards hunting for pelts. This market orientation did not affect the essential, deep roots of their mobile culture, although it did greatly affect all aspects of their life. Evenkis at the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska River have lived for a long time with Russians and Iakuts. Due to certain internal developmental tendencies within their economy, those who had few or no reindeer became either semi-nomadic or settled by the turn of the 20th century. By 1920 already, more than one-third of the Evenki population kept horses, and more than half of the population had wooden dwellings (izbas, winter cabins), where they lived a sedentary life for several months of the year. In addition to their traditional occupations, a small number of Evenkis worked as porters [zanimalis' izvom], or engaged in haymaking and forestry. There was also a trend towards keeping livestock (GAIO R538-1-183: 67; Patkanov 1906). These were natural processes, facilitated by mixed marriages. Downstream along the Lower Tunguska, where Evenkis had contact with Iakuts, they took on new activities such as livestock raising, but in their turn, they also influenced the Iakut way of life to some degree.

[2.1.1 Hunting animals for subsistence and for pelts]

Hunting dominated Evenki economic life. Opportunistic hunting of moose [sokhatyi] and, to a lesser extent, wild deer provided the main sources of meat for human consumption [Fig. 18]. Of the two, deer hunting was less important. Evenkis living in different places in Irkutsk oblast’—for example, the Cis-Baikal—also hunted roe deer [kosulia], musk deer [kabarga], and Manchurian deer [iziubr']. Bear hunting was rare, “incidental,” and accompanied by special rituals.
Hunting for meat was especially intensive in spring and autumn, when the meat was stockpiled by freezing it fresh or dry-curing. In summer and early autumn, Evenkis tracked moose. In late autumn and early spring, moose were hunted down on skis. All of these main hunting methods were practiced in the past and continue today. G. M. Vasilevich (1969: 55) wrote that occasionally Evenkis and Russians living on the Lower Tunguska and the Upper Lena would erect a hunting fence together, digging pits along it and covering them with flooring, twigs, and conifer branches [to trap animals].

Hunting animals for pelts became the most important activity in the Evenki economic system by the end of the 18th century, and remained very important until the beginning of the 20th century. During this time, reindeer transport became more significant. Commercial sable hunting declined after the 18th–19th centuries, in connection with over hunting and the disappearance of the sable. At this point, the main trade animal became squirrel [belka]. The biology of this animal is such that its demography depends upon its main food—the cones from Siberian pine [kedr] and spruce. When the harvest was poor, Evenki hunters had to travel great distances from their regular permanent territories in search of squirrels. This occurred regularly in two or three-year cycles, in the autumn–winter seasons (Turov 1990). Sable and squirrel were traditionally hunted with dogs. If the snow was not deep, Evenkis hunted on foot, or used skis, or rode reindeer [if the snow was deeper].

By the late 1920s, squirrel represented 84% of hunters’ incomes from commercially traded fur. In Katanga district, on average 130,000 squirrels were hunted per year (GAIO R538-1-183: 133). Evenki families spent the proceeds from hunting pelt-bearing animals on provisions such as flour, rifles,
ammunition, and other everyday essentials. Soviet artels and kolkhozes also profited from hunting animals for pelt. For instance, in 1942 the Inarigda Production Artel earned 28,500 rubles from the sale of 5,559 squirrels, 32 ermines, 794 muskrats, and other pelt-bearing animals to the state (AKRA 12-1-25).

Another traditional area of Evenki economic life at the turn of the 20th century was fishing [see also 2.1.4]. Evenkis of Central Siberia engaged in three major types of fishing: fishing during the spawning season, in “pools” as the fish matured, and during their autumn migration to deep rivers and lakes (GAIO R538-1-183: 67–79). Researchers have had contradictory opinions about the role of this branch of Evenki economic life. Fishing seems to have played a varied role at different times in the life of local Evenkis, depending on the ecological situation. In the absence of other sources of food, fish consumption would temporarily take on an especially important role. Evenki summer travel to a great degree would be planned around fishing prospects. However, summer travel was never directly planned around fishing by itself.

[2.1.2 Reindeer herding]

Reindeer herding [olenevodstvo] influenced the direction and tempo of Evenki travel to a greater extent than fishing: “Reindeer... define the entire way of life of the natives, and particularly their system of hunting” (GAIO R538-1-183: 80). G. M. Vasilevich (1969: 75) classified the reindeer herding practiced by Evenkis in the taiga of Central Siberia as the “Evenki type.” It is characterized by small herds, the use of reindeer for transporting packs, and travel linked to hunting. The other type of reindeer herding singled out by Vasilevich (1969: 76)—the “Orochon type”—was characterized by larger herds and by travel predicated on reindeer forage. The differences between the Evenki and Orochon types of reindeer herding might be caused not only by different natural-climatic and geographical conditions, but also by deep historical factors that influenced the formation of Evenki culture. N. V. Ermolova (1993) suggests that there might be two separate sources for the origin of these herding patterns.

By the end of the 19th and start of the 20th century, striking changes had taken place in Evenkis’ use of reindeer as a means of transportation in Central Siberia. Herds became bigger, as a consequence of the greater importance of hunting animals for pelt. In turn, the methods for tending reindeer became more complex, and reindeer were employed in a wider variety of ways (Turov 1990). All these factors promoted the greater role and importance of reindeer herding in Evenki economic activity.

The Evenki group under consideration here does not have a pure “Evenki type” of herding. The reindeer herding of the Katanga Evenkis is exclusively for transportation purposes, and could be described as the “taiga type” of herding [Fig. 19]. Kets, Iukagirs of the forest zone, Nenetses of the forest zone, and Enetses also practiced this type. They did not keep large numbers
of domesticated reindeer, but the herds had a high degree of domestication. Reindeer cows were milked.

During the first part of the 20th century, there was only a small number of domesticated reindeer in the southern part of Katanga raion. Three of the Evenki families in the Tokma group kept no reindeer at all, and ten families kept horses. The number of reindeer per family did not exceed 30, with 10–12 being the average (GAIO R565-1-61: 5).

In the 1940s–50s, reindeer were used to transport the goods of geological exploration companies. Evenki reindeer-team drivers were contracted out from the kolkhozes, and continued to earn their “labor-days.” Such contracts represented up to 36% of the revenues of kolkhozes (Turov et al. 1995: 145). In the early 1960s, reindeer meat was used as feed at fur farms set up for fox [lisitsa] and Arctic fox [pesets]. The overexploitation of reindeer by the geological exploration companies, and during the initial period of work of the promkhozes, led to decreased numbers of transport reindeer. Thus, while in 1965 there were about 2,500 head of reindeer in the collective herd, within 15 years there were only 400 head. Promkhozes gradually excluded reindeer herding from their sphere of economic interests [in favour of fur hunting]. The reindeer remaining after their use by geological exploration companies were sold to Evenki hunters. Mature reindeer sold for 30 rubles and calves for 10 rubles. In the southern part of the raion, where hunting, livestock raising,

§9 It is important to note that the buying power of a ruble fluctuated even in Soviet times. In the strongly regulated price system of the mid-20th century, the average monthly salary was approximately 120–132 rubles per month. A student stipend was 40 rubles per month. Bread cost 20 kopeks a loaf. —Ed.
and vegetable gardening played an important role, reindeer were left to feed freely for a time, while their owners lived in town (Fig. 20).

The number of reindeer kept per person was not large, ranging from 3 to 15 head. Reindeer were owned by Evenkis, or by Russian settlers who hunted. In autumn and winter, they rode reindeer to hunt, and after the hunting season the reindeer pastured freely throughout the winter, returning to the villages by themselves with their young in the spring. The reindeer owners fed them salt, made shelters for them, and [tended] smudges for them. Gradually the reindeer disappeared. The Tutura-Ocheul Evenkis also engaged in “settled” or “izba-type” reindeer husbandry (Petri 1930).

Figure 20. Cheronchin (Evenki) with village youngsters, Ika village, 1991.

Today, Evenkis leading a semi-settled way of life have maintained many traditional economic activities. These help to preserve their traditional ways of ordering their life-world. The main areas of their economic activity are still hunting (for fur and meat), reindeer husbandry, and fishing (although their proportions have changed considerably). The imperative to engage in these activities and to combine them in creative ways gives them a unique dynamic-logistical quality when compared to the ecological adaptations of static or settled people.

[2.1.3 Hunting pelt-bearing animals for exchange]

Hunting pelt-bearing animals for income has also been a long-standing economic tradition for Evenkis. The income thus generated made up the
major part of family budgets. In 1986, Evenkis who kept reindeer sold fur to the state and obtained payment as follows:

- G. V. Veretnov — 1,361 rubles
- G. N. Galin — 4,730 rubles
- L. P. Sychev — 3,932 rubles
- N. V. Kaplin — 1,322 rubles
- M. N. Galin — 4,063 rubles
- A. Ia. Veretnov — 1,938 rubles
- P. L. Sychev — 2,950 rubles
- E. P. Sychev — 3,772 rubles
- V. D. Kaplin — 1,192 rubles.

Since the mid-20th century, sable has once again become the most important provider of pelts. According to statistical data, 2,800–3,400 sables were caught during the 1987 hunting season in Katanga raion. The sable harvest does not depend on the amount of forage to the same extent as the squirrel harvest. Therefore, sable hunting territories are relatively stable [in size and location]. This change also brought about changes in hunting methods and the weapons used. While squirrel was hunted actively with rifles and with or without dogs, sable was frequently hunted [passively], by using various types of leghold traps and deadfalls. Hunters travelled on either reindeer or Buran snowmobiles, and took along one or two specially trained dogs. Evenkis living in Kachug raion are “unaccustomed” to setting traps, and keep no more than 10–20 of them. This is due to the geographical features of the area, which is crisscrossed by ridges. Hunting with traps requires a set of paths or roads.

In the 1940s–50s, a new pelt-bearer appeared—the muskrat [ondatra]. It was translocated to Siberia from North America, and adapted well and propagated itself. According to data for the 1987 hunting season, about 20,000–25,000 muskrats were caught for the Katanga Promkhoz. Evenkis with reindeer combined fishing with their muskrat hunting. Traps were set in the evening and checked in the morning. They were set in water, submerged in places where animals scratch lake bottoms (in search of forage), or at their burrows. In addition, nets were spread in the lagunes [kur’ia] of creeks and rivers. Muskrat trapping is practiced by Evenkis not only to obtain fur for sale but also to collect their carcasses, which are then “soured” [kvasit’] before being employed as bait in sable traps. Fish is also used as bait. Muskrat trapping is done during September and early October. This is the rutting period for domesticated reindeer, and one needs to remain near the herd at this time to repair and build fences, castrate, or trim horns. Muskrat trapping is therefore done near the autumn camps, as a rule, on rivers and lakes. Sometimes, a few family members will move to a lake or river and stay there for some time to fish and hunt muskrat, while the others must stay in the autumn camp. Evenkis who have few reindeer occasionally give them over to others in order to form a single common herd. These reindeer owners
usually are part of a [recognizable] territorial group. While their animals are tended by a few herders, the owners engage in hunting muskrat and fishing in their territories [ugod'ia].

Hunters usually unite into small groups based on kinship and acquaintance, although pelt trapping is done individually. In the past, groups of hunters could include nomadic Evenkis, Russian settlers, and other Evenkis who might be acquaintances or [connected to a family as] godparents. One of the distinctive traits of Evenki culture is the presence of female hunters, who mainly hunt animals for pelts and rarely animals for meat. They are usually taught by men—their fathers, husbands, or brothers. If they had no other choice, men might take their own young daughters or adopted daughters hunting. Women do not range far, usually hunting near the camp.

Hunting for food [meat] still plays an important role, especially at the end of summer, when the dried meat is stockpiled for long storage. At the beginning of autumn, fresh moose meat can be frozen for storage. It should be stressed that Evenkis never pass on a chance to kill a moose in any season. Hunting for food, as well as sable hunting, does not drive hunters to travel great distances beyond the boundaries of their traditional living space.

[2.1.4 Fishing]

Fishing also plays an important role in the life of Evenkis. The main kinds of fish caught in the Lower Tunguska River are pike, ide [iax'], perch, roach, and dace. The fish caught in the tributaries are whitefish, lenok, grayling, and tugun [tugunok]. The main marketable fish caught around Chirko, which borders on Iakutiia, are sturgeon, whitefish, taimen', grayling, and lenok. The

Figure 21. “Going fishing with a harpoon.”
fish caught around Nakanno are perch, crucian carp [*karas’*], dace, and pike. Special barriers called *zaezdy* are used in fishing. They are built across the river. People use nets, seines, sweep-nets, and fishing lures to catch fish, as well as a special basket [*koryto*] that is set against the current. In the past, Evenkis would fish in boats made of birch bark [Fig. 21], with a double-bladed paddle. Today they fish with motorboats.

All fish are for family consumption only. Along with starchy foods, cereals, and tinned food, fish are an essential source of nourishment in summer. The fish are usually boiled, but Evenkis do not drink the broth [unlike Russians].

All the people living in Katanga raion engage in fishing, irrespective of their nationality. Commercial fishing is also done here, albeit on a small scale. According to data provided by A. A. Andreev, manager of the Katanga Promkhoz, about 26–30 tons of river and lake fish are caught annually, January to December, with the maximum possible annual catch being significantly larger, about 60 tons.

### [2.1.5 Reindeer herding today]

People are not optimistic about the future of reindeer herding, due to increasing pressure on the land and on the economic practices of the peoples of the North that have led to complete changes in their way of life and mentality. Transport reindeer are no longer needed and have been replaced by snowmobiles. Today, all reindeer are privately owned, and the owners are practically all Evenkis.

In Nakanno, during the Soviet period geologists wanted to establish a small reindeer operation attached to their company. They flew some reindeer in from Tofalaria by helicopter, and employed some local people as herders and to put up fences. They planned to keep the reindeer fenced all year round. The attempt failed, mainly due to the fact that their local employees [were not ready or forgot how] to work with reindeer. The enclosed pasture was also too small. Possibly the highland Tofalar reindeer were not able to adapt to the conditions of the Lower Tunguska.

It should be stressed that in spite of the gradual and constant decrease in the numbers of herds and of Evenki families engaged in reindeer husbandry, keeping reindeer is prestigious. This can be explained by Evenki people’s recognition of the role of reindeer in the functioning and viability of the traditional economy and traditional way of life. This way of life—a mobile life—has shaped many features of their psychology and their distinctive mobile culture.

In summer, reindeer are kept in a partially free form of domestication. They are “herded” by mosquitoes. To escape the bugs, they seek out human camps and their smudges. When reindeer shed their coats, they are easily annoyed by mosquitoes and horseflies. During the hot and dry summer days, they usually return from their night pasturing early in the morning, around
6 or 7 a.m., when the cold temperatures fade away and the mosquitoes and black flies appear. In cool and rainy weather, they return later in the afternoon or evening.

For the rutting and birthing periods in autumn and spring, special fences are made and placed close to each other. The larger the reindeer herd, the bigger the area that is needed to be fenced off. Reindeer fences can be 4–5 kilometres long. One can come across whole systems of reindeer fences in camp. L. P. Sychegei has 4 fenced areas used in autumn, the total length of which is 10–12 kilometres. Reindeer are fenced in in early September (but not earlier than 1–10 September). While they are kept in the fenced area in autumn during mating, [the condition of] the fence is monitored daily to ensure reindeer do not escape.

Evenkis easily recognize their own reindeer “by their faces.” They do not refer to the marks made on their ears but to their exterior features, antlers, and behaviour. Both adult reindeer and young are given nicknames, of Evenki or Russian origin, that reflect specific characteristics of the reindeer. There are usually three breeding stags in a herd. [In commenting on this excess, it is said,] “One might get lost—it does happen!” Evenkis are familiar with simple selection methods. Stags are castrated in spring and autumn (early August to early–mid September). In selecting stags, they take into account which stag loses its antler velvet earliest. These animals can start mating earlier and, in turn, allow an early birth of calves which would have better chances of gaining strength before the winter frost. Neighbouring Evenkis were known to exchange reindeer, in part to improve the breed. Evenkis also keep the calves born of wild deer, but they demand a lot of attention. Evenkis like dappled reindeer. One of their stags is always white. As a result, his offspring are mottled [peganye] grey-white reindeer, or sometimes also pure white. Though the white colour attracts mosquitoes, black flies, and horseflies, such reindeer can be seen at a distance in thick forests during the summer and autumn.

Fenced reindeer are fed small amounts of salt. Reindeer that cause a lot of trouble by trying to jump over the fence have a pykteraun ‘movement-restricting wooden “rifle”’ put around their necks. In winter, cows are tethered with devices called changai (chapgai), and on very restless female reindeer, restraints called kuluka are used (Fig. 22). Bells are put round the necks of very old cows, so that they can easily be found. The reindeer are released from the corrals as soon as the mating period is over, in early to mid October. Usually, the snow is ankle-deep at this time, and so they can be easily found by their tracks.

Evenki reindeer are distinguished by their high degree of domestication. Over half the herd consists of uchakil ‘riding reindeer’, which are trained separately from the ones that carry packs (“under saddles”) or pull sledges in harness. Evenkis use winter sledges with three to four braces, based on designs borrowed from Jakuts and Russians. There are special sledges for riding and for carrying loads. Both take two harnessed reindeer, with the driver sitting
on the right side. The family of L. P. Sychegir uses 15–16 sledges and 30–32 reindeer to move from place to place during the winter hunting season.

Domestic reindeer are rarely killed for food. This might be done one or two times in a year, when the weakest ones were chosen, or during a long period without meat. Local Evenkis would slaughter domestic reindeer by stabbing a knife into the backs of their heads. Today, some Evenkis do it by using a rifle, but this is done by women only. It is said that if a man slaughters a domesticated reindeer with a rifle, he will have bad luck hunting. Evenkis milk their reindeer. When the cows return in the morning, they are tethered to trees or to special sticks hammered into the ground near a smudge. Their calves are tethered separately [so that they do not drink up the milk]. Female reindeer are milked in the daytime at about 4 or 5 p.m., with the milker on the right side, either on a block or kneeling on one knee. The milk is drawn from

**Figure 22. A reindeer cow with a *kuluka* restraint, 1990. Photo by M.G. Turov.**
the two nearest teats, while the farther ones are left for feeding the young. The milk obtained in this way from 10–15 cows amounts to about a litre per day in summer and autumn.

At present, Evenkis who have reindeer depend on the towns to a greater extent than before, both from the economic and the psychological points of view. This is partially reflected in the planning of travelling routes, such that every member of an Evenki family can go into town about twice a year. Many of the supplies without which contemporary Evenki families cannot live today are bought only in town. All the other necessary things for hunting—rifles, ammunition, traps, and all clothes (with the exception of winter clothes)—are also bought there. Most Evenkis have wooden houses in town, where their relatives or acquaintances live while they are away. Reindeer Evenkis are attracted to urban life in order to visit their relatives, but also because of the higher standards of medical care and cultural life. The highly unfavourable demographic age/sex ratio of reindeer Evenkis [i.e., the relative absence of women in the taiga] also draws them to town.

2.2 Evenki land tenure

Hunter-gatherer land tenure is unique in that it entails collective and temporary ownership of territories, the borders of which are somewhat indistinct (Shnirel'man 1990: 140). Nevertheless, this kind of land tenure is characterized by relative stability. Pastures and travel routes are used for extended periods on the basis of common law, but they can be modified in emergencies for a short time (Krupnik 1990).

Being a mobile people, Evenkis have never had a concept of private land ownership. They only had a concept of [private] use. Clans, families, or individuals could not possess land. They only used it and inherited it. According to Evenkis, land could not be anyone’s property because it belonged to Buga, the spirit of the upper world. The earth was called by the same name as this spirit, with additional shades of meaning being ‘place’, ‘territory’, and ‘world’ (Shirokogoroff 1929: 294). At the end of the 19th century, I. I. Mainov wrote about the Evenkis of Iakutiia: “They divide the fishing holes in rivers among relatives, but Tunguses do not consider such division as granting the proprietors full ownership rights of the given spot in the river” (1898: 179).

The same kind of attitude to the land was peculiar to other nations living in the North. For instance, Nganasans and Enetses, who engaged in hunting (and also large-herd reindeer husbandry), did not develop the idea of landownership. The Chukchis’ idea of landownership was no more than a tradition of the use of land by groups of people, who were not necessarily related by blood to the previous tenants. Nenetses, Nganasans, Enetses, Chukchis, and other peoples considered the earth to be an entity that by its
essence could not be owned by an individual or a group of people (Gulevskii 1993: 298–9).

The division of hunting territories was one of the functions of family clans during their clan suglan ‘assembly’. Evenkis co-ordinated land tenure in practice by common law. They had no legally defined territories, nor transfer by inheritance. Land was transferred on the basis of constant use and occupation. “Such land… is not allotted by anyone, no transfer of possession is made (in written form). The right of a family or group of families to such land is determined by their actual use of it for one or two years…” (GAIO R538-1-74: 9).

Misunderstandings and arguments over clan lands were the primary subjects of legal disputes among Tunguses. General clan assemblies were held once per year, organized by the kniaz’ ‘prince’, who was elected for a term of three years. If land was to be sold, the clan assemblies had to approve it. When persons died without direct heirs, claims to the land were considered at clan assemblies (GAIO R538-1-74: 9). While on an expedition to the Podkamennaia Tunguska River in 1926, I. M. Suslov wrote that the number of disputes over clan lands had considerably increased. He explained it by the destruction of the “institution of the princes,” and in general by the “rapid pace of change of Evenkis’ everyday life” and by the “ignorant and harmful influence of various traders” (GAIO R538-1-72: 9). In the following description, these changes are used to justify the necessity of incorporating Evenkis into the Soviet system:

At the confluence of two rivers forming the Taimura (a left tributary of the Lower Tunguska), there are two parcels of land belonging to the centenarian Ulkigo and to three brothers, Nalega, Chekaren, and Chuchancha, who live together. They all belong to one blood clan. Both plots of land have good forests, with wild deer and moose. There are three hunters in Ulkigo’s family: old Ulkigo himself, his daughter Gilbarik (25 years old), and his adopted son (19 years old). All three brothers (two with families and one a bachelor) hunt in the neighbouring land parcel. Ulkigo hunts moose solely for food, taking no more than 1–2 every spring (hunting on the crusted snow). Meantime, his neighbours hunt mainly for the hides, which they sell at the trading post for 10 rubles apiece, and they sell the meat to the Tunguses. In spring of 1926, they slaughtered about 30 moose… The greed of these brothers in their moose hunt motivated by profit has exceeded any reasonable limit. Not only did Chekaren and Chuchancha trespass onto old Ulkigo’s land and set about killing his moose, but even while the old man and his daughter were hunting, the brothers intercepted the moose they had run down and killed it, considering the prey to be their own. They have been doing such things for three years now. The old man tried to appeal to the former princes regarding this offence, and for that he was beaten more than once by his neighbours. … Similar instances take place very often with the Tungus nomads in this district. That is why the Tunguses willingly support the organization of [Soviet] clan courts. (GAIO R538-1-74: 9–11).
By the end of the 19th century, Evenki clans did not live in isolation from each other (if they ever had). Representatives of several clans could be found living in one and the same place (Patkanov 1906). The main reason why Evenkis began to obliterate clan distinctions in using the land, and to change locations in the past (often only temporarily), was to avoid paying iasak. They also preferred to search for new territories that were rich in feed and pelt-bearing animals. Inter-ethnic pressure and epidemics, as well as certain aspects of their social organization, also played an important role.

Although the problem of the form of Evenki land tenure has not been completely resolved, it now appears that researchers have failed to differentiate properly between clan and family land, for the reason that there never seems to have been any such differentiation.

At the turn of the 20th century, with the increased pelt hunting by Evenkis, families began to exercise their rights to those places where they trapped and fished. The owners of hunting territories were families, such that “… a family’s right to a hunting territory extended to animals that were trapped … and also applied to moose” (Suslov 1927: 47). S. M. Shirokogoroff (1929: 300) noted a similar feature in the culture of Tunguses in the Transbaikal region.

V. V. Karlov (1982: 15) noted that fishing places were held with a much more marked feeling of ownership than hunting places, and also that traditionally the location of fishing places was permanent. “The families of good Tungus hunters care about preserving their hunting territories for their families and children. For example, they build solid fish traps on the rivers for kandachin’e (ice-fishing with harpoons) in winter…, traps for fox and wood-grouse, and corrals for enclosing … reindeer herds,” wrote I. M. Suslov in 1926 after having studied the traditions of Evenkis on the Podkamennaia Tunguska River (GAIO R538-1-74: 9).

Having studied Evenki economic and social life, scholars have now abandoned the idea that Evenkis moved around the taiga unsystematically. Instead, they now assume that Evenkis practically never left the borders of their own naturally formed hunting areas [khoziaistvennye regiony]: “Every community has its traditional hunting/fishing places [ugodia] and its own narrow economic region, which becomes a locus for meeting through everyday economic activities” (Karlov 1982: 29). K. M. Rychkov (1917, 1922–23) was one of the first to note the fact that the border of the Enisei Tunguses’ nomadic territory had remained practically unchanged since the 18th century. In the 1930s, the Committee of the North took part in organizing expeditions to regulate the use of land in the districts where indigenous peoples lived. Economists, ethnographers, and game wardens taking part in the expeditions observed that the use of land was already managed remarkably well by the mobile peoples themselves (GAIO R538-1-183; Petri 1930; Levin 1932). Thus, within a few generations, adjoining communities had established specific territories for themselves, albeit with indistinct boundaries. The
specialists working in the southern part of Katanga district in 1928 noted that it was impossible to import [Russian models] of land use to the North. They emphasized that the “historically derived traditions of organizing the use of land must not be ignored” (GAIO R538-1-183).

Authorized representatives of the Committee of the North, who travelled into the field to become better acquainted with the system of land use, assessed the situation as “calm.” The following report was filed about the population on the Taiur River in the neighbouring Ust'-Kut district: “The attitude of the natives towards the Russians and that of the Russians towards the natives is friendly [tovarishcheskoe] … There is no evidence of exploitation of the Tunguses by the Russians … they exercise friendly, joint use of hunting grounds, although there is some dissatisfaction regarding fishing spots” (GAIO R528-1-25: 17). The Upper Katanga Native Council in Katanga district reported: “It is particularly gratifying… at the suglan the natives and the Russians jointly discussed native issues, and there was no evidence of particular national discord, although complaints were voiced about the seizure by Russians of hunting places, but it was spoken of without malice” (GAIO R538-1-233: 60v).

The work of land use regulators in the late 1920s and the early 1930s resulted in the categorization of three main types of Evenki nomadic travel: [1] autumn–winter–spring travel, connected with hunting; [2] summer travel, connected with reindeer herding and fishing; and [3] trips to trading centres (GAIO R440-1-85). In general, their entire life cycle was subordinated to the demands of the hunt.

Evenkis have always considered a territory to be occupied by a given family or other mobile community if any personal belongings of family members were left at a campsite, or if their owners left metki ‘special [territorial] marks’. In such cases, the territory could not be occupied without the formal consent of its present owners (Shirokogoroff 1929: 299). In the first part of the 20th century, before the formation of the promkhozes, Evenkis travelled in the winter around those places where their closest ancestors had travelled. If necessary, they could go to neighbouring territories, as there were no strict borders to hunting grounds in the modern sense.

Until recently, land use in Katanga raion was regulated by the norms of common law, and formal laws only marked the relationships that were already being practiced. This meant that hunting grounds (primarily, but also reindeer pastures and fishing spots), were used by families and could be inherited patrilineally.

Today, the pressure exerted by different ethnic groups on any given territory has increased, due to larger populations and to the specialization of certain regions entirely in trapping. As a result, considerable changes have taken place in the regulation of land use. These include the distribution of trap lines by formal law [rather than common law]. Presently, practically all the territory of the taiga has been divided in this way. Rivers and watersheds serve as natural borderlines of trap lines, the size of which depends on
population density (number of hunters) and on the total size and quality of hunting grounds, the given territory, or hunting enterprise. The average size of hunting grounds in the southern part of Katanga raion is 100–150 square kilometres, while in the north it is over 1,000 square kilometres.

It must be emphasized that despite the relatively large area of the trapping territory compared to the number of people, there is a shortage of productive hunting grounds for Katanga Evenkis. One reason for this is the variable productivity of the trap lines, which are locally classified by hunters as being either permanent, temporary, or casual. The best hunting places are in the headwaters of shallow rivers, and at watersheds and their tributaries (along ridges). All other land is considered of secondary value. Among Evenkis, the trap lines of value were divided between groups of people (the large tracts) as well as between individual enterprises (GAIO R538-1-183: 132v).

Until recently, the right to allocate land to hunters was exercised by special committees of the promkhozes, consisting mainly of the management of these enterprises. In August 1990, they were replaced by committees for the allocation of hunting grounds that were part of the rural (raion) councils. The social representation of the new committees was widened, and the opinions of hunters’ labour councils were also taken into account.

According to current legislation, hunting grounds are allocated once every five years. The latest act governing their allotment was adopted in 1988. In practice, hunting places are still transferred according to inheritance traditions, provided they are used properly.

In the past, Evenkis could give their own hunting grounds to people from other clans (Suslov 1927). The same practice continues today. Promkhoz managers have practically surrendered to “reindeer Evenkis” the informal right to use their clearly defined territories in the way they see fit. The result is that many Evenkis who own reindeer allow other people to hunt animals for pelts on their territory, especially those who they think could be helpful to them someday. They usually describe the general boundaries to the area in terms of rivers. Agreements are sometimes officially registered with the corresponding promkhoz. There have been instances of settled Evenkis (who do not own reindeer) giving their hunting places to relatives, including people of other nationalities, with the consent of the promkhoz.

There are three categories of hunters: shtatnye ‘tenured’ (permanent), sezonné ‘seasonal’ (temporary), and liubiteli ‘sport [hunters]’. Tenured hunters work for the promkhozes. In Katanga raion, most of them are Evenkis. For example, in the Katanga Promkhoz, 62 of the 76 tenured hunters are Evenkis and only 14 are Russians. Moreover, all Evenkis who keep reindeer are tenured hunters. The number of tenured aboriginal (Evenki) hunters, however, has been decreasing recently.

The promkhozes sign contracts to employ seasonal hunters, whose quota of animals is usually the same as that of tenured hunters, or a little less. These employees are considered to be “temporary tenured hunters.” The third category, sport hunters, includes representatives of practically all nationalities
living in the raion, and among them are settled Evenkis. In 1987, there were 400–600 sport hunters on the territory of the Katanga Promkhoz alone.

Promkhoz managers, and the [raion] committees which regulate hunting, preferentially assign hunting territories to Evenkis holding reindeer on the basis of those former (“clan”) territories where they actually lived and hunted. [On paper,] their winter movements should, in turn, be confined to their official pelt-hunting territories. However, because practically all employable adult members of Evenki families are tenured hunters, the total hunting area for any given family is often much greater, and includes [summer] pastures as well as fishing places. Nevertheless, the amount of land used by Evenkis has decreased in size because of the fires of 1985–86, when most of the pastures were destroyed. In this situation, Evenkis were forced to change their travel routes, which had been arranged around the old pastures. However, as fire is not rare in the taiga, it seems that even this contingency had already been worked out some time ago.

I have observed that if for some reason it becomes impossible or difficult to travel within a regular family territory, then hunters or herders can claim rights to the traditional territory of an adjoining Evenki community. For instance, after a forest fire V. P. Kaplin (Pangarakai clan) changed his family’s travel to include both his “family” territory and part of the territory used until recently by Ia. P. Veretnov and, after his death, by his adopted son E. Veretnov (Pangarakai clan). At the same time, E. Veretnov’s travel plans have also included V. P. Kaplin’s territory. N. Kaplin’s family (Pangarakai clan) now travels in the places used by his grandfather and his parents (close to lakes Onkoikta and Burkaul).\textsuperscript{10}

The territories of the Gole (Galin) clan were once situated on the Lower Kochema River. The Mongo clan territories were on the Middle Kochema, and the Sychegir clan had theirs on the Upper Kochema. Today, the Galin and the Sychegir clans are intermarried, and they hunt, fish, and herd reindeer at the headwaters of the Upper Kochema. Nevertheless, the family of L. P. Sychegir is still attracted to their old places at the mouth of the Upper Kochema and on its tributary, the Umotka River, where their permanent base camp and temporary autumn/spring camps were situated before the fire. At present, these places are used only partially during the pelt-hunting season, when people go there by Buran snowmobile. It is impossible to travel there by reindeer, as fire destroyed the forage over a large territory.\textsuperscript{11} Sport hunters, although neighbours to Evenkis (but of different nationalities), are gradually occupying these territories.

\textsuperscript{10} Here, the author emphasizes the fact that the Kaplins and Veretnovs are members of the same patrilineal clan (Pangarakai) and thus can make claims on each other’s territory in times of need. —\textit{Ed.}

\textsuperscript{11} When travelling with reindeer, the animals have to be allowed to forage for feed at regular intervals. If a place is surrounded by a large burned-out zone, it is practically impossible to reach by reindeer without stressing the animals. —\textit{Ed.}
Scholars of Evenkis, and the related Orok (Uil'ta) people of Sakhalin, have noted that they prefer to keep to established migratory routes, and use more or less permanent spots for setting camps. V. D. Kosarev (1986: 72) noted that the Oroks have four traditional nomadic routes, “although these routes, known to have been ‘established by the ancestors’, have been nearly destroyed by the industrial invasion of foresters and oil prospecting and extracting companies. Nevertheless, even young reindeer herders still do their best to stick to them, if possible.”

It should also be emphasized that reindeer herders do not feel completely at ease travelling in places other than their own, “family” territory, even if it is within the bounds of their community-clan territory. Certain traditions and specific rituals can be explained by this situation—for example, feeding the fire, sprinkling the earth with wine, and so on. M. P. Egorchenok told me: “I am so afraid here. This place is new and strange. I walk around and I’m afraid. I drink, and I sprinkle the earth—for the dead. Let them drink, too.”

These traditions reveal a strong tendency towards preserving the old nomadic routes and places within old boundaries. They also show a type of fear and non-acceptance of “other people’s” places, places used by other ethnic groups, or [even] other Evenki groups. This idea is supported by a study of Evenkis in Sym-Ket carried out by I. E. Maksimova (1994: 92): “Evenkis imagined that there was an indissoluble connection between a place and the people living there. Places inhabited by ‘others’ were themselves considered hostile.” This feature of Evenki land use represents one of the main components of their distinctive attitude towards the taiga. They relate to the territories they visit as they do to their home.

2.3 Evenki toponymy

Evenki toponyms have been frequently used as a source for researching the ethnogenesis of Tungus-Manchurian peoples and the history of their settlement in Siberia. The distribution of toponyms can also provide a clear picture of the way different ethnic groups have occupied territory. Even a cursory glance at a map of Eastern Siberia would show that Evenkis used to occupy a much bigger territory than they do today. In my research, I have used a semantic approach to the analysis of Evenki toponyms, in order to identify important characteristics pertaining to their perception and ordering of the environment.

One of the ways in which a people order a territory is to name it, or to accept or adapt existing toponyms. Every nation has its own traditions for naming territory in addition to the generic or universal ways used [by any people when they] recognize a territory. These [local] traditions first and foremost follow ethnically specific ways of occupying space, and are defined by the type of households they have and by the economic strategies they use.
The way in which a language’s [grammar] facilitates constructing words can also give birth to naming traditions.\(^5\)

Tungus toponyms proper comprise two groups: [1] place names formed with the help of syntactic suffixes; and [2] words denoting different natural phenomena, things, or actions. Some proper names can also be added to this group (Vasilevich 1958). Most of the toponyms in Katanga raion are of Evenki origin. Rarely, one can come across very old toponyms of pre-Tungus origin that have been adapted by the local population. Toponyms of Russian origin are more commonly found in the southern part of the raion and in the valleys of the Lower Tunguska and Nepa rivers. There are instances of double [overlapping] names—Russian and Evenki—for one and the same place. Most of the toponyms I have analysed are connected with the hydrology of the region.\(^6\) These hydronyms also reflect elements of the relief. This is a feature common to all Evenkis, and may be related to their mobile way of life.

Katanga Evenkis are the descendants of mobile taiga hunters and reindeer herders, who to this day maintain a dynamic-logistical model of occupying space. Their way of understanding and organizing their landscape is keyed to the river system. “The places where a hunter has been at least once are engraved on his memory in the form of an original map of the river system…” (Vasilevich 1969: 182). Today, as in the past, Evenkis orient themselves by rivers. They envision the places where they live as a map of the river system.\(^7\) The number of tributaries of the major rivers—not their length—plays an important role, and it is reflected in the way that Evenki people draw maps (Podgorbunskii 1924).

Most Evenki hydronyms reflect distinctive features of rivers and the riverside landscape, or the flora and fauna of rivers. A secondary group of place names reflects human activities (Iurgin 1974: 12). Strictly speaking, the features of the land are learned only through everyday experience of them [zhiznedeišt’nost’].

When orienting according to river systems, it is important to know where the rivers start and where they flow. This is especially important for Katanga Evenkis. Sometimes, the only feature around which one can orient oneself when travelling are the rivers, due to the fact that in this [relatively level] part of Siberia the mountain ridges and [the high points between] watersheds are almost invisible.

The most widely used Evenki hydronyms are Kholokit ‘a river for travelling upstream’, Khitakit ‘a river for travelling downstream’, Dagaldyn

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\(^5\) Unlike many other languages, Evenki toponyms have no specialized words meaning ‘river’, ‘lake’, ‘water’, ‘mountain’, etc. Word building is done by adding special suffixes with a demonstrative meaning.

\(^6\) [My analysis] included the Evenki toponyms of Katanga raion [as well as those] used in raions closer to Lake Baikal.

\(^7\) It is an interesting fact that Evenkis cannot swim. [Instead] they bring offerings to the spirit-owners of the rivers.
‘tributary, a confluence of two rivers’, Modan ‘a bend in the river’, Deren ‘a riverhead’, Daptun ‘a mouth of a river’, Mogokta ‘a river with deep places’, Dulisma ‘a river between other rivers’. Special features of importance to mobile peoples can also be reflected in Evenki hydronyms, such as the colour, taste, and smell of the water (Sikili ‘turbid’, Iukta, Iuktukon ‘a cold spring; a brook with clean, clear water’). They also note the peculiarities of the current: Iumurchen ‘a rapid’, Konda ‘a winding river’, Ogne ‘dry, drying out’, Kochema ‘winding’, Kinika ‘crooked; upper course is crooked’, Amnunnda ‘lower course is always iced over’, Mogokta ‘a river with deep places’, Tonkokte (or Eksha) ‘river with a low bank which is inundated during floods’. Names for a riverside (or lakeside) landscape include Detmi ‘tundra’ [Lake], Churgikta ‘burned river’, Duvuikta ‘clean place’, and Ellonekte ‘river with a high left bank and low right bank’. In comparison, most of the hydronyms used by Transbaikal Evenkis derive from words meaning ‘mountain pass’, ‘rocky mountain ridge’, or ‘cliff; mountain’ and reflect well the features of the mountainous-taiga landscape of that territory.


Evenki toponyms reflecting the features of rivers, lakes, and the landscape are closely connected with human activities. They are [good] illustrations of how human perception works. They also testify to Evenkis’ profound knowledge of the places they live in, including their ecology and terrain. Toponyms can also offer information about the ecological conditions of the area. For example, toponyms with the root tala ‘natural salt-lick’ occur more often in Chita oblast’ than in Katanga raion, where I did my research. Hunting of moose, Manchurian deer, and roe deer is common in these places, where they come to lick the salt and are stalked by Evenki hunters (Shmidt 2001: 74).

It is interesting that there are noticeable similarities in the names of rivers in different places and different regions where Evenkis live. This probably comes from the identical ways they have of exploring and occupying comparable natural-climatic environments. Also, Evenkis may deliberately employ familiar place names when they travel to new territories, with the aim of quickly occupying them and “making them like home” [odomashnivanie] (Vasilevich 1962). On the one hand, the frequent employment of certain words reflects the efficiency that is typical of the language of mobile people. On the other hand, it reflects the quality of their perception [of nature], particularly their concentrated attention upon landscape qualities that are important to them. For instance, the purity/impurity of drinking water is important and is reflected in river names (Iukta ‘pure, cold brook/river’, Sikili ‘turbid river’).
or in showing other features of a river (Kochema, Kochechumo, Kochenga, Kochoku, Kochkota, Kochemsko ‘winding’, derived from kocho ‘bend in the river’). Rivers are also given names according to the fish in them, with high frequency of hydronyms such as Delinda, Dzhilinda, Dzheloul ‘abounding in taimen’, derived from dzheli ‘taimen’; Surinda, Murinda ‘abounding in whitefish’, derived from suri ‘whitefish’; and so on. Many hydronyms have the root diagda ‘pine’. For example, Evenkis use this root to demark places in their environment which are good for campsites. The toponym Diagdali ‘continuous pine trees’ characterizes a place suitable for any kind of camp, especially a summer one. The hydronym Onkoiktia meaning ‘a place rich in reindeer forage’ offers information about large moss pastures for reindeer.

According to a study by Schmidt (2001: 130), some river names deriving from the same stem (Onkgo, Ongkkit) are found in the northern part of Chita oblast’, where Evenkis live, and the most productive reindeer pastures are situated there. The river name Ogne ‘dry’ implies that the river is dry in summer, with some water there only in spring and autumn, when a camp can be made.

Another group of place names is connected with human activities: Puribiran ‘river with caches’, Guloni ‘river with storage platforms’ (synonyms used in Chita oblast’ are Purichi, Puren, Kolbochi, Delkonoi), Diukcha ‘river with a lodge frame’, Bolodikit ‘river with an autumn camp’, Kakipka ‘river with traps’, Ediurge ‘blacksmith’s tongs’, Kellokon ‘river one can ski on’, Chukil ‘river with a bear’s head buried in willow twigs’, Vovdiak ‘killing’ [Lake] (in commemoration of a historical event—an armed conflict between clans), Kalakan ‘pot’, and Giramdali ‘river with graves’.

Toponyms derived from anthroponyms (personal names) and ethnonyms (names of tribes or nations) are relatively rare in Evenki naming systems. These toponyms are “… real witnesses to prehistoric (and subsequent) settlement by groups of a given clan, as well as to the places they lived” (Vasilevich 1958: 334). This phenomenon is typical of all nations living in the North. S. P. Krasheninnikov pointed out in his well-known work [describing the lands of Kamchatka] (1949) that Itelmen fishermen never gave human names to rivers or places.

There are very few toponyms indicating human actions along a river, such as hunting, fishing, or settling permanently. Among such toponyms are the rivers Iaka (“[named for] a man, maybe lakov, which would be laka in Evenki”), Sil’gisha (“a place where someone camped; or a surname”), Il’baryk (“A woman was there, she gave birth, and they named the river [for her]—so said the old people”), and Onok (“A man was there, probably an old man”). My informants also pointed out that rivers were not named after ordinary, unremarkable people.

These toponyms indirectly suggest that people’s attitudes to various parts of their territories varied widely. Thus, the relatively rarity of toponyms associated with personal and clan names is characteristic of the peculiarities of Evenki and—if taken more broadly—aboriginal beliefs about the earth.
Land was never parcelled out, and belonged to a person only while it was being used. At the turn of the 20th century, the fact that some hydronyms derived from personal names indirectly showed that there was more of a proprietary attitude to fishing places than hunting places (Karlov 1982).

As a rule, elevations (ridges) are given the names of the rivers flowing along them (Podgorbunskii 1924: 3), e.g., **Inarigda** [Ridge], **Iuktakon** [Ridge]. The area, the river, and the Evenki camps situated there would all have the same name, e.g., **Nerpop (Onok, Ogne)** for the river, the locality, and the camp. My informants said that they gave names to their camps so that “… our neighbours would know our whereabouts.” The naming of settlements, including camps, stressed the fact that the territories were inhabited. Thus, the names were intended more for other people than for the owners. Ridges and other more or less noticeable heights were also named according to the features of the landscape (**Delov** ‘stony’, **Churgi** ‘burned’, **Diagdali** ‘continuous pine trees’). They also commemorated associations or events connected with a certain place (**Moro** ‘cup’, **Onkocho** ‘boat’, **Potakui** ‘saddlebag’, **Diaaviadia** ‘place where a backwater formed and there were a lot of fish’, **Tokma** ‘[named after the river] abounding with moose’, **Ika** ‘[from the name of the river] mark’). The names of ridges also marked special qualities of the land around them (**Erboachen** derived from **erboko** ‘high place with a pine grove’, **Nakanno** ‘high riverbank’). The same rules for giving place names are observed by other Evenki groups, for example, the Aldan Tunguses: “Ansat Mountain reminds one of a woman’s round workbox, from which it obtained its name” (Pod"iakonov 1900: 52).

It is interesting to compare the names of Evenki and Russian settlements from this point of view. Unlike Evenki ones, Russian villages were usually named after the people who settled there first, for example, Zhdanova, Os'kino, Nizhniaia and Verhniaia Karelina, Fedorova, Bokovikova, and others. This again indirectly illustrates the divergent economic and cultural traditions of the Russians, and different attitudes to the land.

In territories used by both Evenkis and Russians (for the latter, only during hunting seasons), rivers have sometimes been given two names, which are known to everyone in the area. The second name is often a direct translation from Evenki into Russian (e.g., **Puribiran–Labazinaia** [Labaz River], **Sikchelekte–Sukhie ozer** [Dry Lakes River]), though sometimes the two names can have quite different meanings (e.g., **Khitakit** ‘river for travelling downstream’ v. **Pokoinishnaia** ‘[river] of the dead’; **Neekshema** ‘covered with moose hides’ v. **Nizhniaia Zaozernaia** ‘lower [river] beyond the lake’). In neighbouring lakutilia, there are several compound lakut-Evenki names, for example, Kapral-Dzhangy or Kapral-Khaia on the Syalakh River (Pod"iakonov 1900: 58); as well as Evenki-Iakut names (Keimetinov 1996), and sometimes there are official Russian names, as well. Though double names are widely used in Siberia, they are rarely marked on geographic maps, and much hard work is needed to research them.
Evenkis have a wonderful ability to give nicknames to their kinsmen, according to distinguishing but perhaps not immediately notable features of character: “It is enough to make a slip of the tongue, or to find oneself in a funny situation, and one can immediately be given a nickname that sometimes perseveres for one’s entire life” (Rychkov 1922–23: 141). In the same way, the main requirement for the toponyms used by Evenki people is a feature of the given place that is important not only for an individual but for the whole mobile group generally, the whole social group.8

2.4 Travelling cycles, and a descriptive typology of mobile settlements

*Tunguses exhibit a striking combination of nomadic and settled life.*
—A. Middendorf [1878]

The rhythms of life, and the ways and directions of the routes taken by contemporary mobile Evenkis, are not arbitrary. They are regulated by the overall rhythm of Nature, which is reflected in the traditional Evenki calendar and its phenology. Each Evenki family or territorial community has an individual, systematic character to its travel routes (Karlov 1982: 123) that shows the creative side of how they order their environment, campsites, and plan travel routes.

One of the main conditions for the successful planning of travel is a profound knowledge of the area, its ecological and other peculiarities. Since their life experience is confined within a specific place, Evenkis know it very well: “They know every tree, every stone, etc. in the places where they nomadize,” wrote I. G. Georgi (1799: 38). Evenki people have been characterized by their ability to find their bearings even in unknown places, to choose the right way and the best place to spend the night (GAIO R538-1-183). I. E. Maksimova (1994: 28) recorded an Evenki living in the north of Tomsk oblast' as saying, “An Evenki could never get lost in the taiga, he could only himself wish to stay there forever.” Tungus people have been unsurpassed guides for the Siberian expeditions of the first explorers and of contemporary geologists (Tugolukov 1969; Pod"ianov 1900; Ermolova 1999; Fainshtein 1988; Shishkov 1914; et al.). S. A. Pod"ianov, a mining engineer who prospected for gold in 1896–99 along the Aldan and Olekma rivers (today located in southern Iakutiia), wrote: “Because of my unsuccessful experience dealing with existing maps ... I turned to the Tunguses with my questions. They gave me a map, according to which I made my itinerary. On their map they showed me the direction of the rivers, as well as their mutual correlation and distances” (1900: 50). He characterized it as an almost inborn quality: “Even if the local Tunguses seem to make guesses when they walk, because

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8 In this connection, it is interesting to note that practically no place names in Evenki toponymy are associated with their emotional perception of the places they live.
of the absence of clear landmarks in the local landscape, they are guided by a special instinct \text{[chut'e]} peculiar only to them…” (ibid.: 61). The basis of this feeling is formed by the centuries-long experience of life in close connection with nature, their observation of its subtest changes, and the absence of fear of the taiga—in short, an integral system of spatial orientation.

Modern Evenkis have an excellent knowledge of the flora and fauna of the places where they live, and take them into account when ordering their environment. They know the wild animals and birds that live regularly in the same locality as they do. “Families, or groups of families (usually of the same family clan), commonly set aside a reserve area within their territories for wild deer and moose, in case of hunger” (GAIO R538-1-74: 9). Their relationship to animals involves not only elements of rivalry but also those of coexistence and even protection (Shirokogoroff 1929). Hunting certain wild animals and birds is forbidden, because of specific religious beliefs and sanctified traditions.

Evenki travel is structured by their knowledge of the local rhythms of nature. Evenkis have a profound knowledge of their own territory, as well as of the biology of domesticated and wild animals. They also understand how their particular economic activities depend upon concrete changes in the natural environment. Four main cycles of nomadic travel correspond to the four seasons in this part of Siberia—spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

I will link my typology and classification, as well as the features of mobile settlements, to the yearly mobile cycle. Although this problem has been the focus of scientific research for a long time, there is no generally accepted detailed classification for pastoralists, which causes difficulties in the interpretation of many terms, including place names (Andrianov 1985: 42). It is necessary to study this problem in detail. Here, I shall only define the meanings of the terms used in this work concerning mobile settlements, and the implications they carry.

In accordance with standard use, mobile settlements \text{[kochevye poseleniia]} are distinguished according to the length of time they are used. A mobile camp used for a short period of time is called a \text{stoianka} ‘stopping place’, while one used for a long period of time is called a \text{stoibishche} ‘camp’. Though these terms are often used as synonyms (Turov 1990: 135, 136, 146–9), I think it would be better to use the term \text{stoibishche} in ethnographic literature when referring to both types of temporary mobile settlements. The term \text{stoianka}, in fact, is a specific archaeological term, associated with ancient archaeological sites.

Evenkis had two types of mobile settlements—\text{urikit}, the seasonal camps of the reindeer Evenkis, and \text{meneen}, the permanent (often winter) camps situated on riverbanks (Vasilevich 1969: 107). One of the criteria for distinguishing between the two is the length of time living in such camps. In addition, Evenkis living in the taiga zone of Central Siberia at the turn of the 20th century had four types of mobile settlements, according to Turov (1990:
134–5), differentiated by and corresponding to the four seasons of the year: meneen in winter, nengnerkit in spring, khigolorkit in autumn, and diovorkit in summer.

Evenkis themselves still classify their mobile settlements as urikit and meneen. From my field notes, it would seem that the main criterion for this division is not the length of time of their usage but the composition of the group of people staying there. Thus, the urikit is a camp used for an indefinite period of time—from a week to a month. This type of camp is home to a whole family (or nomadic group). On the other hand, the meneen is a place where only parts of the family stay—usually women, old people, and children—while the men are away hunting.

Along with this type of division, Evenkis usually distinguish four types of camps, according to the seasons, which govern the nature of their economic activity in spring, autumn, or summer. Thus, all camps are divided into summer (diovdian, diovani urikit), autumn (bolodian, boloni), winter (tuvani/tugani urikit, tuvodian/tugedian), and spring (nengnedian) types. Each of these is characterized by certain features pertaining to location, functions, and assortment of structures for living and other needs. With the exception of the summer camps, any of the above-described camps could be called either urikit or meneen [depending on the circumstances].

In this work, I will use only the term stoibishche ‘mobile camp’, signifying both a camp used for a short period of time (e.g., used in summer for 5–10 days) and a camp used for a long period of time (e.g., used in autumn and spring for 25–35 days).

[2.4.1 The spring travel cycle]

The spring travel cycle covers approximately the period of late April–early May to early–mid June, when the first mosquitoes appear. This includes a long settled period, because of the tradition of keeping reindeer corralled during calving. People engage in various husbandry activities during this period. They look after reindeer dropping their calves, tend to the newborns, and mend fences. They hunt meat [for subsistence]. While there is still snow on the ground, they get ready for summer travel by transporting unnecessary winter clothes and sledges to a noku storehouse situated close to the autumn camp. They also begin to prepare for the next winter’s travel cycle by repairing and manufacturing fur clothes, skis, and sledges.

At the turn of the 20th century, the location of Evenki spring camps depended on the cyclical harvest of squirrel forage. When it was plentiful, hunters could remain in their spring camps even after the pelt hunting season was over. Spring camps could be situated some 200 kilometres distant from the regular winter camps (especially in those years when squirrel hunting was poor, because of lack of squirrel forage), or 60–90 kilometres distant, sometimes only 5–6 kilometres away from the winter camps (Turov 1990:
Today, spring camps are placed close to the winter and, especially, autumn camps. This follows from the fact that Evenkis’ main pelt-bearing prey is now sable, which maintains permanent territories. Sometimes, spring camps are also re-used in the autumn.

Spring camps are usually used for a longer period of time. My informants preferred the southern sides of ridges—open, sunlit places in forested valleys that were protected from the wind. In these places, the snow thaws early and the first green grass appears. Reindeer that have been lost or have fallen behind seek out such places themselves by instinct.

The tradition of keeping reindeer corralled during the spring period seems to have appeared recently among Evenkis, and to have been borrowed from neighbouring peoples (Spevakovskii 1984; Turov 1990). The spring fences usually enclose a territory with a river and a bog [mar']. They often enclose pine groves and places with good reindeer forage. Evenkis have observed that reindeer prefer dark places during the fawning period. When there is no more forage, a new corral can be made and the camp is moved.

Previously, up to five or six families would gather together at the vesnovka ‘spring camp’. Today, almost every family that has enough reindeer travels separately. Occasionally, however, in spring and autumn several relatives and neighbours work together, staying in one or two lodges. Evenkis who have only a few reindeer gather together in summer. The [recent] changes in the social structure of nomadic alliances have not introduced any unexpected innovations to the organization of camps and their architecture.

Evenkis herd their reindeer out from the spring corrals and then travel to their summer camps at a time appropriate to natural biological rhythms. Instead of watching the calendar, they wait for the time when spruce trees show new growth. “The reindeer leave … in order to get out in the open, or to cooler places … before the merciless mosquitoes appear” (GAIO R538-1-183: 137).

[2.4.2 The summer travel cycle]

The summer travel cycle starts with the appearance of mosquitoes, in early to mid-June, and lasts a period of 2–2.5 months, until early to mid-August.

Summer itineraries are planned in advance, in spring. They would be discussed at a suglan, or during the time when families and neighbours lived together in a spring camp, or when they delivered fur [to traders]. Today, these discussions take place over portable radio transmitters, which are owned by all olennye ‘reindeer’ Evenkis, or during meetings in the villages to which Evenkis travel “by high water” in order to stock up on food at the end of May. They can also occur during chance meetings in the taiga. While living the settled life at spring camps, Evenki women cure hides. They say that the smell of the smoke reminds them of summer travel—“the happiest” period in the life of the Tungus people, as K. M. Ryehkov put it (1917: 55).
The spring–summer “transition period” was documented as follows by the Evenki A. V. [A. Ia. Veretnov] in his diary:

17–18.05 Sawed logs and built a labaz ‘storehouse’.
22.05 Finished the labaz.
23–25.05 Labazili veschi ‘put our things in the labaz’.
31.05 Nikolai ([nicknamed] Moriak ‘Sailor’) went [argishil] downriver to the mouth of the Khovorkit
1.06 [Weather is] hot. V.A.Ia., V.E.V., and Petro (Blake) left Lake Burkavul for Turguit.
2.06 Clear, hot. We got [only] as far as the Umotka [River].
3.06 Cool. Continued onward. At Eruldygno we got a small wild deer. Spent the night on the Beldo River.
4.06 Reached [the camp on the] Dagaldyn towards evening.
5.06 Overcast. Rained a bit in the afternoon. Petr (Blake) went home.
6.06 V.A.Ia. went to the neighbours’ bania ‘steam-bath’. The helicopter is flying to the exploration company camp [today].
7.06 Made a bridge [felled a large tree] over the Dagaldyn.
23.06 Made camp on the Diurpul River.
26.06 V.A.Ia. went hunting.
27.06 In the morning he got a moose on the Chepkitta River.
28.06 In the afternoon, Petro and Alesha arrived from Chukil.
30.06 A cool day. Went to fell trees for the zimov’ia ‘winter cabins’.
31.06 A cool, windy day. Went to debark the logs.

The summer travel cycle is focused on reindeer herding and fishing. Summer travel is governed to a great extent by the necessities of keeping and feeding the reindeer. The best summer pasture for reindeer in the taiga zone of Central Siberia is in wide-open alpine tundra on mountaintops, where the wind blows. There, in these high, open places, the strong winds drive off pesky blood-sucking insects. In summer, Evenkis travel close to the taiga rivers, and in the watersheds of major water systems and their tributaries. The riverbank growth consists of multitudinous willow-like shrubs and green grass—the main forage for reindeer during this period. Rivers also serve as barriers to the relatively frequent forest fires.

Summer travel routes follow an elliptical path. As with travel at other times of the year, summer moves are planned consciously and in advance, with respect to the general travel patterns of other seasons. Changes can be made enroute, depending on the circumstances. Planning itineraries, in addition to ordering living and working conditions, is considered to be an

§12 Reindeer cannot travel well in hot weather. —Ed.
important duty. It is usually assumed by the oldest and most experienced members of the family who, having retired from active work, can help young reindeer herders by suggesting alternatives. Young people who are often natural leaders, and who are preparing to gradually take the place of the older generation, implement these itineraries.

I documented the summer travel routes taken by several Evenki families in 1990 and 1991 [Fig. 23]. These were the interrelated families of L. P. Sychegir and E. P. Sychegir, as well as V. P. Kaplin, from two adjoining communities of Teteia Evenkis (Fig. 23–25). Each family’s summer travel cycle had the following features:

- L. P. Sychegir’s family (with 70–80 reindeer in their herd) covered 60–70 kilometres during the summer [Fig. 24];
- E. P. Sychegir’s family (60–70 reindeer) covered 50–60 kilometres [Fig. 24];
- V. P. Kaplin’s family (35–40 reindeer) covered 40–50 kilometres [Fig. 25];
- N. Kaplin’s family (25–30 reindeer) covered 30 kilometres;
- Two neighbouring groups of Teteia Evenkis with a few reindeer (totalling 20–30) covered a distance of 20–25 kilometres during the summer.

Among the reasons for the different lengths and times of these itineraries, the most important was the unfavourable sex/age demographic structure of Evenki families. There were few young people, and most Evenkis staying in the camps were unmarried or single people. Thus, they were forced to undertake tasks they would not have done before—women stockpiling wood for the smudges, or men cooking meals, milking reindeer, and even sewing [Fig. 26].

In recent years, major forest fires destroyed large areas of pasture and hunting grounds, including many traditional Evenki pastures. Furthermore, existing pastures became inaccessible to reindeer, because large areas of burned-out forest created gaps which prevented the herds from crossing over to them. These factors influenced the planning of travel itineraries.

The number of reindeer in the herd also played an important role. Families with many reindeer were more consistent in their choice of migratory routes, which were typically longer, even in summer.

Among the relatively new developments affecting the direction of nomadic routes and the time required to traverse them was industrial exploration in the taiga where Evenkis live. Connected with this were also the large numbers of incoming workers. These factors influenced the amplitude and the direction of travel, as well as the time spent on the move and in summer camps.

A travel route 50–60 kilometres long might have had 9–12 camps on it; a 40-kilometre route might have had 6–8. The average distance between
Figure 23. The territories used by contemporary nomadic Evenkis [1991].
Figure 24. The summer travel routes of two related Evenki families [1991].

Figure 25. The summer travel routes of an Evenki family and of two adjoining communities of Teteia Evenkis, 1988.
two summer camps is 5–6 kilometres, and the approximate stay in each is 8–10 days. I observed Evenki families staying at their summer camps for up to 20–25 days. Evenkis themselves explained that they like to stay in their “favourite” places. The length of their stay in summer camps depends on various factors. Camps are shifted for ecological and economic reasons, in order for the pastures to be able to recover, as well as to seek better places for herding and for fishing. Sanitary and hygienic reasons are closely connected with the ecological reasons. It is important that a campsite be given a chance to restore itself. Changing camp is also an important preventive measure against reindeer diseases. Finally, there are psychological reasons. When Evenkis stay at the same site for a long time, they start feeling uneasy and are heard to say, “Been here a long time,” or “I am fed up, sitting on the same spot.” It is interesting to note the Evenki belief that staying in one place for a long time can even cause one to fall ill: “An old belief dictates that it is quite dangerous and unfortunate for a man to live in one place…” (GAIO R293-1-774: 2).

In summer, Evenkis usually camp on high windy elevations, called borki [dim. of bor ‘pine grove’] by the local population. These are elevated places that are actually quite flat. They are covered with blown-in sand and differ from the surrounding taiga by the fact that pines grow there.

A summer camp should be situated next to a river, lake, or mossy bog locally called a tundra or mar’. Actually, the location is selected so that there are usually two sources of water nearby. Another obligatory condition for making camp in a given locality is enough dry pinewood to make smudges.

Summer travel routes follow river valleys (crossing ridges only to reach other valleys). Evenkis use [established] pack trails called khoko, khoktokon (derived from the Evenki khoko ‘road, path, trail’), and also diovimokit, diovani ‘summer’ (Tsintsius 1977: 331). The trails, also called argish, are laid

*Figure 26. Embroidering with glass beads in a summer camp, 1988.*
out in high dry places (on ridges and their southern slopes), in boggy river valleys, and “sometimes crossing a small watershed, they run along a river valley until they reach another pass” (GAIO R538-1-183: 49v). The network of such trails is quite extensive, and it changes according to the locations of viable campsites. Currently, Evenkis prefer to travel along the geologists’ profili ‘cut-lines’.

Evenkis can remember for a long time all the details and directions of routes they have taken once. Nevertheless, they still use some orienteering [putevye] signs. Evenkis living on the Lower Tunguska River use two kinds of markers—ilkan ‘notches’ on tree trunks, made at distances of 20–60 metres along taiga trails, and khuva ‘pointers’ made of sticks (Khoroshikh 1950). The latter were used when crossing rivers if there were no trees nearby. In addition, different kinds of information could be given in the form of simple charcoal drawings made on debarked tree trunks. The Ket-Sym Evenkis would indicate fording places with upturned small trees. They would also put pieces of moss on short treetops (Maksimova 1994).

Katanga Evenkis still use these signs. The ilkan ‘notches’ are made with the long-handled Evenki knife, the pal’ma, or with a hatchet, along the trail when making a winter camp, building fences, or moving in a given direction. If there are no trees and the area is flat, sticks are driven into the ground and moss is hung on them. As for drawings, not long ago the shaman Ia. P. Veretnov (now deceased) drew on the trees along a sledge path, in order to make it “easier to travel.”

In summer, Evenkis have to travel often. Usually, women do the packing. They gather all the reindeer together and pack the things (dishes, bedding, clothes, and utensils). Everything is packed tightly, so as not to make any noise on the saddle or attract attention. Also, a priority is to have the most important things “at hand” at the new place. All their things are packed into saddlebags made of a firm birch-bark structure (inmek) and covered [glued] with reindeer leg skins (kamys). Soft packs are made of rovduga ‘reindeer leather’, reindeer fur, or canvas [pota]. When the things are packed, they are loaded onto the reindeer. At this time, the men help the women. Men also take down the lodge-covers, which used to be a woman’s chore (Vasilevich 1969: 73, 166).

The last things to be taken from the campsites are the icons and the children (Lindgren 1935: 120). When the argish ‘caravan’ is ready to go, the lodge smudge, the smudge for reindeer, and the guluvun ‘campfire’ are all extinguished with water. If people expect to come back, they must leave some personal belongings behind. Departure is in the afternoon, when it is no longer hot and the reindeer have gathered at the smudge in the camp. Some reindeer are specially tethered to trees beforehand. The pack reindeer are organized into caravans of 8–10 animals (when there are 50–60 reindeer in the herd). Usually each member of the family leads one argish.

S. M. Shirokogoroff (1929: 35) observed that the Tunguses used certain commands to drive their reindeer: mot-mot! (Nerchinsk and Barguzin
Evenkis) and *modu* (Angarsk Evenkis) ‘gee-up, quicker, forward’, and short exclamations *o! o!* ‘go on’. According to my field notes, when an *argish* moves forward, a woman calls the young reindeer by shouting *kuu-uu! kuu-uu!* and the reindeer not carrying packs by calling *met'-met'-met!* She calls intermittently until she is sure that all the reindeer are following the caravan.

From my 1989 field diary:

**Wednesday 9 August. Stoibishche ‘mobile campsite’ of M.P.E. [Marina Petrovna Egorchenok]. Travelling will start in the afternoon at 5 or 6 p.m., because the reindeer only came back at midday. Packing took 3–3.5 hours.**

The things are packed into pack bags—*inmek* [covered with leg-skins], *inmekcha* (for kitchen implements; covered with canvas on a birch-bark base), and *pota*. There are four real Evenki *inmek* (two pairs). Some of the canvas bags date to the time when their owners worked for the exploration companies. Reindeer are usually loaded with up to 30 kg. About 22 reindeer were loaded. Nikanor led the first *argish*, with eight loaded reindeer tied to each other, followed by me riding his *uchak* ‘riding reindeer’, then Vasilii Pavlovich, then Marina Petrovna with a line of (6–8) reindeer, then Pet‘ka (8 reindeer). All Evenkis carry staffs in their right hands, to lean on in dangerous places. Reindeer are mounted on the right side from a stump or an elevation, with the help of the staff.

… Marina Petrovna rode the only *uchak* that can carry her (she weighs 103 kg). It can do so for two hours at the most. We rode exactly that amount of time. When we were leaving, M. P. cried *met'-met'-met'-met'* (calling the reindeer) and *kuu, kuu, kuu, kuu!* (calling the fawns) for half the way. They did begin to run, but started off at a distance. Later, the dams started calling to the fawns, and they ran beside them.

Usually, summer relocations last 1.5–2 hours, with approximately 5–10 kilometres covered during this time. If necessary, stops are made to adjust the packs that have shifted, to disentangle reindeer or dogs (which are tied to the reindeer saddles so they move beside the reindeer), or to wait for the freely running reindeer.

The destination of the *argish* is usually chosen in advance. A *diukcha* ‘lodge frame’, *khammin* ‘smudges’, and *delken* ‘storage platform’ are prepared ahead of time and waiting at the new campsite [Fig. 27]. Having arrived, the men first light the smudges, while the women free the reindeer of their loads. Then everybody sits at the fire and has freshly brewed tea before putting the canvas on the lodge frame. Only after having tea do they proceed to set up camp further.

In early and late summer, travel is elliptical and accelerated. Beginning mid-July, Evenkis move towards the territories for pelt hunting. “At this time, they assess the squirrel forage. The most experienced and competent hunters do a special reconnaissance trip for that purpose” (GAIO R538-1-183: 140). Today, people try to travel closer to their autumn camps by mid-August, since their winter hunting places are now consistent and permanent. At the autumn sites they have reindeer fences ready. Sometimes the reindeer are sent inside
the fences, depending on the phenology of the season: “The exact date is irrelevant: you notice when the larch needles start to fall—that is the start of the reindeer rut. Then it is time to corral them.” It can also depend on the time when mushrooms appear, and on other factors.

From my 1989 field diary:

05.08.89. At the stoibishche of M.P.E. [Marina Petrovna Egorchenok], Katia and I were cooking dinner on the campfire, when suddenly she made a sharp movement with her hand, trying to catch some kind of insect. It looked strange—oblong, with four or six legs and several pairs of little wings, black, red, and yellow in colour, even a fan-tail! Katia’s eyes shone with delight. Then she threw the insect into the fire. I asked her what it meant. Katia explained that it was an irkin—the Evenki name of the insect—which could be seen but rarely in August, and superstition held that it foretold getting a moose. If the irkin was big, the moose would be big. During dinner today we saw two of those insects, a big one and a small one. Thus we thought we might meet a moose with a calf [Fig. 28].

Sunday 13 August. Nikanor came back from hunting at 11 or 12 a.m. He got a moose with a calf, and a wood-grouse. He had walked the whole night, slept very little. The dogs had started barking around morning (he had taken two dogs). The dogs ran down the moose. He brought some of the meat with him, namely, some of the ribs, the kidneys, liver, and heart, and he left the rest at the hunting site, not making any storage for it, just covering it with twigs and moss.

It was obvious that everybody was pleased about the successful hunt, though nobody except the old man said it directly. In fact, it was just the other way
around; the pleasure was hidden behind a show of indifference. Only the old man did not mask his pleasure. Otherwise, here it seems to be customarily expressed in a reserved way. There you go, he said, God gave it, God gave it. And he described the dream he had had the night before, in which he dreamed about his stepmother, who asked him: “Where is Nikanorka?” The old man had answered her, “I don’t know, he left to go hunting somewhere.” It was a good sign, that dream—it meant he’d get something.

I plucked the wood-grouse, and Pet'ka finished this task. I collected the feathers and down in a basin (I was plucking in the lodge so the wind wouldn’t carry them away). Marina Petrovna put the down and feathers into a sack—saving them up. Incidentally, I sleep on a pillow stuffed with the feathers and down of wild ducks.

14 August. After breakfasting heartily, Nikanor and Pet'ka took 12 reindeer (2 of which were their riding reindeer) and went to get the meat of the moose that Nikanor got yesterday. M. P. [Marina Petrovna] told us that several years ago a moose had been killed in the same way, and when the people went to get it riding their reindeer, they saw that a bear had been there. Well, they killed that bear [later]. The tradition of *nimat* ‘ritual gifting’ is still maintained among Evenkis. “We practice *nimat,*” said M. P., “We do not take a bear’s hide for ourselves, we always give it to somebody else.” So, they gave the hide of this bear to Aleshka (her grandson), and the hide of another to Egor [Veretnov] (a relative in the same clan), and last year’s to [Khadakhanov] (or the judge [Nosov]?). The winter blankets belonging to Nikanor, Petia, and M. P. are made of bear hides given to them in this way. They want to share some of the moose meat from yesterday with Egor V., and tomorrow we are to ride with Petia to see him.
2.4.3 The autumn travel cycle

Autumn travel cycles, like the spring ones, entail a long period of staying in camp due to the necessity of keeping reindeer corralled during the mating period. It lasts from mid-August or early September until mid–late October.

The autumn travel cycle is connected primarily with hunting (to obtain meat and fur) and reindeer herding. Autumn herding tasks include making and repairing fences, monitoring the mating period, castration, cutting antlers, milking, and so on. Making fences is hard physical labour. The working day starts at 10 or 11 a.m. and lasts until 6 or 8 p.m., including very short breaks. They try to build the corrals as quickly as possible. If Evenkis decide to make a new fence or enlarge an old one, they usually go to their autumn camps earlier than usual. Thus, in 1990, E. P. Sychegir’s family went to their regular autumn camp on August 10, as they had to make a new fence for their reindeer, while M. and G. Galin’s families went to theirs at the beginning of September because they only had to repair the fence. During this time, women do their best to prepare especially nourishing food for the men. A high-calorie diet includes meat, the Evenki soup khirba (“They won’t be full unless they eat some soup”), and substantial breakfasts consisting of itykcha ukummi ‘reindeer cream’ or ukummi ‘milk’ with bread or blueberries. I should mention that one Evenki family has reindeer but does not corral them. This family has an unbalanced sex/age ratio, with only one male member and all other members being either adult females or children. Besides, they do not have many reindeer.

In addition to making fences and other tasks connected with reindeer herding, in autumn Evenkis focus on hunting and storing up moose meat, which is either dried (in early autumn) or kept frozen in a special cache called muko, constructed at the kill site. It is a period of gradual preparation for the autumn–winter pelt hunting season. Everything that is not needed for winter travel is taken to a spring storehouse after the first permanent snowfall. Coming back, everything necessary for winter is brought to the winter camp—reindeer sledges, etc. Along the way, fallen trees are removed from the “central” sledge trails, and sable traps are set.

From my 1989 field diary:

August 1989. Sania [Veretnov] left to go hunting today. Vaś'ka [Uvachan], who just arrived from Tura, called for him on the portable two-way radio… Egor did not tell him by radio that he had gone hunting, he just said: he’s left. Again the senior game warden [Konenkin] has been calling on the radio and demanding that everyone collect 100 kilos of berries each. They’re laughing in the lodge; they will not gather any berries. There is actually no time, because they have to: stockpile wood for the smudges and the guluvun; go hunting; fetch water; fence the corral; travel—itself a big deal; and dry meat in late summer. Last year, the promkhоз gave orders to Nikanor and Pet'ka to kill and deliver three moose. They killed and delivered.
The selection of locations for autumn camps depends on a number of factors, considered together. At the end of August, Evenkis leave the riverbank zones for the distant ridge tops, the territories between major river systems, or small taiga rivers and their tributaries, where they stay in their autumn camps. Autumn camps are situated close to spring and winter camps. That is why sometimes the spring and autumn camps are combined.

One of the main criteria for choosing autumn campsites is their proximity to places where ungulates have gathered regularly for the past few years (Turov 1990). Modern-day Evenkis, especially representatives of the older generation, know such places quite well.

The camps are usually situated near the special enclosed areas of the reindeer rut. The kure ‘autumn fence’ encloses a rather large area, with enough reindeer forage and a source of water for them (bog or river). It is important to find places that are rich in reindeer moss (lavikta) and horsetail (khivokta). A lot of horsetail can be found in fir groves and at the top of scree slopes. Evenkis say that reindeer need them during the mating period.

The average length of a kure is from 2 kilometres up to 5–7 kilometres. It is repaired or enlarged every year. After the area inside a fence is used for one or two years (in rare cases, for more than two years), the urke ‘gates’ are closed to prevent reindeer getting in until the reindeer moss is restored. Evenkis consider that such areas cannot be used for at least 4–5 years, and only “if the reindeer moss renews itself.” They also leave the special gateway-traps (khonngo) in the reindeer fence, through which reindeer can get inside but cannot get out.

Autumn campsites are changed regularly, depending on a complex series of conditions. At present, locations are changed once in 4–6 years, as a rule. I recorded an instance of the use of an autumn camp for four years running, with the corralled areas being enlarged every year (Fig. 29). The main requirements in the selection of locations for autumn camps are enough standing pine and larch deadwood, and a source of water.

[2.4.4 The winter travel cycle]

The winter travel cycle starts on 15–25 October and lasts until late February. It is primarily oriented towards the sable and squirrel hunt. Previously, they would hunt mainly squirrel. The winter cycle is divided into two periods—before the New Year and after it. The first is marked by two Christian holidays that happen to overlap with the Evenki calendar: Pokrov ‘Feast of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin’ on 14 October, and St. Nicholas Day on 19 December, which was sometimes even called the “traditional Tungus winter holiday” (GAIO R538-1-183: 139). During this first period, the most intensive long-distance hunting and travelling are done at the beginning of winter, when there is little snow and it is possible to hunt with dogs in mountainous places and at the sources of shallow rivers. Usually the hunt starts in a location close to the source of a river. One of my informants said:
“We live like the animals, in the high places [river headwaters] at this time.” At the end of the winter season, they go moose hunting and spend the spring period near bigger rivers, at the mouths of their tributaries.

The beginning of the winter travel season—or, for those Evenkis who have reindeer, the pelt hunting season—also depends on the end of the reindeer rut, which usually occurs in mid to late October. It is interesting that Evenkis specially select stags as breeding deer that are known to finish the rut early (in combination with other necessary qualities such as colouring, appearance, and behaviour). The travel of Evenkis during this period is governed more by the needs of reindeer herding than by the needs of the pelt hunting. The best places for reindeer in winter are considered to be those where there is little snow and a lot of reindeer moss.

The first hunting trips start from the location of the autumn camp. As soon as the reindeer mating period is over and the land is covered with snow, the animals are let out of the corrals and the winter pasturing cycle begins. In winter, reindeer roam freely, but as they are fed regularly with salt, which is given to them in special troughs [koryta], they do not go far from the winter camps. If they do, they can be tracked.

The first hunting season is usually the most productive, as the snow is not yet deep, the frost is not severe, and one can hunt with dogs. At present, Evenkis practice a combination of hunting with dogs and rifles and trapping (“passive” hunting). Traps are usually set along the sledge trails, as well as along special tracks, off the main trails, that usually follow frozen rivers or
other water bodies. Such hunting trails are called *putiki* [dim. of *put’* ‘path’]; they can be three, five or even ten kilometres long.

Winter travel occurs within regular permanent hunting territories. Winter routes are stable and connected to the “central” Evenki *chanke* ‘sledge trails’ that are close to the autumn, spring, and winter camps. Every family or community takes care of their separate trails. The *zimov’ia* ‘winter camps’ along the sledge trails almost all have izbas now, instead of lodges. A single Evenki family can have any number of winter camps, usually from two to five. The tradition of making log cabins along the winter track was borrowed from Russian hunters. This is a relatively new element in the way Evenkis order their environment. With the winter camps, the ground does not have to be prepared for lodges beforehand, so the whole family or travelling group can move together in winter. They stay at one *zimov’e* from three to ten days, until that section of the taiga around the camp has been entirely explored, and the traps checked. Then they move to the next camp, usually 10–15 kilometres away. If the distance is too far, they can put up a lodge [on the way]. They use sledges to move, with one allotted to each family member for riding, and several for freight. L. P. Sychegir’s family goes hunting with 15–16 sledges. During a hunting season, Evenkis can cross the same spots along the same route several times (even ten or more times, depending on the size of the hunting ground).

While the men hunt around the winter cabins, the women stay in, doing the household chores, removing and preparing skins, and cooking. Young hunters go farther from the camp and explore larger and more distant territories. Old hunters and women hunt closer to the camp.

In mid and late December, Evenkis who have reindeer travel to town to sell fur and to replenish food supplies. Meanwhile, part of the family stays in the winter camp—usually their base camp, which is located on the border of their hunting territory. The base camp is usually situated close to a winter vehicle road or a cut-line, at a place that has good trapping areas and reindeer pasture, and yet is easily accessible.

The second season of pelt hunting starts after the New Year, in mid-January, and lasts until late February. It is less intensive, because the severe frost and deep snow do not permit much travel. At the end of the season, all traps are “lowered” [closed] and left until next season. In March, Evenkis usually live a settled life in their winter camps, hunting ungulates, repairing reindeer harnesses and hunting equipment, making clothes, tanning hides, and doing various kinds of building work.

### 2.5 A hunter’s diary

Many Russian settlers and Evenkis keep diaries when out hunting. Excerpts of G.G.F.’s [Gennadii Gavrilovich Farkov’s] diary from the 1983, 1984, 1985, and 1986 hunting seasons are given below. He is one of Katanga’s
Russian settlers. His maternal great-grandmother was an Evenki, his wife is an Evenki, and his children are Evenkis, married to Evenkis. Farkov’s hunting partner was the Evenki Sidor [Kharbo]. He set traps for hunting [fur-bearers] and used reindeer as a means of transportation. Farkov had about five reindeer, which were pastured in summer by his Evenki relatives. I should say that in comparison with Russians, Evenkis prefer hunting with dogs to setting traps, and thus they usually set far fewer traps [than in this diary]. Moreover, hunting muskrats does not play such an important role in Evenki life as it does for Russian hunters. Nonetheless, this diary is valuable both as an interesting sample of a hunter’s writing style and as a first-hand account of what it is like to hunt for pelts in this region of Siberia.\footnote{This English translation has been edited to preserve the format and colloquial style of the original Russian. Some abbreviated words are given in full, e.g., ond. [ondatrov] as ‘muskrats’. While the original text is sparsely punctuated, complete sentences have been created in the translation to make it readable. In the original text, the daily entries alternate between the first person singular and first person plural. It seems that on some days the diarist-hunter was alone, and on others he was working with a partner, but the movements of the partner are not always documented. In the original text, the author added footnotes to clarify the meaning of some terms. The translations of words from dialect to standard Russian have simply been incorporated into the English text and are not included as footnotes. The second type of footnote provides direct quotes taken from the hunter as he read the diary together with the author and she queried him about some details. These have been retained and are distinguished by their enclosure in quotation marks. —Ed.}

1983 [muskrat hunting season]. Arrived at Khandiuk [camp] on 2 September 1983 at 8 p.m. from Teteia. Spent the night with Lazar and Sania Zabrodin. It rained all night.

3 Sept., Sat. Did some work around the camp, fished, set nets.

4.09, Sun. Fishing… 4 guys working for the ekspeditsia ‘exploration company’ came by on two motorboats. I got 8 ducks.

5.09, Mon. Albert came by [on his way] to Erbogachen. I set traps ([at] Lake Turundukit). Set 35 [leg-hold] traps, 2 mor'dy ‘woven wooden fish traps’, and two nets for karas ‘crucian carp’. Rain broke out in the evening and continued all night. The water [on the river] is rising. I’m living alone. The children [back at the village] have still not been taken to Erbogachen to go to school (it’s really outrageous—a total mess).


I’ve set 51 traps [and another] 4 at the kur’ia ‘bend in the creek’. Total 55 traps.

7 Sept., Wed. I lifted the Turundukit lot. Caught 16 muskrats [and] 4 on the creek; total 20. Set 15 traps on the Lower Chuchulma pond [ozerko] and 5 on the creek. Managed to salt 50 kg [of fish] in the barrel. Up to my ears in work from morning till night.
8.09., Thurs. Set 29 traps at the pond near the Chuchulma and 15 along the river; 10 at the bend; [total] 54. Caught 9 muskrats. Silantii came by boat to visit [and] Petrovna came from Teteia. The Veterok outboard motor broke down. The rings were cracked and the piston broke.

9.09, Fri. Set 70 traps in 4 places upriver and at the pond. Set 2 nets for karas' [and caught] 50. Caught 15 muskrats in 8–9 [traps]. Clear weather continues. Up the Teteia and at the lake I picked up 64 muskrats + 13 = 77.

10.09, Sat. Set 60 traps on the Lower Chuchulma and 2 nets for karas'.

11.09, Sun. Set 50, caught 17 muskrats.

12.09., Mon. Set 50.

13.09., Tue. My birthday. I went to Teteia.

14.09 Checked the traps at the Chuchulma. Caught 20 at the river and the lake. Set 15 nets each at the river and the lake.

On 16.09 caught 5 muskrats at the lake and 14 at the river. Total 19.

Kupriian arrived on the 16th. I lifted the traps from the lake and set 20 traps at the river.

On 17.09 caught 15. In total downriver and at the lake I picked up 71 muskrats. As of 17 Sept. a total of 150 muskrats.

18, Sun. Caught 5. Set traps at Lake Khandiuk and at the river. 68 traps.

19.09 Mon. Caught 15 at the lake, and 3 in the creek. Total as of 19.09—18. The Zabrodin boys came by [on their way] to Teteia. I set traps at the Khandiuk—68 traps; total as of 19.09—170. Alik came by [on his way] to Erbogachen.

20.09 caught 24 muskrats; I reset 70 traps. Kesha arrived with Shura [and] stayed the night. They went home on the 21st (sokhatili ‘hunted moose’).

Caught 18 muskrats. Total as of 21.09—212.

21.09 I reset 50 traps at Lake Khandiuk.

…

1984/1985 [furs hunting season]

We departed Teteia on 20 October 1984 and arrived at the [camp on the] Dulisma.

27.10, Sat. –

28, Sun. Dnevali ‘we worked in camp’. The snow was dumped knee-deep. Wet snow’s still falling. I set 7 traps.

29. Mon. Dnevka ‘day in camp’. Set 16 traps; got 1 sable, 1 squirrel. As of 29 Oct.—23 traps. Weather is warm. Snow’s melting.

30, Tue. Worked in camp, drank in honour of my beloved izbushka [little cabin on the] Dulisma.

31, Wed. Took some “hair of the dog,” dniuem ‘working in camp’.

Petrovna is the narrator’s wife. The use of the patronymic shows respect, especially in rural areas. —Ed.

Sidor travelled [to] Khakhtaikhta to get his things. I went hunting, got one sable and one squirrel.

2.11, Fri. Traveled [along the] Dulisma. Set 5 traps, total of 28; got 1 sable, 1 squirrel.


Sidor returned. He got 2 sables, 2 squirrels, 1 wood-grouse. I set 3 traps, total 32 traps.

4.11, Sun. Went hunting, set two traps—total 34. Got a sable.

5.11, Mon. Traveled to break a trail to the kaltus ‘hummocky bog’ towards the Little Erema [River], 9 km away. Set 7 traps, total 37. The frost has set in.

…


2. Travelled to Erbogachen to fetch Petrovna. [At a cabin on the] Purul’ma [river] I tied one on. I stayed a week and almost died [“left my life’’] in Purul’ma. Sidor came to Purul’ma, we lost each other [for some time]. We made it to Teteia on 14 February and I took sick. I caught a bad chill on the way. I lay in bed because of severe radiculitis [inflammation of a spinal nerve].

15–22 – everybody stayed in.

23 – Soviet Army Day


25, 26 We travelled to Kopa. Stayed the night.

27.02 – We returned to Dulisma [camp] at 4 p.m.

28.02 We worked in camp. I closed [zapuskal] the traps. Caught one sable on the Dulisma River.

1 March 1985 Friday. Moved [camp from] Dulisma–Little Erema. Closed 40 traps. Didn’t catch a single sable. There are sables around, but they won’t go into the snares.

2.03, Sat. We worked in camp, I closed traps up the Erema river. A fox dug up all the snares. Some were empty. I had 40 traps but not a single sable. But one trap worked excellently, a big fox got into it. Petrovna will have a shapka ‘fur hat’. Travelled to the Uksa, closed 15 traps. All for naught. No sables on the ridge.

3.03, Sun. Moved [camp from] Erema–Dulisma. On the way we dismantled the lodge, and stashed [zalabazili] the stove with the pipes, shovel, and pail for the dogs on the storage platform. A strong wind was blowing. At Dulisma we stashed the flour, a case of macaroni, 10 kg sugar,
22 kg salt, 4 kg vegetable oil, 2 sacks wheat [flour], a sack of grade-A [flour], traps, thick snares, 30 litres kerosene, 2 tins dry milk, 2 bricks [loose] tea, 20 packets of teabags.

As for dishes, [next time bring] a kettle and a bucket, no other dishes needed. It’s all there. 5 stoves with pipes, a large moose skin, 300 tozovka [0.22] cartridges; flannel trousers–plain trousers, a shapka, mittens, scissors, a lamp, three panes of glass, a handsaw.

... 

1985/86 [fur hunting season]

We departed Teteia on 20 October 1985. Travelled as far as Zabrodin’s [camp] and stayed the night 5 km [away].

21.10 Mon. We travelled as far as Khaktaikhta.

22.10 Tue. We travelled as far as the drilling rig. I set one trap.

23.10 Wed. We travelled to Dulisma. On the way, I set 5 traps.


25.10, Fri. Warm weather, snowy. Everything’s melting. Set 16 traps while travelling Dulisma to Little Erema = total 38 traps. No sable. There were no berries [this season]. The place is barren.


27.10 Sun. Warm weather, wet snow falling since yesterday. Set 6 traps, total 51 traps. Killed one squirrel [belka-teteria].

28.10, Mon. Weather is fine, went and laid [razbil] a new trap line. Set 5 traps, total 56 + 1 = 57. Caught one sable, got three squirrels.

29.10, Tue. Travelled along the cut-line, set three traps there, total—60 traps. Got one sable, Sidor left for Zakhar’s place.

30.10, Wed. Damka got caught in a trap. Had to go 5 km to get her.9 Killed one squirrel, 3 hazel-grouse. The weather was fine. Built a labazok ‘small storehouse’ near the winter camp.

31.10, Thurs. Moved [camp from] Dulisma–Little Erema. Set up a lodge 4 km from the Erema. The weather was warm with a wet, heavy snowfall. I set 6 traps on the way—total 66 traps.

[Greetings] on the eve of 1 November 1985, Friday.

Walked to the Little Erema [River]. Set 14 traps, total—80 traps. Got 8 squirrels, 1 hazel-grouse. The weather is warm and the snow is melting.

2.11, Sat. Travelled to the Little Erema zimov’e ‘winter cabin’.10 Found

9 “The dog Damka was a puppy, she found a sable and started barking. Then she got caught in a trap. Because of her, we spent the whole day there [dnevali]. [On such days] we usually put up a tent or lodge, sometimes we stay at the winter cabin.”

10 “There were three winter camps. One was destroyed by fire. Now there are two left. Until November it’s warm [enough] in the tent. In December–January [we stay] in the winter cabin. The distance to the first winter cabin is 60 km.”
two bichi\(^\text{11}\) ‘sport hunters’ at the winter cabin, went back to the baza ‘base camp’. Set 3 traps, total 83. My uchak ‘riding reindeer’ hurt its eye.

3.11, Sun. The day is clear. The fine weather continues. Tol’ko sobolit’ ‘perfect for hunting sable’. I travelled to set traps—got as far as the Little Erema and by the lake it hit me. I had forgotten the privada ‘bait for sable and muskrat traps’, and had to come back. Went belochit’ ‘hunting squirrel [belka]’ along the Erema. I got 8 squirrels, set up 1 trap, total 84.

4.11, Mon. I travelled to Uksokh to set traps. 14 traps, total—98. Killed one sable, one squirrel. [Another] sable got caught in a snare but the dogs ate it. Wet snow fell all day.


6.11, Wednesday. Not a great day. It’s been snowing hard all day. The wind has been blowing all day. Lots of snow fell—30 cm. Checked the traps. Not a one caught. No sables.

[Greetings] with tomorrow’s [October Revolution holiday]
7 November 1985.

We travelled to the drilling rig, to their bania ‘steam-bath’. Had a thorough wash. There were three lads at the rig. All the others had flown to the town of Ust'-Kut.

8.11, Fri. We travelled back to Dulisma [camp]. On the way I got one sable, in the hollow of a tree-trunk, set two traps, total—102 traps.


10.11, Sun. Wet snow fell the whole day. The temperature is 0. Found no sable tracks. Got 8 squirrels and a hazel-grouse. Set 1 trap, total 105.

11.11, Mon. Today is clear but wet; 4°C below zero.\(^\text{12}\) I went and checked the putiki.\(^\text{13}\) I didn’t catch any sable—[although] they had approached the trap—then went away. Got 8 squirrels, one hazel-grouse. Set 3 traps, total—108.

12.11, Tue. Moved [camp from] Dulisma–Erema. Weather is warm, 10 degrees below zero. Not a single sable caught on the way. They won’t approach the snares. They’re not hungry.

13.11, Wednesday. Dniuem ‘We spent the day around the camp’. The weather is fine and clear. I went up the Erema to check the traps. There are

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\(^{11}\) “The bichi hunt until 20 November. Then they [only] go along the cut-lines. All summer they kill sable. All summer they stayed at the winter cabin.” [bich is an acronym for byvshii intelligentyi chelovek ‘formerly educated person who now has lost social status’—Ed.]

\(^{12}\) The temperature is broadcast over the radio by the Hydrometeorological Centre.

\(^{13}\) “[When you’re] clearing a trail [you should try to make] side trails. [Do this] for 5–6 km from the mouth of a river, [or maybe as much as] 10. Along the putiki ‘trap-lines’, set traps beside the path every 300–500 m, sometimes every 1 km. Set traps as well at the spots where a wolf has killed a moose.”
sables around, but none was caught. Caught one ermine, got 4 squirrels. Set 4 traps, total—112.

14.11, Thurs. Dniuem, travelled to the Uksonok [river] to check traps. The sable won’t approach the traps. On the way I set 6 traps, total—118.

27.11, Thurs. Checked the traps up to the Ukson and up the Erema. 1 sable got caught on a side trail [putik] at the lake. There were none along the Erema. I killed one squirrel, the weather was clear.

29.11, Fri. Moved [camp from] Erema–Dulisma. In the morning I took the reindeer team and checked the traps 5–6 km away. I caught 1 sable, killed 4 squirrels. Returned at 2 p.m. We set out for Dulisma [camp] at 3. Arrived 5 or 6 p.m. The weather was clear, around 45°C below zero. On the way [I placed] snares for hares. There are 4 snares along the way.

30.11, Sat. Spent the day in camp and set 10 snares and 1 trap. Total 131. The cold weather has set in.

[Greetings] with the coming first of December, the first winter month.


3.12, Tue. Dneval ‘worked at the camp’.

4.12, Wed. I hauled wood. Brought in 6 sledges. I found the reindeer at 1 p.m. It’s freezing –49°C.

5.12, Thur. Dneval. I brought in three [more] sledges of wood. It warmed up to –30°C.

6.12, Fri. We travelled to Kulemoshny’s [cabin] and stayed the night. It was late, 6 p.m.

7.12, Sat. We travelled as far as the Khandiuk [camp]. Along the way I set 7 snares, 2 traps and cut one on the way. 4+2=6 [on the] Khandiuk. Caught 2 sables, 2 ermine, killed 6 squirrels.

8.12, Sun. Dneval. I walked to check on the reindeer and found them in the tundra. I herded them to the trough, left them, made a fire [for them]. On the way I killed two squirrels, set 4 traps 2 snares along the way. Total of 10 traps on the Khandiuk. With Petrovna I placed a net below the ice [zanyrilt]. Caught 2 pike for the frypan.

9.12, Mon. Dneval. Went downriver to hunt squirrels [belochit']. Got 12 squirrels. [Set] 8 traps + 3 traps for fox; total 16. The weather was clear. The male dog got caught in a trap. He had to spend the night [there].

10.12, Tues. We arrived at the Teteia [camp] from Khandiuk [camp] late, at 6 p.m. We had started out at 3 o’clock. On the way I set 1 trap. Caught 3 hares. Total 17 traps at Khandiuk.

11.12, Wed. Dneval ‘Spent the day’ in camp.
12.12, Thurs. We arrived at the Khakhtaikhta [camp] from Teteia at 6 p.m. I set two traps on the way. A sable stole a hare [from a trap]. Total 137 traps.

13.12, Fri. We arrived from Khakhtaikhta at 4 p.m. On the way caught 1 sable, 3 hares. I set two traps, total—139. Severe cold set in.


17.12, Tue. Moved [camp from] Erema–Dulisma. Travelled up the Erema; caught 1 sable and a hare on the way.

18.12, Wed. Dnevali about the camp. Caught one sable, I set one trap, total 141 traps.


21.12, Sat. I am working about the camp, took sick, the weather is good, –30°C.

22.12, Sun. I hauled wood and hung about the cabin.

23.12 Mon. I worked, spoke with Erbogachen on the two-way radio. Fixed the door and gates.

24.12 Tue. Arrived at Khandiuk [camp] at 6 p.m. On the way caught one sable, one hare.

25.12, Wed. Dneval, walked to check traps, 1 sable caught at the Lower Chuchuma [River]. The fox is very cunning [i.e., taking bait without getting caught]. Few sables, no squirrels along the Teteia.

26.12, Thurs. Dneval, walked to check on the reindeer; set 2 traps on the way, total 19 [at] the Khandiuk [camp].

27.12, Fri. Dneval about the camp. We stockpiled wood. 18 traps for sable, 4 traps for fox, total 22 traps.

28.12, Sat. We arrived from Khandiuk [camp], I set 1 trap on the way.

29.12, Sun. 30.12, Mon. 31 Looked for the reindeer. I herded them to my woodpile and then let them go. It’s –53°C.

2.1, Thurs. Travelled from Teteia to Khakhtaikhta, late at 6 p.m. –50°C.

3.1, Fri. Travelled from Khakhtaikhta to Dulisma at 3 p.m.—not a single sable caught on the way. It’s cold –50°C.

4.1, Sat. Dneval, checked the traps, not a single sable caught, no sables. Wind and blowing snow. In the morning it was –42°C.

5.1, Sun. Moved [camp from] Dulisma–Erema. Arrived at 3 p.m. The weather is warm, no sables, I am all alone here with a [favourite] reindeer.

6.1, Mon. Checked the traps up to the Uksokon and along the Erema River. Caught not a single sable, there are very few sables. At 3 p.m. I left for the Dulisma [camp]. Arrived at five o’clock. –38°C.

7.1, Tue. Moved [camp from] Dulisma–Khakhtaikhta. Arrived at 3 p.m. Stayed the night. –45°C. The trip was a complete waste of time, didn’t catch a single sable.

8.1, Wed. Arrived in Teteia, –40°C.


10–11–12.1 The schoolchildren have still not been taken to school. No helicopters in Erbogachen.

13–14–15.1 [Still] no helicopters at home. The weather is warm, –40°C.

16.1 The helicopter arrived, Petrovna went [with the children to Erbogachen].

17–25.1 I looked for reindeer. On the 18th day, found the reindeer.

26–28.1 Arrived at Khandiuk [camp] at 4 p.m. –41°C.

29.1, Tue. Dneval, walked [to] the Lower Guruma [River], caught a fox and an ermine. Got two squirrels, set a net.

30 January 1986, Wednesday. Dneval at Khandiuk [camp]. Catching a few fish. Walked to check out the traps, no sable caught, not a single sable. Skinned a fox.

31.1, Thurs. Dneval about the camp. Worked, cut 2 fox traps at Lake Khandiuk. Fishing is poor, the temperature is about –40°C, –50°C.

[Greetings] with tomorrow’s 1st of the month of February.

Saturday. Travelled to Teteia. Petrovna flew in from Erbogachen with Ania.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Fri. We travelled out, spent the night, arrived.

8.2 Sat. We arrived at the Dulisma [camp], I closed and took down the traps. Didn’t catch a single sable. All the traps were covered [with snow] and there were no sables.

9.2, Sun. Dneval, cut three traps,14 weather is fine.

10.2, Mon. Dnevali, I fell ill.

11 “On 14 February I hung up all the traps. The traps remain out there all year. So that they don’t rust, I coat them with a snake solution or vegetable oil.”
11.2, Tue. Moved to the Erema [camp]—on the way [I caught] 3 sables.
12.2, Wed. Checked the traps towards K. and up the Erema for 5 km and away from it. Caught 5 sables.
13.2, Thurs. We arrived at Dulisma [camp].
14.2, Fri. Checked the traps. Caught 1 sable in all of January.
Hunted without a dog the whole season.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} “Because it had been shot dead.”
Chapter 3. Mobile architecture:  
A static way of ordering the environment

_The tongusy do not have any houses or other buildings, as they are a nomadic people._  
—I. I. Mainov [1898]

Evenkis maintain an artificial, built environment made up of a series of household, economic/productive, religious, and mortuary structures, both within mobile settlements and outside them. Through them, their territory is explored and “made like home” [odomashnennost’]. This complex has become considerably more diverse in the period I examine in this book. Evenki camps in the forest have zimov’ia ‘winter log cabins’, bani ‘steam-baths’, snowmobile garages, larger networks of reindeer corrals, and modern racks for curing meat. All of these buildings testify to changes in the mobile use of the environment. Nomadism has become more “settled,” and confined within smaller territories.

### 3.1 The structure of an Evenki stoibishche ‘mobile camp’

Having analyzed the arrangements of Evenki camps, I concluded that each specific type of camp consists of certain dwellings and outbuildings. It is as if the structures are taken from a standard set and are placed within a given space. This set also determines the length of time spent at the camp, and its functional type. It, in turn, reflects natural-climatic conditions, and—to a greater extent—the composition of the nomadic group, including the number of people. The territory of summer camps is about 50 × 50 metres. Summer camps are of a standard set and layout. One can also detect a certain logic in the organization of the space inside the camp. In each case, however, there are differences depending on the area it occupies, the composition of the mobile group, and individual creativity. The buildings are placed deliberately, according to a design that takes on the form of a broadened cone, at the very top of which sits the lodge (Fig. 30, 31).

Usually there are no structures placed behind a lodge. Summer camps include the following structures: the _diu_ ‘lodge’ (or sometimes an ordinary _palatka_ ‘canvas tent’), a _delken_ ‘storage platform’ (one or two, but rarely more), _ummevun_ ‘flooring’ for storage of saddles, packs, and harnesses, _lokovun_ ‘rods’, _khivek_ ‘pegs’, the _guluvun_ ‘campfire’, _khammin_ ‘smudges’, and the _in_ ‘pit-cellar’ for keeping perishable goods (Fig. 32–37).

These structures are arranged in the following pattern: the campfire is placed some 10–20 metres away from the entrance to the lodge; the smudges are placed opposite to the lodge entrance at a distance of approximately 15–20
Figure 30. Summer camp, 1981.

Figure 31. Summer camp, 1989.
1.8 Lodges (*diu*)
1a Flooring for storage of packs
and saddles (*ummevun*)
2, 6 Temporary storage platforms for the
storage of various items (*delken*)
3, 11 Hanging rods (*lokoun*)
4, 5, 10 Places for feeding reindeer salt
6 Small storage platform
(*delkekon*) for water
7, 9, 12 Fences (*kurekan*)
:: Smudges

Figure 32. Layout of the summer camp of T. A. Zabrodina and L. I. Kaplina,

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1 Lodge (*diu*)
2 Flooring for storage of packs
and saddles (*ummevun*)
3 Storage platform (*delken*)
4 Campfire (*guluvun*)
5 Smudges
X Dog tethers

Figure 33. Layout of the summer camp of Egor Veretnov, 1989.
Figure 34. Layout of the short-term summer camp of Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin, August 1989.

Figure 35. Layout of the summer camp of Nikolai Ivanovich Kaplin.
Figure 36. Layout of the summer camp of Mitrofan Nikolaevich Sychevir, July 1988.

Figure 37. Layout of the summer camp of Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin, August 1989.
metres, under a natural canopy made by trees; the caches are a small distance from the campfire and the lodge; the flooring is placed to the right and/or left of the entrance to the lodge, along the outside walls; the hanging rods are set up in suitable places across the whole camp territory, often next to the flooring, caches, and campfire; and the pegs are fixed in the same way. Convenience determines this layout, as well as the layout of all other structures in camps. Water is not far from the camp. Evenkis are always mindful of water quality, and attend to it scrupulously. Usually there are two water sources—a spring for drinking water and a river or lake.

Autumn camps are of approximately the same size as summer ones, but their form is a little different—with their edges only slightly rounded, producing a form closer to a square [Fig. 38].

A kurekan ‘small reindeer fence’ prevents reindeer from coming too close to the living quarters and storage structures at the autumn camp. In general, the layout of autumn camps is similar to that of spring ones. The following structures are found in autumn camps: a diu ‘lodge’ or golomo ‘sod hut’, or occasionally an ordinary canvas tent; a delken ‘storage platform’, often 2-tiered; the guluvun ‘campfire’, either of an ordinary [open] design or under a roof; lokovun ‘rods’; khivek ‘pegs’; and as many as 2–3 khammin ‘smudges’. The layout of the structures in autumn camps is regulated by the rules of comfort and safety. The campfire is some 12–15 metres away from the entrance to the lodge. The lokovun are located throughout the territory of an autumn camp, most importantly near the campfire and cache. The delken are placed closer to the lodge, or a little farther from it, up to 8–10 metres

Figure 38. Autumn camp, 1991. Photo by M.G. Turov.
away from the lodge entrance. One of the *delken* can be placed outside the *kurekan*. The dogs are tied to the fence, all along the perimeter inside it (Fig. 39, 40).

Figure 39. Layout of autumn camp of Lazar Petrovich Sychevich, October 1991.

Figure 40. Layout of autumn camp of Ekaterina Petrovna Sychevich, 1990.
Permanent winter camps include the following structures: a rectangular wooden house (a small izba or **golomo**), a **delken** ‘storage platform’ (sometimes with a roof made of bark), a garage (like a **muko** ‘surface cache’) for Buran snowmobiles, barrels for storing fuel, salt troughs for the reindeer (three or more blocks for a herd of 50–60 reindeer), and a **dolgan** ‘shed’ and/or **abdun** ‘shelter for dogs’. Winter camps occupy a much bigger area than other types of camps, and they are encircled by a **kure** ‘reindeer fence’. The maximum size of a winter camp is $90 \times 100$ metres [approx. 9,000 sq. m]. The **zimov'e** ‘winter cabin’ is at the centre of the camp. Wood is stacked conveniently near the **zimov'e** and the **bania** ‘steam-bath’, and in other suitable places (Fig. 41). There are **urke** ‘gateways’ for reindeer in the fence encircling the camp territory, and salt troughs located inside the fence. The garage for snowmobiles or barrels with petrol is placed at the entrance to the camp outside the **kure**, close to the sledge trail.

![Winter camp, 1990.](image)

The interior of structure of a spring camp is similar to that of the autumn ones. An important difference concerns its special layout connected with the activities during this season. The specific set of structures includes a **diu** ‘lodge’, a **delken** ‘storage platform’ (usually two), the **guluvun** ‘campfire’, **lokovun** ‘rods’, **khivek** ‘pegs’, special devices for making skis and sledges, a **noku** ‘storehouse on posts’, and sometimes an **utuvak** ‘shed for smoking hides’ [Russ. **dymokur**]. Sometimes spring camps can have fences surrounding them entirely. The layout of these structures does not differ from that of autumn camps (Fig. 42–44).
Figure 42. Layout of the spring camp of Mitrofan Nikolaevich Sychegir, 1988.

Figure 43. Layout of the spring camp of Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin near Dagaldyn Lake, 1989.
3.2 Dwellings

3.2.1 The lodge

The *diu* ‘conical lodge’ [Russ. *chum*] has been the most widely used portable dwelling of the peoples of the North. It is described in detail in the ethnographic literature. A. A. Popov developed a detailed classification and typology based on two criteria—the way the supporting poles are connected, and the way the hearth hook is affixed. He singled out five types of lodges according to these criteria: Samoyed, Ket, southern Turkic, Tuva, and Tungus (Popov 1961). The Tungus lodge is distinctive for having 2–3–4 main lodge poles, set against each other at their ends or intertwined by means of twigs specially left at the crown, or the poles tied together or interwoven. Another marker is having the hearth hook fastened to a single horizontal pole, which is connected both with the lodge poles and to a special pole inside the lodge. The Tungus lodge is unique for the types of material used to cover it, as well as the ways they are made. [According to this classification,] Tungus lodges are closest to the Altai and Tuva lodges (Vasilevich 1969: 109–10). N. N. Gutsol
(1989: 17) noted that Evenkis living in the taiga, other peoples living along the Amur River, and the Athapaskan people living in Alaska and Canada—whose economic activities were nearly identical—had no standard rules for building the main structure and cutting the lodge-covers, nor for the materials they were made of or the ways they were fastened. All of these observations were made from sources dating to the 19th and early 20th centuries.

[At the time of my research,] there were no significant changes in the construction of the lodges, although I noticed some minor changes, as follows. The size of a diu lodge depended on the number of family members living in it, and was defined by the size of its base and the number of lodge poles. The diameter of the [circular] base of a lodge was about 4–6 metres. The number of lodge poles was not standardized, and could vary from 20 to 36 or even more. In erecting a lodge, Katanga Evenkis connected three main lodge poles, which were called khona and turgu. The smoke hole was also called khona. The poles were tied together with willow twigs, rope, or wire.

G. M. Vasilevich (1969: 110) argued that the Evenki tradition of tying the three main lodge poles together originated under Iakut influence. It is true that one frequently encounters this method in areas where Evenkis live close to Iakuts (Nikolaev 1964: 106; Gurvich 1977). Katanga Evenkis also had, and still use, other ways of fastening the main poles of a lodge. The method called v suchok ‘knotting’ (or v razvilku ‘forking’), describes when two poles are crossed and a third one is set against them. My informants specially emphasized that if a lodge is set up for a short period of time, “hurriedly,” they use the forking method. However, when a lodge is erected for a long period of time, the poles are always tied together.

In the ethnographic literature, there is a reference to a late 19th or early 20th-century Evenki practice of taking the three main poles from an old lodge and using them in a new one (Turov 1975: 138). There was only one instance in my field notes confirming this practice. At the beginning of the 20th century, Katanga Evenkis would bring the three main poles of an old lodge with them. They do not observe this rule today.

The lodge poles are set up in a circular manner, from left to right. Two turgu poles form the entrance to the dwelling. The other lodge poles are called kheran. When the lodge is being constructed, these poles rest upon the three main ones and upon each other. Having analyzed my field notes and asked a number of informants, I concluded that today there is no firm pattern governing how the entrance to an Evenki dwelling is oriented. E. J. Lindgren [1935] wrote that the entrances to dwellings of the Chinese and steppe Tungus peoples always faced south, but that the Tunguses who kept reindeer did not have any fixed rules of this kind. Generally, the urke ‘lodge entrance’ can face east, southeast, south, southwest, west, northwest, or northeast. The entrance to a lodge never faces north, as the north is considered to be the side of the dark and of the night. Evenkis believe that the souls of the deceased depart in a northerly direction.
The following rules do, however, govern the placement of a lodge entrance. Firstly, in summer the entrance should always face the smudge(s), so that the owner can watch his reindeer. Smudges, in their turn, are put under a natural canopy of trees, in a place suitable for the whole reindeer herd. Secondly, the direction of the prevailing wind is taken into consideration. Some information indicates that during summer, people try to have the entrance to the lodge face the path along which they had come from their previous camp (Turov 1975: 138). I have also seen such a thing several times, but I do not have enough information to consider this tradition to be widespread. In this case, a simple and pragmatic explanation could be that the entrance was placed in this way to watch for reindeer that had lagged behind.

Earlier, a chimka ‘special vertical pole’ was set inside an Evenki lodge. In winter, the ikepten ‘horizontal pole for the hearth-hook’ was placed on it. At present, the chimka is used during all seasons except summer, though it does not perform any functional role. The ikepten is not used in summer.

Setting up mobile dwellings was once a woman’s task—for Evenkis as well as the Nenetses, Dolgans, Ugrians, lakuts, and other peoples (Vasilevich 1969; Popov 1952: 153; Ionova 1952: 272 et al.). At present, however, the men usually set up lodges, though women also take an active part. Today, canvas tents are used more often instead of lodges, or alongside them. For the group of Evenkis under consideration, the tents usually serve as a spare dwelling or guest house. Tents are also used as dwellings when people go hunting. It should be noted that Evenkis living in Buriatiia and (partly) lakutiia do not set up lodges in their temporary camps. They use canvas tents (Sanzhiev and Atutov 1988).

3.2.2 Lodge-covers

The most widely used lodge-covers were the tiski, made of birch bark, and the niuki ellun, made of rovduga ‘tanned hides’. Evenkis used the latter in winter, and the former in both summer and winter.

Evenkis living in the southern Katanga mostly used the tiski birch-bark coverings. This was because of the ecological characteristics of the places they lived and the fact that they had few or no reindeer [and thus could not spare the hides for lodge-covers] (Fig. 45).

Evenkis who were poor and had few reindeer used birch-bark coverings in winter, as well. To make the lodges warmer, snow was used as a supplementary material, with almost half of the tiski covered with snow. Sometimes, the lower parts of the lodge-covers were made of rovduga and the upper parts of birch bark.

I. G. Georgi (1799: 46) was the first to describe the birch-bark tiski used by Evenkis: “The lattice made of poles is covered by them with birch bark that is boiled and sewn together like sacking. The edges are bound with birch strips, both for greater security and for ornament. When they move to
another place, they do not take the lattice along, but the used birch bark is rolled up and never left behind.” At present, birch-bark coverings are not used any more. Each Evenki group had its own specific methods of making them. According to one source, it took about six sheets of birch bark to cover a lodge, with each sheet a metre wide and three metres long. According to
another source, it took about nine metres of birch bark to cover it (Vasilevich
1969: 110; Middendorf 1878). The divergent data can be explained by the
different sizes of the sheets and of the lodge itself.

The birch for lodge-covers was prepared in summer, “when the trees
dripped with sap,” i.e., in May–June. Birch bark preparation was considered
a man’s work, but the tiski themselves were made by women. A special
pit was made for the fire to boil the birch bark. Bark taken off birch trees
was rolled up and placed vertically into a basin or boiler with water, and
ashes were added. The rolls of birch bark were wrapped in spruce bark to
hold them straight while boiling. The birch bark was boiled until it became
pink. The pieces were sewn together with thread made of reindeer or moose
sinew. Straps made of rovduga, sewn to the edges of the sheets, were used to
fasten the tiski to the lodge poles. Sheets for the lodge entrance were made
separately. They needed to be durable, which is why they were made of
two layers of birch bark sewn together. All the tiski were edged with birch
bark. The tiski were put on the lodge poles in an overlapping spiral pattern.
When moving from one site to another, Evenkis would roll up the birch-bark
coverings and transport them by reindeer, usually putting them on the inmek
saddlebags. When lodges were set up in winter, the birch-bark coverings had
to be warmed up near the fire, in order not to break them. The advantage of
birch-bark tiski was that they did not curl from the heat of the fire inside the
lodge.

In winter, the Katanga Evenkis, especially those living in the northern
part of the district, usually covered their lodges with niuki ellun, made of
moose hide. Katanga Evenkis still use the moose rovduga coverings. Kept
in a noku ‘cache’ until the cold weather sets in, they can also be used in
late autumn and early spring, as needed. Rovduga coverings can be used for
10–15 years, or even longer.

Rovduga coverings consist of four parts: two ellun ‘lower parts’ and two
uneken ‘upper parts’ (Fig. 46).

To cover a lodge, 10–12 or even 16 moose hides are needed. For instance,
the rovduga lodge-cover belonging to E. P. Sychegeir consisted of 12 tanned
moose hides, with 8 hides used to cover the lower part of the lodge and 4
hides used for the upper part. They selected the tanned hides of moose killed
in summer for the upper covering uneken, “so they would be easier to lift.”
For the lower part of the lodge, they tanned the hides of moose killed in
autumn or winter (rovduga). These hides were heavier, but also thicker and
warmer.

Making moose-hide coverings was laborious work and took 2–3 years,
for only 4–5 hides could be hunted during a year. Women usually sewed the
lodge-covers. Tanned moose hides were sewn vertically, with small gores
inserted between the hides. There is no special pattern for making rovduga
coverings. The women sewed them “by eye.” The technique of making
rovduga coverings is similar to that of making canvas ones, which I describe
below.
Today, the lodge-covers used in summer are made of canvas instead of birch bark, while the coverings used in early autumn and late spring are made of thick felt. Like the rovduga coverings, the canvas ones consist of four parts: two lower parts, called ellun, and two upper parts, called uneken. Evenkis transferred the names of the rovduga coverings to the canvas coverings. They usually buy the canvas material either in a retail store or from the warehouse of a commercial trapping company. About 40 metres of canvas are necessary to make the lodge-covers—about 20–25 metres for the lower part and about 15–20 metres for the upper part. The material is cut according to the pattern of older pieces. The entrance sheet has a different pattern. The ellun parts have 3–4 ukhikan ‘small leather straps’ sewn to them, for fastening to the poles. Rovduga loops are made in the upper corners of the uneken upper coverings (Fig. 47).

The specific procedure for placing rovduga and canvas lodge-covers has been described in detail in the literature (Vasilevich 1969; Turov 1975: 138). The lodge is first covered on its lower part, in a direction from left to right. The ellun lower coverings are placed first, then the uneken upper coverings. They are lifted by two people with the help of fork-like poles inserted into the loops sewn to the upper corners of the uneken. After the upper coverings are placed, the poles are not taken out of the loops. They are kept in place as weights. Additional poles would be needed to weigh down the niuki moose lodge-covers. Removal of the coverings takes place in reverse order.

Lodge-covers were considered to be the property of the women, and the dwelling itself was also their property. This was the tradition of Evenkis as well as other nations of the North [Nenetses, Enetses, and Nganasans (Gulevskii 1993)].

Figure 46. Lodge coverings [paired panels of each type are used].
3.2.3 The half-lodge

One of the lodge types is the half-lodge kaltala (Evenk. ‘half’) [poluchum]. The tradition of using it has been preserved by Katanga Evenkis up until the present day. It is a temporary dwelling used for one or two nights during hunting, fishing, and moving camp (Fig. 48, 49). The family stayed at home while the man went hunting, fishing, or to town to obtain goods and food. Previously, half-lodges were used often, but today they are quite rare.

The base of the kaltala half-lodge was made of three main poles, tied together at the top in the same way as for an ordinary lodge. All other lodge poles were set against them. This type of lodge was covered with two niuki, the upper ellun and the lower uneken. The guluvun campfire was placed opposite the entrance.

3.2.4 The interior layout of a lodge

The interior layout of lodges remained unchanged for a long period, constituting an ancient cultural tradition (Gutsol 1989: 18–19). Moreover, the layout of other types of dwellings and storehouses duplicated the layout of the lodge.

At the centre of the lodge was the aran ‘fireplace’. It was framed on three sides by logs or uvo ‘wood blocks’, with the open side facing the entrance. Firewood was kept between the entrance and the fireplace. Usually, one end of the wood was lit, and as it burned the rest of the stick was pushed into the fire (Vasilevich 1969: 111–12). At present, open fireplaces are not used
Figure 48. Half-lodge, used in trips for provisions, etc. Photo of Luka camp on the Lower Tunguska River by P. G. Poltoradnev, c. 1930 (IOKM No. 469-183).

Figure 49. Half-lodge of the Teteia Evenkis.
anymore. During summer, smudges are lit in this space for protection from blood-sucking insects. During other seasons, an iron stove sits in the fireplace (Fig. 50).

Figure 50. Interior of a lodge in autumn camp, 1990. Photo by A. V. Os’kin.

Iron stoves appeared in Evenki households at the turn of the 20th century. At first, such stoves were purchased. According to my field notes, different Evenki groups and families obtained iron stoves at different times. There is one account of the first stove being carried off by an Evenki from the winter camp of a Russian hunter. Other Evenkis condemned him for it. They were afraid that the Russian hunter would find out. Later, they began making their own stoves from iron barrels, based on the design of that stove. Today, stoves are placed on four small wooden posts, 25–30 centimetres high that are dug into the ground. Empty cans cap the poles as a fire prevention measure. Bark chips or wood blocks (in autumn and spring) cover the ground around the stove, except the side facing the entrance. The floor of the lodge is covered with a thick layer of pine branches (more rarely, larch or spruce). The branches are placed in layers, with their tops turned towards the fireplace. This lodge flooring, called khokto, is laid out in both winter and summer.

Comparing research materials from the turn of the 20th century and field research done at the end of the 20th century, it is evident that the interior layout of lodges and the functional organization of space therein have remained remarkably unchanged. S. M. Shirokogoroff (1929: 255) provides the most detailed description of the interior organization of a lodge (Fig. 51).

The place opposite the entrance is called malu (matu, maro) in all dialects. A certain category of spirits was also called by the same name (Shirokogoroff 1929: 255). E. J. Lindgren (1935: 136) wrote that the term malu was used for specific spirits present in every family. It refers to the place in the lodge opposite the entrance, with which the spirits were associated. It is also linked
to various prohibitions; for example, adult women were not allowed to touch the lodge poles, or to walk around the lodge either outside or inside—unless, of course, she was the mistress of the lodge. The place called malu is the most important, a place of honour (Fig. 52).

As a rule, only men have the right to sit at the malu. Moreover, they should either be single (unmarried) or elderly. Male guests were usually invited to sleep in that spot. Outsiders or relatives adopted by the family were forbidden from taking the malu space. In practically all dialects, the two spaces between the malu and the chona kitchen/household area are called be. They are places for resting in the daytime, and for sleeping. It appears that the allocation of the two be (to the right and left of the entrance) among family members differed in the various Evenki groups (Shirokogoroff 1929: 255; Nikolaev 1964; Sokolova 1962: 169; Vasilevich 1969: 151). A general tendency that has been observed is that parents usually occupy one be, while children occupy the other be. Distinctions between males and females are also evident. According to my field notes on Evenkis, the left be is usually occupied by the head of the family and his wife, while the right be is occupied by grown children (if they are of different sexes, the young men sleep in the malu and the girls stay in the right be).

The two places to the left and right of the entrance are called chona. These places are for kitchen and household utensils. The mistress of the lodge is usually here during the day (married women usually in the left chona and single women in the right one). She should be able to see as much of the camp territory as possible through the lodge entrance, above all the reindeer at the smudges.

**Figure.**

The Northern Tungus Wigwam

*Figure 51. Layout of lodge interior (Shirokogoroff 1929).*
3.2.5 Belongings

If people have them, portable radio transmitters, radios, or tape recorders are kept in the *malu* honorary place in Evenki lodges. The bedding (blankets, skins, and pillows) is laid out in the *be* only for sleeping. In the morning, all these things are rolled up and put close to the lodge wall, where they can serve as back supports while sitting (to be more exact, semi-reclining) when having a rest during the day. In summer, bedding consists of the skins of domesticated or wild reindeer (preferably hides obtained in autumn or winter), and often nothing more than that. A thin woollen or half-woollen factory-made and store-bought blanket (or, in winter, a quilt), and a feather or down pillow (of wild fowl, mostly duck), can also be used. The women usually sew the sheets, pillowcases, and quilt covers themselves. Sometimes they are bought. Ready-made linens are seldom used, because of the big openings in the quilt covers and their bright-coloured fabrics. When Evenki women buy cloth for bedding, they select muted colours, preferably pale blue and brown shades, especially with small, fine patterns. Young people today use store-bought sleeping bags (quilted or made of felted camel’s hair), and in winter they use fur blankets made of bear hides obtained as *nimat* ‘ritual gifting’.

Dishes and various utensils are kept in the *chona* on small, homemade tables. Such tables are quite primitive. Two or three boards or debarked poles are placed on two short, thick pegs. The tables are about 15 centimetres high, 30–40 centimetres wide, and 50–60 centimetres long. Some Evenki housewives keep their utensils in plywood boxes that were used as packaging
for store-bought food. Such boxes are placed vertically and partitioned into compartments, and the housewives put dishcloths or small curtains on them to hide their contents. Evenkis use standard factory-made dishes, whose main requirement is that they should be unbreakable. They also use bowls made of birch bark, for short-term storage of fish, berries, etc. Such bowls are usually kept outside the lodge, on the delken ‘storage platform’. Evenkis would take their meals at small homemade wooden tables, with bent or straight legs, about 10–15 centimetres high and tabletop of area 30 × 40 centimetres. Sometimes the tables were painted in bright colours. Tables of this type are not in use anymore. Meals are served on factory-made trays or homemade stands. Trays and stands are kept in the chona. In spring and autumn, wood is also kept there, and pieces of rotted larch in the summer, for making smudges in the lodge.

In the chona, a small pit-cellar is made close to the outside wall, for keeping reindeer milk in summer. Its size varies, with the depth usually not more than 30 centimetres and dimensions of 20 × 30 centimetres. Evenkis store pans of [scalded] reindeer milk there, since they do not drink fresh milk.

The interior of a lodge is multifunctional. Its usage features maximum rationality. Every member of the family has their own set of “boundaries” or “zones”—their own places. This is very important for people’s psychological adaptation, when their living space is so small. Evenkis are skilled at adapting to changing situations and social contexts, a fact which is demonstrated very well in the ethnographic data on how they organize space in a lodge.

### 3.2.6 The golomo lodge

The golomo is a stationary (permanent) lodge, widely used by Evenkis as well as northern Iakuts, Dolgans, and Kets. Judging by the ethnographic data, it can be of a conical or pyramidal form. The material covering the frame—sod or larch bark — defines the two types of golomo. I concur with Z. P. Sokolova (1998), an expert on the dwellings of Siberian peoples, who says that further research needs to be done on the different types of golomo.

Below, I present my classification of the types of golomo found among the Katanga Evenkis, based on the ethnographic literature and my field notes. The first type of golomo (another name is ugdama diu) represents a transition from the diu [portable] lodge to the golomo [Fig. 53].

This golomo is similar to a [portable] lodge in that it has a round base (diameter 4–5 m or even more) and in the way the main poles (blocks, logs) are tied together. The frame of a bark golomo is made of four–five main poles, two of which form the urke ‘entrance’. There are different ways of fastening the two or three khona ‘secondary poles’ or turgu ‘main poles’. They can be tied together, or two supporting poles are placed v paz ‘in a mortise joint’ (sometimes this method is called v ship), where the end of one pole fits into a notch carved in the end of a second pole. Another method involves setting the
two main poles in such a way that the end of one pole fits into a fork specially
carved in the other one. The poles forming the entrance to the lodge are called
*turu*. The thick, main pole opposite the entrance is also called *turgu*.

The conical lodge is similar to the classic *golomo* in that both use bark
coverings, a tied-round frame, and poles or logs that weigh down the bark.

Evenkis nail a frame of four squared timber-cross beams *tolboko*, or
*kultir*, 40–70 centimetres from the tops of the poles (or, alternatively they
set them with the help of special forks placed at a specific height on the main
poles). All the other *kheran* ‘lodge poles’ are set against it. I would like to
call the reader’s attention to the term *kultir*, which was explained to me by
N. V. Boiarshina. It means literally ‘threshold’, ‘step (at the entrance to the
dwelling)’, or ‘porch’ (Tsintsius 1975: 548). This threshold, or windbreak,
is made of two boards 30–40 centimetres high, and is constructed only in
an autumn lodge. One cannot draw general conclusions on the basis of one
example. Nevertheless it is thought-provoking that the term *kultir* denotes
the framed opening around which the main poles are set. The term may have
survived since the time when the *golomo* was a dwelling built over a ditch,
the entrance to which was a chimney-passage. G. M. Vasilevich (1969: 113)
made this conjecture on the basis of language. According to folklore, this
type of Evenki dwelling was permanent, and the entrance to it was through
the upper chimney-passage. Today, there is no limit to the number of poles in
the conical *golomo*. There can be about 39–45. The poles can be placed close
together in some cases, or not very close in others.

The other type of *golomo* is the proper, “classic” *golomo*. It features a
quadrangular or rectangular base, an internal frame, and either bark covering
with weights on top or sod covering. This *golomo* has a pyramidal form. The

*Figure 53. The stationary dwelling (golomo) of the Teteia Evenkis.*
Katanga Evenkis would make it quite often. For example, the Evenkis of the Tokma group built both types of *golomo*. They called the first type a “bark chum,” while the other type was called a *golomo*. Sometimes it was called a “plank chum,” when planks appear to have been used for weights.

As has been mentioned above, the *golomo* is classified according to its covering—either sod or bark. The *golomo* is usually covered with larch bark. Spruce bark is used less often because it breaks more easily. Evenkis living in the southeastern part of Iakutiia also used pine bark to cover the *golomo* (Nikolaev 1964: 107). Bark for covering the *golomo* is removed from growing trees in May–June, sometimes in early July, at the time when birch bark is prepared. It is removed with the help of a knife or a hatchet, as well as an *uklaun* ‘small, sharpened wooden stick’ used as a chisel. On selected trees, crossed incisions are made in the bark at a height of approximately 2–2.5 metres and at the foot of the tree. Then, long vertical incisions are cut from top to bottom, and the bark is removed entirely from the trunks with the help of the sharpened stick, to the width of the vertical cuts on the trees. It is interesting, moreover, that when Evenkis decide to build *golomo* in their camps, they choose sites with a coniferous forest nearby, particularly larches. To cover a *golomo*, 20–30 such bark panels need to be harvested. The frame should be covered with fresh bark pieces. The whole structure is weighed down with poles or blocks to prevent the coverings from warping. It takes one person about 2–3 days to do all this work. Katanga Evenkis have used both types of the above-mentioned *golomo*.

Yet another type of *golomo* can be distinguished that is similar to the *dulga*, or Iakut type of *balagan* ‘hut’ (Fig. 54). It has a low internal frame, at a height of about 10–20 centimetres below the top of the main massive poles. This dwelling has a ceiling, made of beams split in half and covered with moss or turf for insulation. These two features are the main changes to the *golomo* form. This type of *golomo* usually has windows that are small and close to the ground.

And finally, Katanga raion also has *balagany* ‘huts’ of both Tungus [Evenki] and Iakut type. I found and studied an Evenki dwelling in the form of a truncated pyramid on the outskirts of Preobrazhenka village. It had been deserted many years before and was half-ruined. I showed a photograph of it to many Evenki people in my effort to establish what that dwelling was called. Their opinions varied. After considering it for some time, some people answered that it was a *golomo*, because it was covered with birch. Others thought it was a *balagan*, saying that its form and exterior reminded them of Iakut structures. Indeed, the construction of the dwelling resembles that of a lakut *balagan* (Fig. 55). It is built on the ground, and its frame, covered with larch bark, is in the form of a truncated pyramid with a rectangular base of 3.5–4 × 4.5–5 metres. Four corner support poles form a skeleton on which the longitudinal and transverse main roof beams are placed. The poles forming the walls of the dwelling are set close to each other, leaning against the bearing beams at an angle of 65–70 degrees. The ceiling is made of split
logs, set close to each other on the longitudinal roof beams. The roof is made of poles, with its slope created by two chocks placed on top of the ceiling at the entrance side. There are windows in the longitudinal and transverse walls. The dwelling entrance faces northeast, towards a river or a lake. The size of the entrance aperture is 120 × 90 centimetres, and the fireplace is to the left of it.

As for the Tungus type of balagan, it is reminiscent of the Evenki ugdan dwelling described by G. M. Vasilevich [1961]. It has a rectangular base, a frame covered with bark, and a flat roof.

3.2.7 Wooden log cabins

Today, all Evenkis living semi-settled lives have regular winter camps [zimov'ia] in the taiga, with wooden cabins. They live there in winter while hunting for pelts, and continue to stay there after the hunt finishes, during the coldest months from February to March, and sometimes until early April. Historically, Evenki people did not use log cabins, but started this new tradition under the influence of the Russians. Evenkis living in the southern part of the district began building cabins [also called zimov'ia] in the early
Figure 55. Balagan on the outskirts of Preobrazhenka village.

20th century, but the mass transition from lodges to log cabins took place in the middle and the second half of the 20th century. By that time, most of the Katanga Evenkis were leading a settled way of life.

An Evenki winter cabin consists of cut logs laid out in a square shape, approximately 4 × 4 or 4 × 5 metres in size. Evenkis use pine or larch timber, which is cut down near to the building site. The cabin is usually built without a foundation. Rows of logs are overlapped right on ground cleared of moss, using the \( v \text{ oblo} \) method, or [alternatively] the method of corner-notching called \( v \text{ paz} \). The logs are debarked with the help of hatchets, and the rows of logs are chinked with moss. The only instruments used in building are a hatchet and a saw (crosscut saw or Druzhba-brand chainsaw). A platform made of 4–5 logs is erected outside the frame, to help support the structure and facilitate the lifting of the logs (Fig. 56).

The walls are on average 14–15 rows high (2–2.5 m). Ceilings are made of logs, covered with earth and turf for warmth. The roof is built by using two pairs of poles,\(^8\) on which the upper cross-beam is placed. The roof covering, laid over top, can be made of a wide variety of materials, such as split boards, blocks, larch bark, or tar paper. It is weighted down with poles laid parallel

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\(^8\) In this paragraph, it is not made clear that the top of the dwelling—the ceiling—is structurally different from the sloping covering that directs rain and snow from the dwelling—the roof. In between the turf-covered ceiling and the sloping roof there is empty space. This style of architecture would be self-evident to a Russian reader. Figure 56 shows the nearly complete dwelling portion, without the sloping roof. —Ed.
to the upper beam. Sometimes the pediment [fronton] is covered with bark or boards.

Small windows (approx. 50 × 50 cm) are usually placed in pairs along the walls. The door is made of split blocks. Evenkis place an iron stove to the right or left of the entrance, and a chimney hole is made in the wall of the cabin beside the stove. Against the wall, a plank bed is built at a height of 50–70 centimetres. A table-type structure is placed between the stove and the plank bed (Fig. 57).

The number of winter camps on a given hunting ground depends on the number and composition of the family, the size of the camps, and the number of reindeer in their possession, as well as on the traditions and particular personal goals of the owner. Evenkis with few reindeer have one or two winter camps (in rare cases, more than two). Evenkis with 40 or more reindeer can have about five winter camps. As a rule, they are located along the main hunting trails, with one of the winter camps being the baza ‘base camp’, as Evenkis call it themselves. The ideal location represents a favourable combination of hunting potential, reindeer herding conditions, and transportation convenience.

3.3 Outbuildings and other structures

Besides the dwelling, the complex of Evenki nomadic architecture includes various outbuildings and other structures, some of which have yet to be described in the ethnographic literature. An opinion has been formed that
they are not quite typical of the mobile Evenki way of life (Vasilevich 1969: 116). This may be true insofar as the past is concerned, and certainly the standardized assortment of outbuildings and other structures that Evenkis might have had then has become more varied under the influence of Russians, Iakuts, and Buriats. The arrangement of the outbuildings and other structures has been determined by the past nomadic and present semi-nomadic ways of life of Evenkis. Some of the structures are found in the confines of a camp, while others are built in the taiga, along Evenki sledge paths, or adjacent to hunting and fishing spots.

3.3.1 Storage structures

The variety of “labaz” storage structures can be divided into two types, according to their design. The first type is the ambar ‘cache’ (a storehouse on the ground or on posts), and the second is the labaz proper, which is a storage platform. It should be stressed that the same terms are used by different groups of Evenkis to designate different types of storage structures.\textsuperscript{16} To avoid the confusion that is inevitable in a comparative analysis of works devoted to Evenki architecture (and to the outbuildings in particular), I should like to emphasize that I will use the terminology of Katanga Evenkis. The first defined type of storage structure (the ground-level or elevated ambar) includes the noku, puri, muko, and iumgulo [caches], and the second labaz (storage platform) includes the delken, telgekon, and other [platforms on posts].

\textsuperscript{16} For example, Orochon-Evenkis living in the Transbaikal region call the platform-on-posts labaz a noku, while the same term is used by Katanga and Chunia Evenkis to denote the other type of labaz—the cache [ambar on posts]. On the other hand, Transbaikal Evenkis use the term delken to denote a cache, while Katanga Evenkis and some other Evenki groups use [delken] to denote a platform on posts. [Author’s text, moved to this footnote.—Ed.]
Having seen a cache made by the Tunguses living in Manchuria called a *kolbo*, E. J. Lindgren (1935: 277) noted that it was not known how long Tunguses had been building such structures, and speculated as to whether they were borrowed from the wooden winter cabins of the Russians.

A special work by M. G. Turov (1975) is devoted to the problem of the origin and evolution of Evenki storage structures. He applied the term *noku* to all types of storehouses, but mainly to the *noku* proper, i.e., a cache [ambar] on posts. Turov contrasted them as temporary vs. permanent, and individual vs. collective. He concluded that the *noku* as an outbuilding appeared first at permanent camps, and that previously it might have combined the functions of storage and dwelling. Hence, in his opinion, Evenkis themselves invented the *noku* without borrowing significantly from Russian prototypes.

Today, it is difficult to say whether the *noku* was ever used also as a dwelling, even if only during certain times of the year. This hypothesis is supported by folklore material, and by the similar terms used to denote the interior spaces of Evenki dwellings and their storehouses.

It seems obvious that originally, Evenkis may have kept personal effects on the *lokovun* ‘hanging rods’ and on the *telgekon*-type platforms that are used today for storing game meat. The *kolbo* of the Orochon-Evenkis could be considered a transitional type between the *delken* and the *noku*. It was a hut of branches covered with a sloped roof of larch bark, on posts (a similar storehouse of Manchurian Evenkis was called a *delken*, while Vitim Evenkis called it an *ugdama*).

### 3.3.2 Caches

Long-term caches, which Evenkis call *noku* and *puri*, are types of outbuildings that are not directly connected with their camps. Evenkis living in the southern part of Katanga raion use the term *puri* more often. The term *noku* is derived from the Evenki verb *ne-mi* ‘to put’. Thus, *noku* is defined as “a storage structure (consisting of flooring on posts with a small storehouse); cache; storehouse” (Tsintsius 1977: 602). Tunguses in Manchuria had practically the same kind of cache and called it a *kolbo* (Lindgren 1935: 277).

The *noku* is a platform cache (Fig. 58). The platform is erected on tall stumps of [specially] cut trees to preserve the goods in the storehouse from damage (humidity, rodents, etc.). The construction features of the *noku* cache include: the number of its supporting posts, the building materials (split boards, logs, poles), the number of compartments and their arrangement, and the techniques for making the frame and the roof.

There are 1–8 supporting stumps, varying from 1 to 4–5 metres in height.\(^{\text{16}}\) Storehouses on one or two supporting posts are higher. The *noku* on one supporting post was made more carefully, as the one large supporting stumps of [specially] cut trees to preserve the goods in the storehouse from damage (humidity, rodents, etc.). The construction features of the *noku* cache include: the number of its supporting posts, the building materials (split boards, logs, poles), the number of compartments and their arrangement, and the techniques for making the frame and the roof.

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\(^{\text{16}}\) It should be emphasized that the supporting stumps are cut from living trees and are still rooted in the ground. It takes great skill to choose two to eight trees with strong roots that happen to be growing in the correct configuration. —*Ed.*
cross-beam was propped without any nails (in notches). Exact centering was very important. The poles [making the platform] had to be the same size and placed correctly, so that the cache was windproof.

Nowadays, the *noku* is mainly made with 4–8 larch stumps, whose diameter is at least 20–30 centimetres, cut at a height of 1.5–2.5 metres. At least half of the stumps should be rooted. The rest can be posts that are placed as supports. The stumps are debarked, and sometimes old pails, basins, etc. are turned upside down onto them to prevent rodents from getting into the cache (Fig. 59).

The Evenki name for a stump is *baksa*. Two beams (*khanalaun*) are set on each stump to support the pole flooring. The *khanalaun* beams are joined to the posts by notching the upper ends of the stumps and placing there the main horizontal beams. The *birivun* ‘flooring’, made of poles of average width placed close to one another, is laid on the *khanalaun*.

A log storehouse is built of debarked pine and larch logs of average diameter, on the *birivun*, leaving part of the flooring clear as a small platform at the entrance. It is built using overlapping corners (*v oblo*), or with corner notching (*v paz*). The sizes of the structures vary, depending on the builder’s plan. Caches would be built together by men of different kindred or neighbouring families, and were used by all of them. With the development of a commodity economy and the individuation of fur trapping, Evenkis seem to have switched to building small, individual caches. The ones for collective usage were divided into one or two–three sections; sometimes they had two storeys (Turov 1990). The average storehouse is 2.5 × 2.5 or 2 × 3 metres in size. Its roof can be A-shaped or a single, lean-to roof. The traditional cover of the *noku* seems to have been the sloping roof, with *uldaksa* ‘bark covering’
At present, gabled roofs of split boards prevail. However, modern *noku* coverings are quite different, varying from the traditional larch bark to tar paper. The material depends on the season. In spring, storehouse coverings are made of bark, while in summer they are made of split boards or other material (Fig. 60).

The storehouses have *lokovun* ‘hanging rods’ inside. The layout and names of parts in the interior are the same as for lodges. Thus, the place opposite the entrance to a storehouse is called *malu*, and the places to the left and right of the entrance door are called *be*.

*Noku* caches are built next to autumn and spring camps and along winter hunting trails, close to sledge paths and winter cabins. For example, L. P. Sychegir built a cache some 300–400 metres from his autumn camp, while placing a cache within the territory of his spring camp. N. V. Kaplin’s caches are 0.5 kilometres away from his spring camp and 1.5–2 kilometres away from his autumn camp. Evenkis choose high and dry places for their storage structures, to keep the supports from decaying. There is always a river or marsh nearby in case of fire. Forest fires usually destroy most Evenki storage structures, after which they build new *noku* along the perimeter of the burned-out places and the forest.

Winter clothes and food supplies are kept in the caches that are close to the autumn camps, while the things not needed during autumn and winter (canvas lodge-covers, saddlebags, saddles, packs of reindeer hide, etc.) are kept in the caches next to the spring camps. In October, when the first snow falls, the things not needed during winter are taken to the spring caches nearby. The same thing is done in spring, when everything unnecessary for summer travel is stored in the caches. Food is usually stocked there in spring and autumn, brought by reindeer along the sledge trails. Sometimes, they use helicopters if a lot of food must be delivered and kept for a long period of time. My
informants have never pointed out any functional differentiation of the noku caches. In fact, I have been told that storehouses hold mixtures of things, and I had opportunities to see this myself. Caches hold food as well as different things and clothes. However, in the past, the Evenki caches were functionally differentiated. One was designed for keeping rifles and ammunition, a second for clothes, and a third for food (Turov 1975, 1990). Only Evenkis of the Tokma group made a remark concerning the different functional peculiarities of caches. They mentioned that the most valuable things, such as rifles and ammunition, were kept in the noku that was constructed on one stump.

Another type of cache is a muko ‘meat cache’. It is constructed at moose hunting grounds especially for storing meat during cold periods of the year, i.e., autumn and winter (Fig. 61).

The muko is constructed on stumps (usually two), at a height of 2–3 metres above the ground. The stumps are cut from [living] trees that are [debranched and] debarked. Two cross-poles are joined in the way described above, and pole flooring is placed on them. A small, box-shaped storehouse is constructed on the flooring, using some 5–7 rows of beams of average diameter, with lapped (v oblo) corners. The height of the box is about 0.7–0.9 metres, the width is 0.8–1.0 metres, and the length is about 1.5–2 metres. The cover is made of logs placed close to one other. A beam with notches on it serves as the ladder to the cache. The muko is for storing fresh-frozen moose meat for long periods (up to six months).

Next to the muko moose meat cache, Evenkis usually build another cache for keeping moose bones. It is also called a muko and built in the same way as the one described above, but is much smaller (height of posts 1.0 m, and flooring and frame area 0.5 × 0.5 m).
Yet another type of muko meat cache is the ground-level muko, which is a storehouse with a height of 1–1.5 metres, length of 2–2.5 metres, and width of 0.8–1.0 metres, with overlapped (v oblo) corners. Thick logs are mainly used, and the structure has a floor. It is constructed at moose hunting sites for short-term storage of meat. Its cover is flat, made of thick beams laid close to one other. Nowadays, such storage structures are made for keeping barrels of gasoline.

Figure 61. Meat cache (muko), with a muko for bones in the background, 1990.
Evenkis living in the taiga of Central Siberia also had a storage structure called an *iumgulo* for storing meat. It was made of round beams (with bark) and placed on low posts (60–80 cm tall). Its total height was not more than 1–1.5 metres (Turov 1990: 139).

We will now proceed to the second type of *labaz* storage structure.

### 3.3.3 Storage platforms

What follows is a description of the *labaz* proper—a platform [*pomost*] on posts. These are the *delken, telgekon, gulik*, and others. In Evenki, *delken* means ‘a platform on posts for storing food’. It is interesting that this term exists in the languages of all Tungus-Manchurian peoples. For example, the Nanai people, settled fishermen who live along rivers, use the word *deke*, *desikhu* for an indoor shelf used to keep food (Tsintsius 1977: 233). For Katanga Evenkis, a *delken* is a platform on 2–6 natural stumps [or a mixture of posts and stumps] called *baksas*, cut to a height of 0.5–1.5 metres. The *khanalaun* cross-beams that bear the flooring are dovetailed or mortised [v *paz*] into the posts—or, more often, they are placed into notches made in the supports. The *birivun* ‘floor, base, flooring’, which derives from the Evenki *biri* ‘to lay poles’, is made of 4–7 beams of an average diameter.

The *delken* storage platform varies widely in appearance, depending on existing building conditions. From this point of view, the *delken* presents a good example of adaptation to the environment (Fig. 62). A two-tier *delken* is often made in autumn and spring camps. It takes two people 30–40 minutes to make a *delken*.

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*Figure 62. Various types of *delken* storage platforms.*
In the scholarly literature, information about the types of delken storage platforms is fragmentary (Vasilevich 1969: 116; Turov 1990: 149). This can probably be explained by the primitive quality of its construction, and by the similarity between its types. At the same time, the delken is functionally as necessary as any other camp structure. It can be built either within the territory of the different kinds of camps or outside them at kill sites, as temporary storage for meat. Meat stored on these latter platforms is covered with moose hides that freeze to it, preventing access by scavengers. Tunguses living in Manchuria used such platforms for storing the bones of slaughtered reindeer. In addition, at moose kill sites platforms were built on posts that were fixed into the forks of three long poles (1.5–2 m in height) leaned against thick trees. This kind of storage platform was called a telgekon (Turov 1990: 95–6). The delken was also used as a platform for making offerings, as well as a burial structure (e.g., by Evenkis in the North Baikal region). The Tunguses of Manchuria built a delken for reindeer offerings during shamanic ceremonies. This platform was encircled in a cone-like pattern by poles with carved flying birds—swans (Lindgren 1935).

The delken is also an integral part of the organization of the inner living space of camps. The summer delken is much smaller. The diminutive suffix -kon is added to denote such a delken [delkekon]. The storage platforms for spring and autumn usage are much bigger and sturdier. The difference in size can be explained by the increase in their functions. To summarize, on the basis of materials that I have accessed, I have concluded that the delken is a platform, the main function of which is to store food and utensils, especially in summer. In autumn, it is used for storing different kinds of things, including food, harnesses, and ammunition.

3.3.4 Flooring

Ummevun flooring is made only at summer camps. The word is derived from the Evenki umiv ‘collect, put in one place’ and umivkit ‘place where things are kept, storeroom; heap; pantry’ (Tsintsius 1977: 267). The term ummevun seems to be used by all Evenki groups, which means that they have been making such structures for a long time. They are constructed of 2–4 logs of average diameter placed close to one another, either on the ground or on two short cross-poles (rarely, the logs are placed on low-cut stumps). The flooring is 4–5 metres long, 60–80 centimetres wide, and 10–20 centimetres above ground (usually not higher than 40 cm).

The ummevun is a storage area, a place where reindeer-hide packs (pota, inmek), harnesses, and saddles are kept (Fig. 63). The ummevun is usually built to the left and/or right of the lodge entrance, along the exterior side walls. Things stored there avoid the damp. They are placed in a specific order. First are the reindeer-hide packs, with preference given to inmek that have a hard birch-bark bottom and are pasted with fur [kamys] coverings. Then, reindeer saddles are put on top of the inmek and pota (soft pack bags), in
such a way that the saddles cover the bags and protect them from moisture. Reindeer harnesses are then placed on the saddles, or sometimes they are placed separately. Things on the ummevun used to be covered with birch bark to protect them from rain. Nowadays, they are covered with tarpaulin and/or plastic sheets.

3.3.5 Hanging implements

Almost all types of camps have the very simple structure lokovun. It is a horizontal rod used for hanging different things—hides, clothes, and linens—as well as for drying meat.

The term lokovun (lokobun, lokovan, lokoun) is derived from the Evenki loko ‘to hang, to set out to hang’ (Tsintsius 1975: 502). In spite of its seeming simplicity, it can be constructed using about four different methods. The choice of method depends on the specific situation, and different methods are often combined.

The first consists in nailing a long debarked pole to two tree-posts. This is the latest method used by Evenkis, and it was not common in the past. The second way is to place the pole between the branches of trees growing near one another. The third way is to drive wooden pegs into tree trunks that are growing close to one other, and place the pole on them. Another widely used method is to place a horizontal pole in the natural forks of two long poles (preferably birch) that are then leaned against two trees growing close to one another [Fig. 64].

Besides the lokovun rod, another hanging implement used by Evenkis is the khivek ‘peg’. The term is derived from the Evenki siva ‘to drive a wedge’ or sivaki-sevaki, khivaki ‘wooden wedge’ (Tsintsius 1977: 75). Wooden pegs
are driven into growing trees at a height of approximately 1.7–2.0 metres. The length of the pegs is about 15–20 centimetres. Rifles, clothes, and other things are hung there, sometimes pails or pots with hot food for the dogs (to allow it to cool). In comparison with other structures in a camp, the *khivek* pegs remain for a long time, indicating the fact that a camp was formerly located there (Fig. 65).
3.3.6 Smudges

Along with the other outbuildings and devices, the *khammin* ‘smudges’ play a very important role in summer camps (sometimes they are also constructed in spring and autumn camps). Their smoke prevents reindeer from being bitten by mosquitoes. As soon as people come to a new campsite in summer, they make the smudges first (if they exist already, they are rekindled). Reindeer gather in the smoke to escape the mosquitoes, and thus learn the location of the new camp.

The Evenki smudge consists of the *guluvun* ‘campfire’, encircled with poles (*typken*), the tops of which come together to form a cone (Fig. 66).

![Figure 66. Smudges.](image)

The number of poles is typically 10–24, but is not restricted. The diameter of the debarked poles should not be more than 2–5 centimetres. Sometimes the three main poles of the smudge are tied together with willow (rose willow) switches. The height of the poles is rarely more than 1.0 metres; it varies from 0.5 to 1.0 metres. The poles define a circle, the diameter of which is approximately 1.0–1.5 metres. The fire is made of three or four thick beams, whose ends are placed to meet in the centre. About 10–15 pine logs, each 4–5 metres long and about 25 centimetres thick, are necessary to keep a smudge burning for one day (Turov 1990: 148).

Smudges would be made under the canopy of trees, whose shade protected the reindeer from the heat in the daytime. According to literary sources and some field notes, certain Evenki (influenced by Iakut traditions) and Iakut reindeer herders used to build shelters for reindeer, but not anymore.
3.3.7 The cooking tripod and campfire

A *guluvun* ‘campfire’ is made at all types of Evenki camps, with a *khonan* ‘cooking tripod’ set above the fire. The *khonan* is made of three long debarked poles (2–2.5 m long) tied together with willow switches or a piece of wire (or a rope) at a distance of 30–50 centimetres from the top. They are tied so that the feet of the tripod remain movable, which is how the height of the *ollan* ‘hook’ is regulated. Pans and kettles are hung on the hook (Fig. 67).

Sometimes, in autumn camps an awning is made over the cooking fire. In such cases, the tripod is not made, and instead the awning is constructed of split blocks on four supports. The *khona* pole to which the *ollan* hook is attached is placed on cross-poles, forming a support for the shed as well. The use of such a structure over the fire was not characteristic of Evenkis in the past, and is apparently borrowed from the Iakut tradition.

The *guluvun* is made of logs arranged radially [*solnyshkom*]. Only larch is used. It is an economical way of making a fire that is even and burns for a long time. In fact, it is not necessary to chop wood for it.

Another type of construction over the fire is made in winter camps and in fishing and hunting grounds. It is a long pole (2.5–3 m), one end of which is on the ground while the other end is in a fork formed by two crossed posts. The posts (20–40 cm high) are driven into the ground. Pans, kettles, etc. are hung on the elevated fork-end of the pole.

3.3.8 Pit-cellars

Special pit-cellars for storing perishable food—primarily meat—are made at summer, spring, and autumn camps. I. G. Georgi (1799: 50) wrote about the Evenki tradition of making pit-cellars: “They store a portion of their food in cellars dug in the ground.” K. M. Rychkov (1917: 42) described the special
pits (called in) that the Enisei Evenkis had for storing their food. They would make such pits in August, before the cold weather set in.

The approximate size of such cellars is 0.5–0.8 metres deep, 0.8–1.0 metres wide, and 1.0–1.2 metres long. The bottoms are covered with thin sticks and/or birch branches. The holes are covered with sticks or split blocks. Sometimes, awnings are made to protect them from rain, with a pole placed horizontally over the hole, and a post or plastic sheet put on top.

3.3.9 Structures for drying meat

There is little information about these household structures in the ethnographic literature, as they seem to have appeared recently. In the 19th century, I. G. Gmelin wrote that Evenkis living in the Lower Tunguska region had special racks for drying meat in springtime, when moose was hunted over the crusted snow (Titova 1978: 70). G. M. Vasilevich (1969: 124) also mentioned that “raw meat … was dried … on a willow mesh set over the fireplace in a lodge.” I have also seen such mesh racks among the household goods of Katanga Evenkis (though they do not use them today), and in museum collections.

A buchivun is a rack specially constructed for drying meat. The term is derived from the Evenki buchi ‘to dry, to dry by curing’. Buchi can also mean ‘meat for drying’, and buchivlan means ‘stand (for the mesh for curing meat or fish)’ (Tsintsius 1975: 117). It should be noted that another term in the Evenki language to denote such a construction is teliu, from the Evenki teli ‘to store’, ‘to cure for future use’, with telivun meaning ‘a net (made of twigs on which meat and fish are cured over the fire or in the sun)’ (Tsintsius 1977: 281). However, this term is not used by the Katanga Evenkis.

The buchivun drying rack is a skeletal structure on two posts about 1.0–1.2 metres high, set at a distance of 4–6 metres from each other. The posts are usually set in the ground [i.e., are not rooted stumps] (Fig. 68).
Cross-posts are joined with the supporting posts [as in Fig. 68], and two debarked poles are placed lengthwise between them. The poles support the grating, which is made of split strips 0.8–1.5 metres long, each set close to one another and placed on two [long] poles set lengthwise. A small square pit is dug under the rack, the dimensions of which are the same as those of the rack. A fire is made there, for which only larchwood is used. The pit is always made first, and the fire burns in it for some time. Only then is the rack itself erected. The *buchivun* is made in spring and autumn camps, not far from the lodge but with no other structures nearby.

Moose meat is dried throughout August–October and, less frequently, in March–April: “We dry meat in August–September, when God gives us moose.” The meat is stored only if there is more than what is required for everyday meals. Evenki, Nganasan, and other peoples would dry and jerk meat. G. M. Vasilevich (1969) singled out two ways of curing meat—*buchivcha, buchivun, khurivcha ulle* ‘drying over a fire’ and *sulluvcha, urgavcha ulle* ‘drying in the sun’. A combination of the two curing methods seems to be used today.

There are two stages to the Evenki way of preparing *khulikte* ‘dried meat’. In the first stage, the meat is roasted on a device called *khilaun* on the fire. In the second stage, it is dried on the rack over the fire. It takes about three days and nights to make dried meat [Fig. 69].

![Figure 69. Preparing dried meat in camp, 1989.](image)

### 3.3.10 Reindeer fences

There are two types of fences for keeping reindeer—the autumn fence and the spring fence, each with its own characteristics.

The term *kure* ‘fence, reindeer corral’ is used by all Evenki groups (Tsintsius 1977). Evenkis did not have a tradition of coralling reindeer. Where it was practised, it appeared under the influence of neighbouring
peoples, most likely the Iakuts (Spevakovskii 1984: 125; Zykov 1986; Turov 1990: 143).

The first fences were built for containing reindeer during the autumn [breeding season]. One can suppose that this practice was adopted [from neighbouring groups] when Evenki economic activities evolved [towards large-scale herding]. Many Evenki groups did not make any fences during the reindeer mating period in autumn. These groups placed more importance on hunting big game, which was most intensive during that period of the year.

Today, the length of the kure spring and autumn fences is almost the same, ranging from 2–3 kilometres to 6–7 kilometres. Orochon-Evenkis use the term kapchavun.

In autumn, poles are placed lengthwise in the forks created by two pairs of stakes (tepke) that have been driven into the ground so as to cross each other. The first row of poles (the lowest) is put on low-cut stumps. Spring fences are made slightly differently, due to the necessity of adapting to natural conditions. Starting in early April, when the ground is still frozen, the lengthwise poles are placed in notches made on growing trees or other supports (namkima). These two methods are often combined. The height of these fences is about 1.5 metres (Fig. 70).

Figure 70. Spring and autumn fences.
Reindeer that have lagged behind can get in through special gates called *khonngo* that are made in the fences (often spring fences), but they cannot get out this way. Sometimes, such gates are made in autumn fences. *Urke* ‘gates’ that open and close by moving the poles can also be made in fences.

Making fences is arduous work, done by two or three men; 250–300 metres of reindeer fence can be made in a day. The construction involves a division of labour. One man lays the first row of the fence. He cuts trees at their roots and places them horizontally on their stumps. Another man makes the second row by making the stakes and driving them into the ground. Then he puts the poles between them. Laying the third, last row is the most difficult work. A fence 5–6 kilometres long takes three people 20–30 days to make.

### 3.3.11 Reindeer salt troughs

Special structures for feeding salt to reindeer are made in winter, spring, and autumn camps. They are long logs of medium or large diameter, in which hollows are made 5 centimetres deep. The logs are put on two supporting stumps that are cut very low, at a height of 30–60 centimetres. Winter camps contain 4–5 reindeer salt troughs (Fig. 71).

![Figure 71. Salt trough.](image)

### 3.3.12 Dog shelters

Hunting dogs—the *laika* breed—play an important role in the life of Evenki people. They are man’s main helpers in hunting wild animals for fur and meat, and also in guarding. A single household has about three dogs. The role that dogs play in Evenki life is reflected in the way they keep them.
In summer and especially in autumn, before the hunting season, the dogs are kept on a leash in camp, with no special shelter made for them. In summer, the dogs dig holes in the ground to protect themselves from mosquitoes.

Evenkis make special shelters for their dogs in winter camps (ordinarily not at temporary camps). Two types of shelters for dogs can be singled out, according to my research material. The first type is a *dolgan* ‘lean-to’. A horizontal pole is placed on supports formed by growing trees at a height of about 1.0–1.5 metres. Then poles about 1.5–2 metres in height are placed against the horizontal pole at an angle of 45°. Sometimes the poles are covered with bark or branches (Fig. 72). The dogs are tied to the longitudinal pole or the vertical posts. The Nivkh people also make such shelters for dogs (Taksami 1961). The other type of shelter for dogs is a lodge or a gabled shelter called *abdun*. The frame of a dog-lodge is made of several short poles set in a conical manner and covered with bark, conifer branches, or rags. Then some snow is put on top (Fig. 73). Northern Mansi people also make such structures (Fedorova 1986). Gabled shelters are made of poles and bark, or of split boards.

![Figure 72. Dolgan shelter for dogs.](image)

### 3.3.13 The steam-bath

The tradition of making [standalone] steam-baths in Evenki winter camps was borrowed from the Russians. Today, a *bania* ‘steam-bath’ is built at almost every winter camp. It consists of a 2 × 2 or 2 × 3-metre log house, erected with lapped corners (*v oblo*), chinked with moss, and with a gabled roof often covered with larch bark; the height of the ceiling is 1.8–2.0 metres. The interior contains an iron stove, a sweating shelf, and some small benches. Two builders can make a steam-bath within a week, but in fact more time is
needed, because the moss is collected in May and the larch bark is set aside in June.

The various ways in which different ethnic groups order their environment is revealed in the types and forms of their structures. This analysis of Evenki dwelling and domestic structures has shown that regardless of local peculiarities in type, form, and constructive element, Evenki nomadic architecture exhibits certain specific features that should be considered as being part of an integral whole.

One of the significant ethnic features of any given people is the specific layout of their settlements, which is connected to their economy and way of life.

Evenki built structures retain several general principles that could only have evolved among a people with a highly varied, mobile culture. All their structures are required to be multifunctional, safe, comfortable, and robust. Another principle is that of efficiency [dostatochnost']. This implies that the building process should consume a minimum of time, energy, and material. In Evenki architecture, this results in a large degree of variety in each structure, with one type of structure having many subtypes. Another important principle, common to all nomadic architecture, is that of mobility. Finally, not least important is the aesthetic principle in selecting campsites. The architecture of mobile settlements cannot be appreciated without understanding the surrounding landscape and environment. Thus, when scouting for a location,

Figure 73. Abdun shelter for dogs.
a great deal of consideration is given to the scenery surrounding the camp. Scholars and travellers who have managed to visit Evenki *stoibishcha* have all remarked on the high aesthetic qualities of the sites chosen for these camps (Shirokogoroff 1929: 317) [Fig.74].

*Figure 74. View from an Evenki camp, 1991.*
Chapter 4. The spiritual aspects of ordering space

4.1 Religious belief

4.1.1 Orthodoxy

Under the influence of Christianity, the traditional animism and shamanism of Evenkis acquired a syncretic character. By the turn of the 20th century, most Evenkis became Orthodox. The Orthodox faith was propagated by the few clergymen who lived in the Tunguska region, by Orthodox-leaning merchants, and, mostly, by peasants [Russian settlers].

The Russians living on the Lower Tunguska River were Orthodox. The centre of the congregation (formerly known as the Lower Tunguska pogost ‘church district’) was the Church of the Transfiguration of Our Lord in the village of Preobrazhenka. The first church was built there in 1756. In 1910–20, the greater parish of Preobrazhenka included 12 villages, which among them also had five subordinate houses of worship—St. Innocent’s Church in Nepa, [another] Transfiguration Church in Zhdanova, the Julitta & Kyrikos [the Martyrs] Church in Os'kino, the St. Nicholas Church in Erbogachen, and the Kazan [Mother of God] Church in Erema—as well as four chapels—in Verkhnekalinino, Gazhenka (Kazan Chapel), Iur'eva, and Preobrazhenka (St. Alexander Nevski Chapel) (Kalinina 2000: 363–4).

The many superstitions and elements of pagan folk beliefs preserved in the worldview of local Russians have likely been reinforced by their living conditions and their contacts with the aborigines. The hydrographer V. Ia. Shishkov (1985), who worked in the area at the beginning of the 20th century, wrote that the Russian population of the Lower Tunguska was not as religious as the population of central regions of Russia: “The people are superstitious: they believe in ‘sybils’, and even men ride their staffs around their izbas on New Year’s Eve.” Unfortunately, I do not have enough information to elaborate on this theme. My field notes on this topic that are presented here have been collected incidentally. The Russians of the Lower Tunguska (mainly the male hunters) know the various prohibitions and rules connected with hunting (both Russian and Evenki traditions), as well as the rules of behaviour in Evenki dwellings, the rituals for making a fire, and so on. To have good luck in hunting, they make offerings in the form of gunpowder, buckshot, percussion caps, and/or matches, in the same places as Evenkis. “Whether you are a believer or not—you should leave [an offering,]” a Russian hunter explained to me. The peasants displayed great tolerance and interest in Evenki attitudes to shamanism and other hunting and fishing religious traditions. In the 1920s–40s, Russians living in the area of the Three Rivers (Inner Mongolia, China) that bordered Evenki territory were greatly interested in the shaman views of Evenkis. E. J. Lindgren (1938: 619) noted: “Cossack hunters sometimes witness performances when they stay at Tungus
camps, and often take the opportunity of asking the shaman’s advice.” Such things occurred in other regions of Siberia, as well.

Significant changes occurred in Evenki society and religious consciousness after [their territories] became a part of Russia, with the activities of the missionary church, and equally if not more so during the [Soviet] years of imposed atheism, which led to the decrease, transformation, and sometimes even loss of Evenki traditional beliefs and ceremonies.

Many Evenkis would follow the Orthodox faith in a formal manner. They lacked a complete comprehension of the essence and ideas of the Christian dogmas and rites. For example, Evenkis revered the attributes of Christian beliefs—especially crosses and icons—as sacred religious objects [with power] almost equal to their traditional ones. When they moved from one place to another, such objects were carried by specially consecrated reindeer, usually of white colour. These objects were always kept in the same place in the lodge—in the honoured *malu* [where the master-spirit of the lodge lived]. In this spot, an icon or a cross was fastened to the lodgepoles, and small wooden sculptures—family spirit-guards—were kept in special containers. Evenki folklore was enriched by the [Christian] ideas of Heaven and Hell, which they associated with the respective Evenki higher and lower worlds (Sirina 1993). Christian holy days were observed by the Tungus people, particularly the feasts of St. Peter (12 July) and St. Nicholas (19 December), when they usually went to town. This tradition was observed in almost all parts of Siberia.

Christianity greatly influenced Evenki mortuary traditions. Evenkis switched from aerial burials to burying their deceased in the ground, although one could still encounter children’s aerial burials up until the mid-20th century. Religious duality was also reflected in the mortuary structures and the conduct of funeral rites. Nevertheless, many Evenki traditions and rites were preserved. These include the ceremony of seeing off the spirit of the deceased, leaving the personal belongings of the deceased at the burial place or in places along their nomadic routes, breaking the objects belonging to the deceased that were to “accompany” them to the other world, and a special way of sewing of burial clothing and footwear.

4.1.2 Shamanizing

Shamanizing [*shamanstvo*] used to be widespread throughout this region. It was passed down in “the same way as a tree grows—by its roots.” Both men and women could be shamans, according to the common tradition for peoples of the North. Evenki shamans could not heal their own relatives, and when their relatives fell ill they would invite the shamans of other groups. The Evenkis of the Erbogachen and Nakanno groups would invite shamans mainly from around the Strelka and Ilimpeia rivers in Krasnoiarsk Krai, and those people would invite the Katanga shamans. For example, sick people from Strelka in Krasnoiarsk Krai were specially brought to old Chelakan,
who was believed to cure people of the measles: “Many people he cured. Great shaman he was. The demons helped [him].”

Shamans were respected figures, and sometimes they were elected as princes [shulenga or kniaz']. V. Ia. Shishkov once met the shulenga of the Kurkugir clan, with his wife and niece, and took their picture: “… The shulenga travelled with us to Annavar (now the town of Vanavara in the Evenki Autonomous Okrug—Auth.) for a week. He greeted us with this phrase: Moi chasy sovsem pomer [ungrammatical Russian] ‘My pocketwatch has died’. A shulenga is elected by each Tungus clan for three years. He is granted great powers to judge and show mercy. He collects iasak from his relatives, who live dispersed throughout hundreds of versts, and once a year, in winter, he takes the iasak to Kezhma village, in the volost’” (KRKM Shishkov Album). Evenki shamans were usually skilled blacksmiths.

Animism and shamanizing did not disappear under the centuries-long influence of Christianity. The Soviet authorities fought against shamanizing. It was no coincidence that the main issue which caused much bewilderment and distrust concerning the new [Soviet] rule was denying the shamans the right to vote. The following questions were recorded during the first raion conference of Evenkis in 1928: “Why have the shamans been accused of being saboteurs, where did that come from?” (GAIO R528-1-9: 36v). “There are no kulaks among us, we are all workers, so why are shamans denied the right to vote?” asked one of the delegates (ibid.). Prosecutor Vlasov mentioned the problem of “ideological pollution among members of the district executive committee” in his report on the work of the Nakanno Native Council. He insinuated that Simon Kaplin, the chairman of the Kondogir Native Council, was the son of a shaman, and that the chairman of the Nakanno Native Council was also the son of a shaman and a kulak.

[The following testimony was taken] from an unnumbered file in the archives of the Erbogachen Rural Council:

Case file of Sanaiaik-Mungalov, charged with raping Dondina, a poor Tungus woman. The case was investigated by the clan court, which fined the defendant 20 rubles. The second time, he was sentenced and imprisoned. During the interrogation, he testified as follows:

1. When I start beating the drum, at that time demons appear and start talking and singing with me, and I repeat their words.

2. When I heal a person, I ask the demons the question whether it is possible to cure the patient or not, and the demons always give me an answer, either yes or no. Sometimes they lie...

3. There are different kinds of demons: a head, or a torso, legs. They don’t come to me right away but through the images of animals and birds that I make and hang on trees before the shamanizing procedure.

4. Shamaniu ‘I do shaman healing’ because the Tunguses ask me to.

5. The demons cannot rescue him [the accused] from the court because they lost each other on the way [lit. lost each other’s trail]. They don’t exactly know where the accused is.
The following shamans lived in the 1930s–50s:

- among the Nakanno Evenkis—N. P. Konenkin, Nikolai L’vovich Kaplin, and Vasilii Prokopevich Kaplin (*dedushka* ‘Old Man’ Lanchila);
- among the Ilimpeia and Nakanno Evenkis—Aleksei Nikolaevich Kaplin (*dedushka* Dondin);
- among the Tokma Evenkis—Gavrila Kaplin of the Khaniagir clan (*dedushka* Chelakan), buried in Verkhnekalinino, Boiarshin from Bokovikov village (buried in Verkhnekalinino), and Mikhail Barnaulov from Icheda;
- among the Erbogachen Evenkis—Anna Panteleevna Kaplina of the Pangarakai clan, buried in Dagaldyn; and
- among the Teteia Evenkis—Nikolai Kolobovshin and Yakov Polikarpovich Veretnov, one of the last shamans.

In the first quarter of the 20th century, there were many shamans in the Tokma area: “The faith in shamans is flourishing mightily … most of the shamans are women (out of six, one is a man)” (GAIO R538-1-233: 24). G. M. Vasilevich worked among the Tokma Evenkis in the late 1920s, and wrote about three shamans—one elderly woman and two young men. She described the shaman M. Barnaulov from Icheda as follows (about whom I was also told in 1989 by Evenkis who remembered him): “He is externally a perfectly healthy and not a nervous man. He has been shamanizing for only two years now. He became a shaman quite unexpectedly; earlier, he made fun of it all, then about one and a half years ago, evil spirits [*saitany*] and all kinds of animals gave him no peace at night. With no training, he began singing the shaman songs, made himself a costume, got a drum, and began shamanizing. He himself rather guardedly tried to find out from me why this happened to him” (GAIO R565-1-61: 11). In the 1930s, he was arrested for shamanizing and taken to Kirensk by horse. The old people remembered his last words: “Nothing will remain of this village except stumps.” This prophecy came true, as Icheda became amalgamated.

At present, Evenkis living on the Lower Tunguska River have only their recollections of shamanizing. The radical change of life principles—or, to be more exact, things such as changing the nomadic for the settled life, using healthcare services, and the atheistic upbringing—played a significant role in putting an end to shamanizing. Evenkis still remember that time very well, and today they are not afraid to speak about shamanizing. A critical view of the problem predominates, with shamanism considered to be a legitimate phenomenon and shamans respected as priests, healers, and wise people (Sirina 1992). The elderly people know the religious places associated with great shaman rites, and they know the shamans’ graves. The last shaman of the Katanga Evenkis died in 1989. He had neither a drum nor special clothes,
but he could foretell people’s future and sometimes performed spiritual healing. There is still hope that new shamans will appear.

The memories of shamanizing are also connected to the places of great shamanic performances that are preserved in the taiga. Usually, they were used only once and people never returned to them. There is a special reverence for such places: they should not be visited if it is not necessary, and one should not hunt there or take anything from there. Such places of social and spiritual associations are considered by Evenkis to be protected and reserved territories. Today, such prohibitions are not explained. Rather, they are perceived as precautions. People seem to have a vague idea about harmful spirits inhabiting such places (or that the spirits are perhaps unmanageable without a shaman’s assistance). Certain places—both of natural origin and connected with human activities—are also considered to be religious places of social and spiritual importance. For example, the places of great shamanic performances are marked with special structures, as are the places where they would make bows or to do smithing work, as I. E. Maksimova has suggested (1994: 92).

4.2 Prohibitions, traditions, and rites connected with ordering space

Each concrete group of Evenkis, as well as those of Nganasans, Enetses, Nenetses, and other peoples of the North, believe in a world of spirits attached to a permanent territory, which influences the well-being of their communities [obshchiny]. The places people occupy display certain signs of being ordered. The people living there develop a psychologically distinct, emotionally charged attitude to the land that is often expressed by the phrase “my land.” The idea of “one’s land” [svoia zemlia] is formed by prohibitions, traditions, and rites that are connected with Evenki architecture, the material ordering of the environment, and with distinguishing certain natural objects in that environment. This special attitude can be remarked in the way that Evenkis understand their dwellings and household structures, their religious and burial structures, and the sites on which they are located.

Among the prohibitions known and practiced by Evenkis are those connected with the lodges in which they live in or have left behind. Evenkis conceive of dwellings as primarily protective structures, both supplying and symbolizing their well-being and safety. The entrance, the exit, the smoke hole, the fireplace, and the earth in the lodge, as well as the poles of its frame and other built elements, are considered to be “boundary” objects. They mark the border between living space and the rest of the world.

A number of prohibitions govern the organization of the interior of Evenki dwellings. There continues to be a strict regulation of space between the owners and any guests in the lodge. The malu is especially honoured, and access to it is forbidden to representatives of other clans, and to women (Shirokogoroff 1929: 255). Evenkis believe that this place is occupied by
the spirit-master of the lodge. Long ago, they would keep family idols and figurines of personal protector gods there, in rovduga satchels (“a small figure of a man—made of wood, clad in a belted parka made of bear hide, and wrapped in ermines”). The figures were kept in the malu or tied to the poles of the lodge frame on the western side of the dwelling. Such family idols [bozhki] were to be found in every lodge along with the occupants’ belongings. They were also called malu, or sometimes bovadyl, by Katanga Evenkis.

The fireplace of the lodge was especially honoured. The spirit of the fire and of the fireplace occupied the central position in the pantheon of Evenki family protectors. This spirit also functioned as the spirit-owner of the lodge, the home-hearth, and the entire household, as well as the role of spirit-guard of the family and the clan (Rychkov 1917: 39; Anisimov 1958: 93). The fire was understood to be a benevolent being. The togo musunin ‘spirit-guard of the fire’ was later anthropomorphized and thought of as an old woman (“babushka”) who lived under the fireplace in the lodge (Vasilevich 1969: 221).

The fire is still considered to be very important, although the origin of the special beliefs towards it has been almost forgotten. Elderly informants explained their attitude to the fire in the following way [e.g.]: “My mother-in-law told me, ‘Never scold the fire, neither with knife nor with word.’ There was someone in the fire—a babushka.” A rite existed whereby a bride, before first entering the bridegroom’s lodge, performed a ceremony of joining his clan. Part of this rite involved feeding the fire (the spirit-master of the fire) with some fat and grease. Fat was put into the fire during wakes, as well (Vasilevich 1962: 118). It was prohibited to walk around the fireplace in a lodge. People had to leave a lodge in the same way as they entered it. This prohibition is still maintained today. Strict prohibitions were associated with the threshold. For example, a pregnant woman was not allowed to sit at the threshold of a lodge. Such prohibitions have gradually turned into rules of etiquette.

According to the traditions of Katanga Evenkis, it is not permitted to walk around a lodge in which people are living, or an old, deserted one. Nganasan, Nenets, and Enets people also observe the tradition “never to circle one’s trail around a lodge, or even belongings left behind somewhere. ‘Circling’ [kruzhenie] was an element of the most harmful kind of magic” (Gulevskii 1993). Evenkis explain this tradition as follows. If the rule is broken, a child of the family living in the lodge, or a child of the person who broke the rule, can fall ill. “One stupid woman ran around the lodge. Her child [fell ill] and was at the point of death. She did not tell the elders about it, but they guessed it themselves later, when she ran around (someone else’s) lodge. But it was too late; the child died. They should have thrown fat into the fire much earlier.” Some informants stressed that old people had no right to walk around a lodge if they were not members of the respective Evenki clan. They offered a realistic explanation for the prohibition to walk around an old lodge: “To
walk around a lodge is to feel loneliness. There aren’t many of us Evenkis left. To walk around a lodge and recollect—won’t do anybody any good.” It is forbidden or undesirable to stay the night in another person’s old camp, or in another person’s [abandoned] lodge. If there is such a necessity, one has to sleep in the place closest to the entrance of the lodge, called chonga.

One must not touch the frame-poles of lodges whose owners have died. V. A. Tugolukov recorded that Evenkis living in Ekonda told him: “If it’s a chum of the deceased, you shouldn’t touch it” (1960: 176). Evenki architecture is inseparably linked with the world of the person who created it. It is unseparable from that person. The architect, builder, and dweller are collapsed into one agent. It is believed that old structures preserve the imprint of their creators and owners. This attitude applies not only to the structures, but also to the land on which they are created.

Even according to the vague ideas Evenkis have about such things today, if the above-mentioned rules are broken, a khargi ‘evil spirit’ arrives. Khargi means ‘a devil’, ‘a place’, ‘the taiga’, ‘a wild deer’, or ‘spirit-master of the lower world’ in the Evenki language. Katanga Evenkis also use the names bovadyl or bugadyl as synonyms for the khargi spirit. The notion of bugadyl for Katanga Evenkis is different from that for all Evenkis in general, who consider that spirit to be positive (Vasilevich 1959: 160). Katanga Evenkis used the word khargi ‘a devil’ as a synonym of the word bugadyl, to denote the harmful, bad spirit that was believed to live far in the forest. In the past, such prohibitions seem to have served to create boundaries between one’s own and other people’s territories, or between the protected territory of one’s dwelling and territory open to ruinous, elemental forces. Moreover, the prohibitions applied only at the level of dwellings, since there were ultimately no fixed boundaries to the clan territories, whereas the sites of Evenki family dwellings and other structures were unquestionably the property of the given families while they were occupied.

Evenkis associate the dolboni ‘northern side’ behind the back part of inhabited lodges with darkness, night, and death. The personal belongings of the deceased are hung by relatives on the dolboni—on the external back wall of a lodge, behind the malu, though not necessarily in an exact geographical northern direction. A domesticated reindeer is killed on such occasions, in a place a little farther to the north of the lodge. Nothing is built behind lodges or in the areas adjoining them.

There are also certain rules concerning the outbuildings. For example, the noku cache and the puri [ground] storehouse are built outside the living space of the campsite.

According to my field notes, Evenkis have prohibitions surrounding caches and, especially, ground-level storehouses [ambary]. These forbid people from walking around them, for the same reason as around a lodge. One should not touch or take anything in storage structures belonging to other people, let alone the deceased—and especially shamans. According to I. E. Maksimova (1994), if one had to take something from the storage

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structure of another person, “... he put two sticks on the path, one bent in the
direction he had come from and the other showing the direction he went, as a
sign of obligation to pay his debt.” In the taiga, one can still come across the
ground storehouses of shamans with their old things. The head of the local
museum has been futilely asking Evenkis to bring some things from them
to the museum. The prohibition to take things from other people’s storage
structures is explained in a vague way: Evenkis believe there is a spirit there
that walks around, sighing and groaning.

S. M. Shirokogoroff (1929: 297) wrote that representatives of the
same clan could take things they needed from the storage structures of their
relatives if they observed certain rules—for example, if they returned things
within a certain period of time. The materials I have collected at the end of
the 20th century among the Katanga Evenkis do not confirm this. The change
could be explained as follows. At approximately the middle and second part
of the 20th century, Evenkis started getting rid of their idols (their family
spirit-guards and other sacred things that were prohibited to outsiders), which
they all had in their lodges. There was not any precedent among Evenkis
as to how to do it properly. Formally, it should not have been done at all.
It is difficult to discern why people did this. Among the reasons could be:
the pervasive [Soviet] anti-religious propaganda and the danger of having
religious convictions and attributes; the death of family members to whom
such things had belonged; the reluctance or inability of Evenki youth to keep
them properly; and the fear of such religious things becoming dangerous
for them, especially if people of different clans who were not relatives lived
in the same camp and had different idols. All these things seem to have led
to the people’s wish to get rid of the figures of their spirit-guardians (Turov
1975). The ways of doing so can be traced today on the basis of legends
(though the legends might have sanctioned these methods, as well). Katanga
Evenkis tell the following legends in this connection:

Once there was a brave man, Uvachan by surname, who expressed his wish
to do away with all the bovadyl ‘evil spirits’. He gathered them all from the
people and rode to the river in winter to drown the bovadyl in an ice-hole.
He drowned them there, and only one of the evil spirits jumped out. Next
time, the bovadyl was carried by a consecrated reindeer. The owners wanted
to get rid of the idol, but they did not know how, and they were afraid. While
travelling, they put it on a saddle without fastening it. The reindeer walked,
shaking it around, but the idol never fell.

A woman was told: leave your malu ‘idol’ in the cache, don’t take it with
you. She left it in the cache, in a potakui ‘saddlebag’ among her manatki
‘belongings’. There was an Evenki, Boiarshin by name, he made barrels at
the Kirekan riverside; and he made a golomo ‘sod house’. He was drafted,
but he decided to escape the army by running into the forest—a wood-
goblin talked him into it. He followed the kolkhoz reindeer to the Tetera
River. But soon he ran out of supplies—salt, cartridges…. There were some

§17 The proper upkeep of idols required regular smudging and “feedings” of blood or
fat. These goods in themselves would have been difficult to access in Soviet times.
—Ed.
old storehouses on the Tetera. He said to his wife, ‘Let’s go through those caches now, maybe we’ll find some salt or tobacco.’ … She waited for him [on the ground] while he crawled up into a cache. After some time, he came down, red-faced, saying nothing. Then he said: ‘Let’s go, we won’t touch anything.’ But his face was red. At home, he got a fever and couldn’t get up the next morning. It turned out that he had looked in a potakui, and there was a small man, like a child, who seized his hand; very hot…. So the man falls unconscious because he got into that potakui where the malu was left. And he died.

So people tried to get rid of their spirit-guards when moving from one camp to another, by drowning them in the river or leaving them in the cache. It is interesting to note that some Evenki groups—for example, groups of Chunia Evenkis—started making special caches for keeping their family religious relics (Turov 1975: 202). The Katanga Evenkis did not make any special caches for their religious small sculptures, according to my field notes. They may have kept them in ordinary caches, together with their other things. The prohibition to take things from other people’s caches must have originated from this tradition. The materials on Katanga and Chunia Evenkis show evidence of a transition from keeping family religious relics at mobile settlements to keeping them in the taiga, outside the camps.

Burial places and cemeteries, i.e., the graves of ancestors, are an important example of the formation of special attachments to living-places, as “one’s own.” According to Evenki traditions, the deceased were buried near the place of their death: “Previously, wherever you roamed, if a man died, you’d bury him right there.” The lodge would be dismantled, and all the other members of the family would move to another place and avoided returning to the old place. Some other peoples of the North, for instance Nganasans, Enetses, and Evens, have the same tradition of burying the deceased in the place of their death. Though Evenkis (as well as Nganasans, Enetses, and other peoples) did not use clan cemeteries as territorial markers (e.g., like the Nenets khal’mer), neither were their burials in the taiga done in an arbitrary fashion, as can be seen from the above material. Evenkis travelled about within the boundaries of certain territories (albeit quite amorphous ones). Aerial burial places would logically be located within them. It is interesting that today, the log cabins at winter camps in which somebody has died, or in which the deceased has been, are burned or deserted by Evenkis. New houses are always built in fresh places.

Evenki cemeteries appeared in the area in the middle of the 20th century. Thus, a new type of territory appeared in Evenki culture that was not directly connected with the older type of clan or community places. It nonetheless had a special importance. In settlements of mixed ethnic populations, there were usually two cemeteries, organized along ethnic lines. The villages of Luzhki, Bur, and Preobrazhenka had both Russian and Evenki cemeteries. Evenkis and Russians still bury their dead in different cemeteries in the village of Ika, and there are [separate] Evenki and Iakut cemeteries in the village of Khamaker, where most of the population is Evenki and Iakut.
In Evenki cemeteries, the graves (burial places) are organized according to family clans, where close relatives are buried near each other, or fences are put up around their graves. This tradition is maintained at both Evenki and “mixed” cemeteries. Thus, one wishes to be buried in “one’s own” land, which settled Evenkis think of as the isolated fenced place in the cemetery, in the same row with one’s relatives. All these facts can be interpreted as their specific psychological adaptation to the new cultural phenomena, as well as their attempt to preserve Evenki traditions in the new life conditions.

Today, even if they lead a settled way of life in villages, Evenkis still consider it best to be buried in the forest, on land occupied by them in the past or used in the present. This wish is expressed by semi-settled Evenkis to an even greater extent. The grandfather of V. G. Konenkin (Iur'ev), a shaman of the Preobrazhenka group of Evenkis, asked to be buried in his hunting grounds, not far from Preobrazhenka village, as his camp had been there, he had roamed there for a long time, and he liked that place very much. There are more examples of this kind.

Burial places were usually never visited by the Evenki people (Mazin 1984: 64; Sokolova 1962: 74; Tugolukov 1980). The same attitude to burial places prevails today—both to those in the taiga and those in the villages. Thus, the burial places look neglected and are overgrown with weeds. The attitude of Evenkis to these places is complex. Some are afraid of going to such places. Even relatives do not go to the burial places very often, especially after the first three years following a person’s burial: “People go to graves for three years. When they are travelling, they might stop there, and throw some grease or moose brains in a fire. They sit and talk a while. After three years, they don’t go there anymore.” The Tungus people of Manchuria believe that the spirit of the deceased stays in this world for three years, or that it could return during this time (Qiu 1983: 106). The Khanda Evenkis living in Kazachinsk-Lena raion of Irkutsk oblast' still have a superstitious attitude regarding the site called Pokoiniki [Russ. “the dead”], located 4 kilometres from their town, because there had once been a child’s aerial burial there, [consisting of a coffin made of a single piece of wood, called] a koloda (Bychkov and Iampol'skaia 1989: 66) [Fig. 75n]. Katanga Evenkis still have similar notions. They believe that for three years, spirits of the dead visit the old places where they used to live and work, and do harm there. Illnesses are explained by the harm done by the dead (or their spirits). “For three years, the spirit of the dead walks around the house. Inside a lodge, it walks around the chimka or ikepten pole. For three years, you should put some grease near the chimka each night. But now, if we remember, we put it; if we don’t, we forget.” Burial places are always encircled with prohibitions.
4.3 Religious and mortuary structures

4.3.1 The shaman’s lodge

When one writes about Evenki religious structures, the shaman’s lodge is the best example. It is known as the *nymnandiak* or *shevenchedek* in the literature. This structure has been described in detail in ethnographic materials (Anisimov 1952; Suslov 1927, 1932; Utkin 1986; Iampol'skaia 1993). The region where such lodges were made seems to have been quite large, and included Evenkis living along the Enisei River, near Lake Baikal, and along the Amur River. I pay attention to this specific structure in order to better characterize the way Evenkis artificially order their material environment, and in particular the structures that are directly connected with religious beliefs and rites. Obviously, the structural features of the lodge illustrate Evenkis’ ideas of space and of the dwelling as a protective structure.

As is known, shaman performances [*kamlaniia*] took place either in the lodges where people lived or in specially built structures—the *nymnandiak* ‘shaman’s lodge’. A shaman’s lodge would be specially made for the so-called *bol'shie kamlaniia* ‘great shamanic performances’, which were not held often and were associated with ensuring the well-being of the whole Evenki group. On such occasions, shamans would see off the spirits of the deceased joining the world of the dead, as well as heal people and reindeer. The shaman’s lodge consisted of a complex of structures, the layout of which reflected Evenki ideas about the world. The traditional model of their world was tripartite.

It should be mentioned that other Siberian peoples, such as Nganasans and Selkups, also had special structures for shaman performances, whose parts were also correlated with their traditional models of the world.

The *nymnandiak* was constructed in three parts: [First,] a *dulu* ‘skin lodge’ that was bigger than usual, to have enough room for everybody and to stress the extraordinary character of the event taking place in it. [Second,] it had a *darpe* ‘upper-world gallery’ comprising a complex of wooden monumental sculptures and associated with the mouth of the shaman river, and life. These were placed before the lodge entrance, on the eastern side. Finally, the *onan* ‘lower-world gallery’ associated with the river of the dead, and death, was placed behind the back wall of the lodge, towards the western side (Anisimov 1958). The circular space occupied by the lodge symbolized the middle world. Sometimes it was interpreted as a shaman island. In the middle of the lodge was the *turu* ‘shaman tree’—a new larch, the top of which was put through the smoke hole.

The shaman’s lodge was always constructed in the same way. It was built by all the men living in the camp (or camps) except for the shaman, who gave instructions at the final stage of the work (Anisimov 1958: 103). When a shaman performance was over, the lodge was abandoned.
The architecture of the shaman’s lodge reflected a mythological model of the world. Taken as a complex, all three parts of the structure symbolized the material embodiment of the Evenkis’ tripartite model of the world. It was a special sacred space that would not lose its importance even after the shaman performance was over and the structures had been used.

Before a great shamanic performance, [one or more] reindeer were slain as an offering. The hides were hung on the trees around the lodge, or a lokogor ‘special offering pole’ was set up, on which the hide of the reindeer slain for the ceremony was stretched. The shaman assisted in the slaughter of the reindeer. V. Ia. Shishkov photographed such an offering place. According to his description, “This hide was intended to be taken to the church at the village of Kezhma, as an offering to God. On top of it (see at centre of hide) there are some wooden figures of a moose. The moose is taking an offering to God in the southern direction, ‘in the direction of the bright day’ (the North is considered to be ‘the dark day’). The picture was taken at a site 150 versts away from the mouth of the Ilimpeia River, on the way to Annavar” (KRKM Shishkov Album).

The Evenki G. G. Gorbunov told me about another such place. He happened upon it by chance in October, while hunting for pelts. The place was situated on a hill, high on a riverbank. There were some lodge frames there. The centre of the site, approximately 100 square meters in area, was occupied by figures of horses that were carved of wood; “they had legs and looked real.” There were about 10 figures on that site, including wooden sculptures of birds set on the tops of dead trees. When he told his grandmother what he had seen, she forbade him to hunt there anymore, and she told him that great shamanic performances had taken place there. Such a space was probably attractive to different spirits, and would always carry the signs of past events. It did not lose its significance even many years after the shamanic performance and the end of the literal purpose of the structures.

4.3.2 Mortuary structures

[There has been a heavy Iakut influence on the types of graveside or mortuary structures among Evenkis in the northern part of the raion. These structures have an external appearance like a Iakut serge ‘horse tethering post’. Z. P. Sokolova (1986: 41) noted that “the ritual of placing carved poles on graves can be associated with the traditions of horse-herding peoples.” All serge have three well-delineated elements: an upper part (which is cylindrical or sculpted), a middle part (which is hollowed), and a lower part (which is extended and buried in the ground). Contemporary and, especially, older mortuary structures in the Evenki cemeteries at Nakanno and Teteia closely resemble Iakut horse tethering posts. Earlier, there seemed to be a much more widespread practice of building trapezoidal wooden pedestals called golbtsy out of logs or split tree trunks. You can find them even today, but usually]
mixed together with an ensemble of carved tethering posts, Orthodox crosses, and sculpted animal images (such as horses).]^{518}

There are several different types of *serge* mortuary structures. The first type is a tall wooden cross, with a unique upper section that consists of stacked cylinders (“cupolas”), some of which may be grooved. Informants have described that there could be about three cupolas in such a cross. Older deceased persons would have more cupolas, up to a maximum of three. Such carved poles were combined with a *golbets* (Fig. 75a, b). The second type is a carved wooden pole dug into the ground, with carved figures in the middle section and a five-pointed star at the top (Fig. 75c). The third type is a tapered vertical wooden pedestal (about 70–80 cm high, with the base 25 × 25 cm). A stick with two tines, one bigger than the other, is attached to the upper,

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{518} This text was omitted by error from the second Russian edition. The author asked that it be restored to this edition. —*Ed.*

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Figure 75. Types of Evenki tombstones in Nakanno, Erbogachen, and Teteia. Drawing (n) shows two examples of traditional aerial graves.
pitched part of the tomb (Fig. 75d). The fourth type is a low wooden post (about 1.2 m high), the lower elongated part of which is dug into the ground, the middle part grooved, and the upper part slightly broadened and with a pitched top (Fig. 75e).

Besides these fixtures placed on graves, there are also ordinary wooden crosses, obelisks with a gabled top, and small wooden columns [Fig. 75f, g, i]. These mortuary structures seem to have been differentiated according to the age of the deceased. For example, cylinders (“cupolas”) were not made for children’s graves. Instead, they would erect straight wooden posts, “like arrows” (Fig. 75h).

Taking into account the relatively short period of time during which the Evenki people have buried their deceased in the ground [Fig. 75n], one can suppose that the traditions of erecting mortuary structures, and their variety, have been borrowed from neighbouring peoples—Iakuts and Russians.

Among the mortuary structures made in the southern part of the raion, there is a great variety of wooden crosses, with 4–6 sides (Fig. 75j, k [l, m]). More recently, one encounters standard tombs, with a five-pointed star at the top, or a cross if the deceased was old. Fenced-in graves are common.

Personal belongings of the deceased are hung on trees or horizontal rods near the cemetery (Fig. 76). They are intentionally damaged. Another tradition, whose origin I was not able to discern, is the tying of long rag ribbons to the mortuary structures.

Figure 76. Possessions of the deceased placed on a hanging rod near the grave.
Informants recounted that shamans were buried in the same way as ordinary people were, but also with some differences. Foreseeing their death, shamans could ask their people to bury them in a certain place and to put certain things into the grave.

Among the specific rules governing behaviour at cemeteries and near solitary graves are the following. One must not take away anything from there or touch the mortuary structures or the personal belongings of the deceased left nearby. When visiting a cemetery or a solitary grave in the taiga, one should smoke and throw some tobacco on the ground, especially where people intend to walk. The system of prohibitions and preventive measures [defines the spots for ritual placings,] both inside the territory occupied by the grave and around it.
Enormous political, socio-economic, and cultural changes took place [in Russia] during the ten-year period from 1990 to 2000. The USSR ceased to exist, and Russia became [one of] its legal successors. Branches of the economy were privatized, and the economy became oriented towards market relationships. This was done by the method of “shock therapy,” which affected the Russian North particularly painfully. What was the effect of the recent socio-economic changes on the life conditions of the people in the region under consideration, and of Evenkis in particular?

5.1 The economy of Katanga raion

[During the Soviet period,] the economy of Katanga raion was based on hunting and fishing. The raion received state subsidies to compensate it for its isolation from transportation arteries, and for the difficulty of shipping fuel and goods.

Several state-financed geological exploration companies—ekspeditsii—operated in the raion. By the early 1990s, the geologists had discovered some ten oil and gas fields in the basin of the Lower Tunguska, Lena, and Chona rivers. One of them—the Kovyktinsk Oilfield—was on the territory of Zhigalovo and Kazachinsk-Lena raions of Irkutsk oblast'. [In 2000] this field was just being put into production, and the developments were encroaching on the territory where the Khanda Evenkis traditionally lived and worked. Sooner or later, the other mineral and oil resources of Katanga raion will also be needed. However, in the short term, there was a sharp decrease in the volume of geological exploration being done in the raion. According to a resolution adopted by the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation on 29 November 1997, part of the Nepa Geophysical Exploration company was shut down, with the remaining part transferred to the town of Ust'-Kut, where it merged with the Angara-Lena Exploration company. The federal government allocated money for moving people from Katanga and Bodaibo raions, and the Irkutsk Oblast' Administration’s Committee for Development of the North was mandated to deal with these issues. Today, the Rusia [sic] Petroleum company holds the license to work the Katanga Oilfield. It makes annual payments to the local and regional budgets for its right to lease the oil-and-gas field (Pravda Severa [Katanga raion], 15.11.95).

The income of Katanga raion consists mainly of subsidies from the federal and oblast' governments, and from taxes paid by fur hunting enterprises. The raion remains narrowly specialized on fishing and hunting. In 1992, the Katanga Raion Administration formally supported the oblast'-level Law “On the lease of hunting resources in Irkutsk oblast’” (Decision No. 11/14MC of the Irkutsk Oblast' Soviet dated 16.09.92), according to which 13.6 million
hectares of forest and 14,000 hectares of water and marsh hunting territory were leased to residents of Katanga raion. The 600 leaseholders included 120 Evenkis. At that time, 40% of the population made their living from hunting, and almost the entire population indulged in sport fishing, gathering of berries and mushrooms. In 1998, the official unemployment rate in the raion was 20%, and the only regular source of income for part of the population was hunting for meat and fur, as well as fishing (AIO-KRS).

Perestroika and the more recent socio-economic crisis have provoked striking changes in the economic life and land tenure of Katanga raion. The state monopoly over the fur trade was broken up. The state hunting organizations, which once held responsibility for rural development and for municipal infrastructure of the villages (albeit on a small scale), no longer exist. Instead, new economic enterprises have been formed, based on private, joint-stock, and other forms of ownership.

These new enterprises were governed by Article 36 of the Federal [Russian] Law “On fauna,” Article 8 of the Federal Law “On guarantees to the rights of the sparse [malochislennykh] indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation” (30.04.99), and Article 7 of the Law of Irkutsk Oblast’ “On territories of traditional land use” (1997), which was superseded by the Federal Law “On territories of traditional land use by the sparse indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation” (11.05.01). According to the data of the regional hunting association, corroborated by the Irkutsk oblast’ Department for the Protection, Control, and Use of Animals, as of 2000 there were ten legal entities in Katanga raion that had hunting territories assigned to them and the right to obtain sable quotas [Table 8].

Their activities include organizing hunting, outfitting hunters, and buying fur. Outfitting is done by the pre-revolutionary principle of pokruta ‘purchase on credit, to be repaid later with the proceeds of the hunting season’. The [commercial] harvesting of wild forest products has ceased, and only small-scale dairy farming remains. In 1997, these organizations still had some small herds of cattle and horses—34 horses in Erbogachen; 22 horses and 21 head of cattle in Erema; and 153 horses and 189 head of cattle, including 34 dairy cows, in the village of Preobrazhenka. Some of the cattle were sold to individuals during the reorganization of the state hunting and fishing enterprises.

All these organizations emerged after the split-up of the former state-owned hunting enterprises into smaller units (Fig. 77). For example, the Denke Municipal Corporation was created out of the Inarigda chapter of the Katanga branch of the state hunting co-op [koopzveropromkhoz]. The Katanga Furs CJSC [closed joint-stock company] was formed on the basis of the headquarters of the Katanga Promkhoz (Erbogachen branch). The Sibir'

§19 Unlike in other circumpolar countries, in the former Soviet Union at the first part of the post-Soviet period, public utilities such as electricity, public housing, heating, and water were owned and operated by monopoly fur hunting enterprises and not by municipalities. The cost of this duty was a major drain on these organizations when the system of state subsidies was eliminated. —Ed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Territory (ha)</th>
<th>Director</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katanga Furs Closed Joint-Stock Company (CJSC [ZAO])</td>
<td>4,624,700</td>
<td>A. A. Andreev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibir’ CJSC</td>
<td>4,524,800</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sever CJSC</td>
<td>527,000</td>
<td>V. N. Menshov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girkil Ltd. [OOO]</td>
<td>1,762,200</td>
<td>N. M. Pachinskaia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erema Ltd.</td>
<td>348,800</td>
<td>A. P. Koshkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernak Ltd.</td>
<td>295,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katanga [Raion Hunting &amp; Fishing Assoc.]</td>
<td>280,800</td>
<td>I. Glushchenko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denke Municipal Corporation</td>
<td>258,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Hunting Preserve</td>
<td>113,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energiia [Municipal Corporation]</td>
<td>716,000</td>
<td>V. I. Kiniakin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13,451,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Data provided by V. P. Konenkin.

CJSC used to be part of the Preobrazhenka State Hunting Co-op; and Ereka Ltd. used to be the Ereka chapter of the Preobrazhenka State Hunting Co-op. Even the directors of the new enterprises were the same as the old ones. In theory, the only new actors in the new competitive economy were the national (clan) communities. These are described below [Fig. 77].

V. P. Konenkin, a former senior game warden at the Katanga State Hunting Co-op, who later worked for the Katanga Raion Administration, stressed the following: “Because of the fragmented way [mozaichnost’] the territories have been allotted, none of the directors of the new hunting organizations can produce a description of the boundaries of their present territories.”

Tenured hunters now had the right to choose the new company they wanted to join. They were encouraged to “cross over” to them with “their own” hunting territories that they had taken on a long-term lease. I heard [diverging] opinions from several hunters (mostly newly arrived ones and Russian settlers) holding leases of this kind, as to whether or not private ownership of hunting grounds was a good thing.

According to current legislation, only corporate entities can hold long-term leases. Hunters wishing to use these grounds must obtain and strictly abide by single-season licenses, which specify the quantity of animals that can be hunted. Resolution No. 11 dated 8 January 1998, issued by the governor of Irkutsk oblast’, stipulates that fees must be charged for the right to use animal resources. Licensing problems are handled at the level of the oblast’ administration, which monitors the animal populations and helps with conducting a post-harvest survey. In December 2001, the Irkutsk Oblast’ Duma considered the [draft] law “On hunting” in first reading, and sent it back to the committee for revision. It did not allow any simplification of the
Figure 77. Hunting territories in Katanga raion following the reorganization of hunting enterprises in 2000. Map supplied by V. P. Konenkin.
procedure for obtaining hunting quotas by categories of nature users such as the peoples of the North and Russian settlers.

5.2 Population

Between 1989 and 2000, the population of Katanga raion decreased by nearly 4,000 people. The population figure of 5,647\textsuperscript{17} was similar to that of the general census of the population held in 1959. There are 557 Evenkis living in the raion [Table 9]. This number is more or less stable, while their share in the overall composition of the population has increased from 5.8% to 9.8%. The size of the population of Russian settlers also seems to have remained relatively stable. The overall population in the raion decreased because of the reduced volume of geological prospecting there. The exploration company town of Nadezhdinsk was closed, and its people left for various cities and raion centres in Irkutsk oblast' (Angarsk, Bratsk, and Irkutsk), as well as the European part of Russia. Many geologists left the village of Erbogachen. However, if natural resources start to be exploited again, the population of Katanga raion could once again increase. Similar situations have occurred in Alaska and Australia (Taylor 1991: 6–16).

In the last decade of the 20th century, most of the peoples of the Russian North moved intensively within their respective regions, and the Katanga Evenkis were no exception. Katanga Evenkis moved from small settlements to the raion centre of Erbogachen, where there was hope of finding any kind of job and a better standard of living. As other people left the North, Evenkis had new opportunities to obtain better [state] housing by moving to the raion centre. In 1996, five Evenkis from Inarigda town, three Evenkis from Erema village, and four Evenkis from Khamakar moved to the raion centre [Erbogachen].

The other trend was the migration of Evenkis out of Katanga raion to the neighbouring Evenki Autonomous Okrug in Krasnoiarsk Krai [Territory], as well as to the cities and other raion centres of Irkutsk oblast'. In 1996, 2 Evenkis left Inarigda for Tura in Evenkiia, while 3 Evenkis left Khamakar and 3 left Erema (they moved to the city of Bratsk in Irkutsk oblast'). In 1999, 19 Evenkis left Katanga raion and 5 moved in, while in 2000 12 Evenkis left the raion and 3 arrived (according to the data of the Katanga Raion Statistics Department). The active migration processes among the relatively small Evenki population of Katanga raion evoked the concern of the administration of Irkutsk oblast', which sent a special letter to the raion requesting a detailed account of current demographic changes and migration processes. [According to the files of the Committee for the Development of the North (AIO-KRS

\textsuperscript{17} Although a federal census has not been taken since 1989 [the most recent federal census was in 2002—\textit{Ed.}], interim censuses are taken yearly in each population point and raion. Here, I have used the official, unpublished data of the Katanga Raion Statistics Department.
2000), during the past ten years, the birth rate among the peoples of the North in Irkutsk oblast' decreased, while their mortality rate remained at the same level. There were 15.3 births per 1,000 population, and 17.0 deaths. In Katanga raion, the figures were 12 and 10–15, respectively. The birth rate in Katanga raion dropped by half in the decade from 1988 to 1999.

The average lifespan of Evenkis was 49 years for women and 46 years for men. The respective overall average figures in the oblast' were 68 years for women and 55 years for men. “Traumas, poisoning, and other accidents” [a composite statistical category] were the main cause of death, followed by “cardiovascular diseases and cancers” second, then “tuberculosis” (AIO-KRS 2000). According to published data, 2.4% of the deaths among Evenkis were due to suicide (Pravda Severa [Katanga raion], 18.01.97).

The rate of mixed marriages, especially between Evenki women and men of other nationalities, has remained high, as always.

Only a few Evenkis actually obtained better housing by moving to the raion centre. In 1998, the waiting list in Katanga raion for improved housing units had 379 Evenkis (or 124 families) on it, including 194 people in Erbogachen, 73 in Nakanno, and 49 in Khamakar (AIO-KRS).

Most Evenkis have either a secondary or incomplete secondary education. In 2000, of 332 Evenkis in the work force, only 115 were employed, a figure which includes 55 in rural professions (43 of them were hunters), 34 in public education, 8 in healthcare, 7 in culture & arts, and 7 in administration (according to the Katanga Raion Statistics Department). Thus, the rate of unemployment among Evenkis living in Katanga raion was about 50%, while in remote settlements it was about 80%.

5.3 A unique ethno-cultural environment

The fact that Evenkis have lived alongside Russian settlers in Katanga raion for more than three centuries has made for a unique local social environment. The cultures of these two groups have become closer to each other (Sirina 1999). For the last ten years, Russian settlers of Siberia have raised the issue of obtaining rights equal with the sparse indigenous peoples of the North. They argue that historically they have been living in the North in the same conditions as the indigenous people, and that they also depend on Nature in the same way. The Russian settlers in Iakutiia, Kamchatka, and Magadan have been especially active in raising this issue. As described below in section 5.5, the Russian settlers of Katanga raion have also discussed this issue. In regions with intensive inter-ethnic relations such as this one, it is not proper to study ethnic groups separately. It is necessary to conduct an integral assessment of the whole social, ethno-cultural environment.

In 1970–71 there were 57 hunters (both sport hunters and state hunters) at the Nepa branch of the Preobrazhenka State Hunting Co-op. Most of them were Russian settlers, with the local surnames of Bokovikov, Verkhoturov,
Table 9. The population of Evenkis in Katanga raion, based on sex and age, as of 1 January 2000.

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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erbogachen village</td>
<td>2,348</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,647</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>161</td>
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<td>268</td>
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Source: Katanga Raion Statistics Department.
Ineshin, and Zarukin. Some of them were quite old. Two hunters were 75 years old and one hunter was 83 years old. In Erema, the complement of 23 hunters included Russian settlers (Farkov, Verkhoturov, Safiannikov, Golovchenko) and Evenkis (Sychegir, Boiarshin, Kaplin). Of the 33 hunters in the village of Bur, 15 were tenured state hunters. Eleven hunters had the Russian settler family name Kuzakov, and there were also Evenkis with the surnames Nemtushkin, Salatkin, and Cheronchin. The hunting places of both groups probably had been inherited for several generations, beginning from the mid 18th–early 19th centuries. Evenkis and Russian settlers often formed joint hunting groups. Evenkis and Russians in the southern part of Katanga raion expressed support for the formation of joint hunting/fishing collectives even during the time of the Committee of the North and the founding of early communes and artels [in the late 1920s].

5.4 Economy

According to the statistics gathered by V. P. Krivonogov (2001), in neighbouring Evenkiia the percentage of Evenkis professionally engaged in traditional economic activities has been constantly decreasing. However, if we include sport hunting, we find that 94.9% of the men and 77.3% of the women hunt and fish (Krivonogov 2001: 24–5). Taking into account the 80% level of unemployment in the remote villages of Katanga raion, hunting and fishing are turning out to be the only traditional ways of subsistence for most Evenkis, apart from receiving social benefits.

While almost all of the general population of Katanga raion hunts, reindeer herding is an occupation exclusive to Evenkis. Reindeer herding had been used mostly for transport purposes in the northern part of Irkutsk oblast', and it has generally been declining all over Siberia. Out of 107 reindeer herding areas, 80 have remained, while 27 have disappeared. Almost all the areas that have disappeared were located in the taiga zone of Siberia (Khrushchev and Klokov 1998: 14). During the period 1991–99, the total number of reindeer in Chita oblast' decreased from 8,600 to 900; from 27,700 to 2,400 in the Evenki Autonomous Okrug; and from 38,500 to 9,800 in Khabarovsk Krai (AIEA Statisticheskie materialy...). By the 1960s, reindeer herding had disappeared in Kachug raion, in the southern part of Katanga raion, and in Mama-Chuia raion of Irkutsk oblast'. The difficult socio-economic situation in the country is not the only reason for the decline in reindeer herding. It is also linked to the intensive industrial development of the taiga regions, as well as the destruction of taiga for agriculture [although to a lesser degree]. There is also significant incompatibility between the nomadic hunting way of life and urbanized culture, especially through the imposition of a unified economic model that completely contradicts the Evenki “northern triad” [see section 2.1]. Consequences have included a grave spiritual crisis, and fundamental
changes in the worldview of the people, in all spheres of human activity. These processes manifest in unfavourable demographic trends, social apathy, anti-social behaviour, and lower status accorded the traditional occupations.

Reindeer in Katanga raion are privately owned. Their numbers decreased from 350 in 1981 to 143 in 2000 (of which 87 were riding reindeer). In short, the herd size halved in twenty years. There was a corresponding decrease in the number of families and communities engaged in reindeer herding. In 1994, 11 families kept reindeer, while today there are 8 families (including single parent or single person households [nepolnye sem'i]). Reindeer herding has disappeared in the places next to the towns of Inarigda, Nakanno, and Khamakar, in the north of Katanga raion, close to the Evenki Autonomous Okrug. In the late 1980s, only 2–3 families from Khamakar and Nakanno were engaged in reindeer herding. The geologists’ attempts to revive reindeer herding on special farms near Nakanno (with the help of the local people) were a failure. The disappearance of Evenki transport reindeer herding has been accompanied by an immediate decrease in the territories used and developed by them.

5.5 Law

There have been some positive trends in [legal protection] in the past ten years. Lawmakers have devoted their attention to resolving problems concerning rights to the traditional use of nature and way of life exercised by the sparse peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East. The main issue is the recognition of these peoples’ rights to specific territories. Before May 2001, the establishment of territories for traditional land-use in Irkutsk oblast’, as well as in other northern regions of the Russian Federation inhabited by peoples of the North, had been regulated by local laws adopted on the basis of Presidential Decree No. 397 “On immediate measures to protect the places of residence and economic activity of the sparse peoples of the North” dated 22 April 1992. At the oblast’ level, the law “On territories for traditional land use in Irkutsk oblast” (No. 38–03) was promulgated on 3 October 1997 as the main legal instrument in this sphere. In May 2001, the Federal Law “On territories for traditional land use by sparse indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation” was adopted, and the local law of Irkutsk oblast’ was consequently repealed.\(^{20}\)

In Irkutsk oblast’, the legal relationship between Evenkis and Russian settlers was based on the [older] 1997 law. Under the auspices of both that

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\(^{20}\) According to traditional Soviet and Russian jurisprudence, there should be a correspondence between federal, regional, and local laws. In the period following the dismantling of the Soviet Union, there was a burgeoning of legal initiative at the local and regional levels, often leading to unique and creative laws which had no match at the federal level. By the turn of the millennium, there was increasing pressure from the central state to standardize or repeal these laws. —*Ed.*
law and a number of other federal and local laws, clan communes [rodovye obshchiny] had been organized.

The law consisted of 3 parts and 17 articles that defined the basic concepts of “traditional land use,” “territories for traditional land use,” and “sparse indigenous peoples of the North” [which were later included in the federal law of the same title]. However the federal law did not include the unique definition of the “indigenous population of a territory,” peculiar to the Irkutsk Oblast law. In that definition, the indigenous population included “citizens of the Russian Federation whose life and income are completely or partially based on the traditional forms of subsistence, who have been living in the given territory along with the sparse peoples of the North, and who have been recognized to be a population group equated to the sparse peoples of the North and ethnic communities [etnicheskie obshchnosti] by a resolution of the Governor of the oblast.” However, no such resolution was adopted [in the case of Irkutsk oblast’], and it is not likely to ever be adopted.

My research showed that the draft resolution was aimed at changing the status of Russian settlers in Katanga raion, equating it to that of Evenkis insofar as rights to renewable resources were concerned. Several activists in Katanga raion prepared a draft resolution for the Governor’s [signature] in 1998. It stated: “Citizens of the Russian Federation residing permanently in the territory of Katanga raion whose ancestors have always lived in the district and whose life is completely or partially based on the traditional system of subsistence should share equal priority to access surface natural resources as the sparse indigenous peoples of the North.” Among the Russian settlers who took an active part in developing the draft and raising the issue itself was Anatolii Ivanovich Iur’ev, who had Evenki relatives. In the early 1980s, he was the chairman of the Erbogachen Rural Council, and in the early 1990s he was a consultant to the reeve of the raion. Katanga raion officials sent an inquiry to the Irkutsk Oblast' Administration. It responded that “criteria and parameters” needed to be defined for equating the Russian settlers of the raion in their rights to the sparse indigenous peoples of the North, as well as a calculation of the “estimated financial losses if the draft was adopted” (AIO-KRS 2000). In reply, the Erbogachen administration countered that “the classification of citizens as belonging to one or another ethnic group occurs on the basis of unrealistic formal criteria.” This is absolutely true if we [critically analyze] the politics of social and ethnic construction in the raion (Anderson 1998). The raion management insisted that the rights of Evenkis and Russian settlers must be made equal in order to prevent possible inter-ethnic conflicts: “Additional social tension will be caused if the inhabitants of a single settlement, who are equally subject to the hardships of living in the extreme North, and who are equally dependent on Nature, are classified as belonging to different ethnic groups based on rather formal criteria, and thus would not have equal rights to renewable natural resources” (AIO-KRS 2000). Permanent residence in the territory of the raion was suggested as one of the criteria. An advisory committee consisting of specialists, scholars, and
field workers was set up in the oblast' administration to deal with the issue, but in the end the resolution was not adopted.

The attempt to introduce the notion of an “indigenous population of a territory” into oblast'-level law reflects the unresolved problem of the status of Russian settlers of Siberia. In districts where the indigenous population lives together with a settler population that had arrived during the 17th–18th centuries, their dependence on the natural resources of these territories is virtually equal. One must also mention the fact that Russian settlers do have a special spiritual connection with the land. At present, the problem of the Russian settlers is being addressed through the category of nationality. For example, the Kamchadals of Kamchatka oblast' and Magadan oblast', who had been considered by both researchers and themselves to be a sub-ethnos of the Russians, have recently been recognized as a separate Northern nation. After numerous appeals for many years by the people themselves, they succeeded in proving their national “roots” [ukorennost'] and, what was no less important, gained legal access to resources and privileges. The recently adopted Federal Laws [“On guarantees to the rights of sparse indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation” (1999) and] “On territories of traditional land use by sparse indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East” [(2001)] stipulate the possibility in principle for such population groups to take part in establishing territories for traditional land use (Article 3).

The main task of establishing territories for traditional land-use is to attach a natural resource base to a specific user (italics mine—Auth.). Families or individuals could use these territories by receiving them through inheritance for a life-long tenure, or by leasing them for terms of up to 49 years. Leases would be terminated upon the holder’s death and absence of inheritors, or if the holder used the hunting territory in a way that violated its special status as a traditional land use area (Article 10).

Representatives of peoples of the North could create such territories by submitting a request to the head of the local administration. The application form should include justification for the borders and the size of the territory (but no criteria are given—Auth.), a list of the people supposed to use the land, the term of the lease, and an indication of the aspects and forms of economic activity to be undertaken on the territory. These forms were to be approved by a specially authorized state body in the area of environmental protection. The final decision would be taken by the oblast’ administration (Article 5). In case of disputes or claims to the same territory, the head of the local administration was to be the arbitrator, and would sign a conciliatory agreement (Article 4).

In the case of industrial development, “Appropriation of the land shall be effected in exceptional circumstances and with the consent of the leaseholder (owner) of the territory, and of the ‘indigenous residents’ whose interests would be damaged by the appropriation.” The problem was to be put to a general meeting of indigenous residents, although mechanisms for the implementation of the proclaimed guarantees of paying lawful damages have
...not been established. The heads of local state administrations could assign grounds for sport hunting and fishing, upon the consent of the leaseholder, within his territory (the person who should apply, whether the authorities or the owner, is not specified). Private business undertakings were authorized within the limits of traditional enterprises (Article 18).

In general, before the 2001 Federal Law “On territories for traditional land use…” was adopted, there was no proper recourse to resolve legal problems concerning these territories. The general provisions of the new federal law classified the territories for traditional land use as specially protected natural territories, and relations in the sphere were regulated mainly on the basis of the complex of environmental protection legislation. Currently, the federal law has come into effect, and subordinate legislation is being developed.

5.6 Clan communes

When the state/collective enterprises [kolkhozy and promkhozy] in the Russian North were reorganized, so-called clan communes [rodoeye obshchiny] appeared among the reorganized entities. The main reason for creating them was a popular wish [to practice a subsistence lifestyle] and to obtain land rights, in the absence of state support. By 2000, there were four clan communes (or merged versions) in Irkutsk oblast'—one for Tofalars and three for Evenkis.

Evenkis formed the Vershina Khandy Evenki Commune in Kazachinsk-Lena raion as a reaction to industrial development there. The people of the village of Vershina Khandy wanted to establish their rights to the territory where they had lived, hunted, and fished, and to obtain possible compensation for appropriated and damaged land.

The Upper Tutura Evenki Commune of Kachug raion was formed with the goal of facilitating independent hunting [outside the promkhozes], and of protecting places for traditional land use.

In order to legally protect rights to hunting and fishing places, a group of clan communes formed a union called Girkil [Evenk. ‘Friends’], which was registered on 12 November 1999. A general charter was prepared, and joint-share capital accumulated. A territory of 1,762,200 hectares was assigned to the union for the hunting/fishing activities of its members, in accordance with Resolution No. 164. The Girkil Union of Clan Communes immediately acquired the functions of an “ethnic” producers’ marketing organization. Its founders were clan commune members from Nakanno (19 people), Khamakar (19 people), Teteia, and Erbogachen. It included Evenkis and some Russian settlers. Girkil’s 109 hunter-members organized territories for traditional land use on the basis of hunting places they had leased. The size of the hunting places varied from 3 to 70 hectares per hunter. But judging by the registration papers of the union, its membership was not stable. Some Evenki hunters switched from one organization to another without paying their dues. This led
to an agreement among the biggest hunting organizations of Katanga raion to impose penalties against those who avoided paying their debts.

Sailor (nickname of an Evenki—*Auth.*) was fired all of a sudden from the promkhoz. Do you know why? Sailor sold a sable skin not to the promkhoz but to a different company ([the informant] T. continued calling the new joint-stock company by its old name, the promkhoz—*Auth.*). But when A. (the head of the joint-stock company—*Auth.*) learned this, he fired Sailor. No, he did not take away his territory. Things can become ridiculous sometimes. Ruslanka is our office janitor. Her brothers gave her a sable fur. It so happened that there was no money in our promkhoz at the time, so she naturally sold the fur through another organization, where they were giving even more money for such a fur. Why shouldn’t she sell it at a place of her own choosing? But the head manager came up to her and said, ‘you’re fired’. They found a reason to justify it and dismissed her.

At the end of 2000, clan communes were supposed to be established in almost all villages in the southern part of Katanga raion [Table 10].

**Table 10. The population and location of hunters (Evenkis and Russians) in the southern part of Katanga raion who were willing to join clan communes in 2000.**

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<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Number of hunters</th>
<th>Hunting grounds (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepa</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>603,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokma</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>654,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bur</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>225,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>397,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erema</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>55,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podvoloshino</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>274,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preobrazhenka</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>719,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>131</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,932,700</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Katanga Raion Statistics Committee.

Since Girkil was an indigenous peoples’ organization, the federal and regional governments provided subsidies to allow it to buy hunting rifles and other hunting equipment. But the union failed and got into debt. It turned out not to be ready for serious commerce, in competition with other organizations that had been working in the fur market for a long time. Most of the hunters in the union lost confidence in the leaders when they saw their inability and lack of interest in the long-term development of the union.

It should be stressed that not all Evenkis decided to join Girkil, or the union Ilel that was established later. Some people (among them nomadic Evenkis possessing reindeer) preferred other economic organizations to the ethnic economic ones. In such a situation, it is important to protect the established ethno-cultural environment by giving priority rights to the aboriginal peoples, such as Evenkis, to lead a traditional way of life. The interests of Russian settlers should also be taken into consideration in such cases.
Another union of sparse peoples of the North, called Ilel ‘The People’, was formed on 28 June 2001 in the village of Erbogachen, during a meeting of all Evenki hunters from Katanga raion. The relevant resolution was adopted in accordance with the Federal Law “On the basic organizing principles for communes of indigenous sparse peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation” dated 6 June 2000. The union was registered pursuant to Resolution No. 101 of the reeve of Katanga raion dated 16 July 2001, as a public organization of hunters mandated to “assist and defend ordinary hunters—representatives of both [numerically] small peoples and other nations.” The raion state administration allotted hunting grounds to the Ilel community, amounting to a total 1,581,400 hectares, after having obtained the agreement of all other hunting organizations. Members of Ilel included both Evenkis and Russians, among whom there were old-settlers as well as newly arrived residents. It was perhaps due to the mixed composition of the union that its members launched an active campaign for their rights when the head of the oblast' hunting department started to create obstacles to granting them long-term leases. The members appealed to the highest state bodies in Moscow, including a committee of the Russian Duma [parliament] and executive government agencies. It appears that their demands were upheld (AIO-KRS).

Katanga raion seems to have gained new development prospects in connection with the adoption of the Federal Law “On territories for traditional land use…,” the Law of Irkutsk Oblast' “On hunting” (2001), and others. Specially protected territories for traditional land use will likely be established in Katanga raion, as well as in Kazachinsk-Lena and Kachug raions, areas in Irkutsk oblast' where Evenkis live. The necessity of forming such specially protected natural territories is prompted by problems encountered by hunters—for example, Evenkis and Russian settlers in the village of Tokma, Katanga raion.

Timber is being felled commercially in the southern part of the raion. In 1998, the rights to stockpile and sell timber in Katanga raion were in the hands of the following enterprises: lantal'les CJSC (annual production 130,000 cu. m), Igirma-Tairiku JV Ltd. (93,400 cu. m), and ILEKS Ltd. (14,500 cu. m). All these enterprises were located outside Katanga raion, and did not pay taxes to the raion administration. The village of Tokma was closest to the woodcutting area, and both Evenkis and Russians were upset that the enterprises were operating there. In the summer of 2000, they complained twice to the oblast' administration:

In the USSR, there was a rule that when a state timber enterprise and a client decided to cut timber in our territory, they called meetings first. Our opinion on the problem was listened to, and only after our consent was given to cut timber did they sign a contract to lease part of the forest. Usually, the state timber enterprises agreed to supply specific material and financial assistance to the village of Tokma.
Meanwhile, only God and the parties to the contracts know what is happening today—with whom agreements are made, and what parts of the forest are to be cut, and in what way. Pretty soon we will travel out to our hunting places and see only stumps left. Today we are afraid of going to the southern part of the administrative territory of our village, where workers of the timber industry enterprises consider themselves to be the owners. They poison our reservoirs with carbide, and leave us threatening notes.

According to the AIO-KRS (File “Katanga raion”), some of the suggestions made by the villagers were quite sensible [as listed below], but the authorities did not act on them:

1. Existing contracts should be renegotiated in the presence of our representatives;
2. The Katanga Forestry Department should be required to cede forest in our area to timber enterprises only upon obtaining the consent of the Tokma (Rural) Administration;
3. The office of the Upper Nepa Forestry Enterprise [lesnichestvo] should be transferred from Novaia Igirma to Tokma;
4. Recruit a staff of foresters from among the local population (solving the unemployment problem at least partially in this way);
5. Give the Tokma Administration some kind of authority over the protection of our natural environment.

This case was notable for the fact that this multinational town, with a predominant number of Evenkis, did not act as a clan commune but rather as a town community, in conformity with the law on local self-government. Although there was reference to the federal laws concerning peoples of the North, it has been difficult to use them to reliably resolve legal problems concerning territories for traditional land use. According to current legislation, people can protect their rights either as peoples of the North, or through environmental protection legislation, or as local citizens in accordance with the law on local self-government.
Afterword

My subsequent ethnographic work took me to Iakutiia and Magadan oblast’, where I saw new lands and other nations. But like a first love, I never forgot the Katanga. I recently returned to the Lower Tunguska, after a long absence.

“Perhaps you shouldn’t go this time. Go another time,” my father exclaimed, not looking at me but at my mother, who was standing silently next to me. I managed to get on the flight at my fourth attempt. It had been postponed for nine days. Early October is the most unstable season in this part of the world. A brief spell of cold weather had yielded to thawing, and the heavy snow that had fallen the previous day melted, making the sandy runway of the airport inaccessible to heavy AN-24 aircraft.

I had not told anybody about my arrival, so nobody was there to meet me. A cold, biting wind was blowing across the airstrip. It was much colder there than in Irkutsk. I had just gotten off the plane when I heard a familiar voice. Blue-eyed, attractive Tania, the daughter of Marina Petrovna [Egorchenok] and Vasilii Pavlovich [Kaplin], had not changed much. A calm person of few words, she simply gave me a thoughtful look and said, “You will stay at our place. Let’s go and have a cup of tea.” She said it in a casual way, as if we had parted the day before and not five years ago. On the way home, Tania told me that she had come to meet her son, who had been visiting his cousin in the city. The cousin had returned recently from Chechnya, where he was wounded twice. When I saw them last, they were still children.

After the bania ‘steam-bath’, I heard more news. The old hotel building was taken over by the editorial office of the Pravda Severa newspaper and the raion branch of the hunting association. Farmer Legenkov established [an Orthodox] church in the former building of [Soviet] “political education,” and many people started attending. The two-storied wooden cultural hall burned down because of faulty wiring. The public village bania was turned into a café. The promkhоз split into several independent organizations that compete severely with each other for land and hunters. The promkhоз souvenir shop was eliminated, and Tania and other women lost their jobs. The Evenki Volodia, whom I remembered as a skinny teenager, became a deputy in the Katanga Raion Duma. Semen Petrovich grew old, lost his way in the forest, and his body was found a month later. All his relatives went to bury him in the taiga. The son of an Evenki whom we both knew well, who had been a tall and handsome young man, returned from his military service and began hearing the voices of shaitany ‘devils’ and committed suicide. Vika’s small son got lost in the taiga. It was a tragedy for her, but she married and gave birth to two more children. It went on and on…

The people had not changed much on the outside. I looked at them as through a mirror, and we recognized each other easily. Through the years, only the cold, tarnished silver of the river remained unchanged. The taiga
stood in anticipation of the vague but happy transfiguration that the snow and frost would bring.

The last thing we had to do was to pay tribute to Tania’s deceased relatives. On Sunday we walked to the cemetery. It was a long way. We started from the company town, crossed the Iuktukon River, crossed all of Erbogachen, and crossed the airstrip. We bought some beer and cigarettes on the way. While we were walking, the weather improved. It was cool, calm, and sunny. Tania found the row of graves with various monuments—tombs with stars and crosses, enclosed with fences painted sky-blue. All her close relatives were there—her mother, father, brother, and sister. We stood there in silence for some time. Tania lit “Prima” cigarettes and put one on each grave mound. The cigarettes released their smoke. “They are all smoking together now,” she said. So we stood there, drank beer after giving some to the deceased, and looked at the blue smoke making an impression of movement, and therefore of life. In our reveries, we were in the past. One had to find the right words, but they would not come. Tania said something, and then fell silent. Behind the branches of the evergreen pines, the pale blue light was visible of a sky whose summer intensity had long since faded. All of a sudden, a red squirrel, spotted with grey, appeared—the frosts had not yet come, after all. The squirrel feasted on the pine-cone seeds and looked at us with curiosity, hanging head-down on a branch.
Conclusion

I have conducted a detailed analysis of the distribution of a local ethnic [etnograficheskaia] group of Katanga Evenkis, and the way they ordered their life-world during the 20th century. The specific field location was the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska River in Central Siberia.

This group was subjected to processes of assimilation and acculturation which began in the 17th–19th centuries, and which accelerated during the 1930s–1950s as a result of the deliberate ideological, socio-economic, and cultural policy of the [Soviet] state. In this period, Evenkis were forced to move even more quickly from their traditional microecological adaptation in the forest to a new, structured distribution and way of life. [This was due to many factors, including the policy of] converting nomads to a sedentary lifestyle, and related policies such as the creation of a system of boarding schools. In the past, Evenkis planned their movements based on kinship relations, and on their preference to stay at old campsites. As Evenkis became more settled, they tended to do so within the rough boundaries of their [former] clan territories. Evenki population numbers have essentially not increased, because of acculturation, out-migration, and a high mortality rate due to alcoholism.

Today, most Evenkis live a sedentary life in towns and villages located predominantly in the north of Katanga raion. In this work, I have identified several long-term qualities that speak to an ethnically differentiated strategy for the way Katanga Evenkis order the environment:

1. A tendency to settle in “borderline” or unclaimed territories on the outskirts of, or near to, Russian or Iakut villages. This would be especially true at the beginning of their transition to a settled way of life;
2. Keeping a traditional, ethnic form of housing (such as a lodge or golomo) as a subsidiary dwelling space near their Russian wooden houses;
3. Preparing an Evenki guluvun ‘fireplace’ near the house, for cooking food in the summer;
4. Continuing to name and arrange the interior design of their dwellings in an Evenki manner.

In this work, I have also singled out elements of the traditional worldview of this group of semi-settled Evenkis that mark their manner of ordering their life-world. These elements exist today and, it seems, have been with them for a long period of time.

As a result of my work, I have identified an important ethnographic fact of how Evenkis relate to their living space—the taiga—as their home. I have also explained and analyzed the main [structural] aspects of this relationship.
One of the most important components of this relationship today is the way that semi-settled Evenkis use the territories that have been legally set aside for their use as hunters or reindeer herders. In most cases, these are the same or similar territories that they used in the past.

The other main component is their dynamic-logistical model of ordering the environment, and appropriating it through [specific] trajectories. This implies that Evenkis have an excellent knowledge of their living environment. It is also implicit in the way that they order space by naming it, and the means by which they see the environment through rhythmical and systematic travel. My analysis of Evenki toponymy speaks to this. To illustrate, I have described in detail four major cycles of the life-activity of semi-settled Katanga Evenkis. Three of the basic principles of ordering the environment have not changed—hunting, reindeer herding, and fishing. They each have retained their same traditional weight in Evenki life. Today, Evenkis also take into account some new factors in planning their travel and camps, such as the industrial exploitation of the land. However, the length [amplitude] of their travel routes has been reduced. The tempo and direction of nomadic routes have also changed.

Evenkis look upon the land they occupy as an ordered, organized space. The dynamic way that they use this space has the definitive architecture of mobile settlements. This architecture is yet another important element in the way that Evenkis relate to the forest as their home.

The special [ethnic] way that Evenkis order space is evident in the forms and types of their [vernacular] architecture. On the basis of my analysis of Katanga Evenki homes and productive structures, one can conclude that Evenkis adhere to several common principles in building any kind of structure. These features could only originate in their pure form among a people who have a mobile culture that is itself very flexible. Among the principles of Evenki vernacular architecture one can identify the need for multifunctionality of any dwelling, combined with safety, comfort, reliability, aesthetics, efficiency [dostatochnost'], and portability.

Evenkis have developed an idea of having “their own” land on the basis of their long-term economic and cultural occupancy of a place. It appears as a special psychological relationship to their living space, combined with a deliberate spiritual communion with it, expressed as a strong identification with a place. The relationship to “one’s own” land also includes many components. First, it includes the places where one’s ancestors are buried. Second, it encompasses ritual or monumental places of natural origin (which are also connected to everyday life). In the second aspect, real or mythological events might be included.

Some general remarks concerning continuities in ethnic cultural traits can be made on the basis of this analysis. First, Evenkis must be enabled to engage in traditional economic activities, and to interact with the natural environment in a traditional manner. Second, it is necessary that this activity
lead to a pattern of dispersed habitation of micro-areas. And these factors are not arbitrary, but more “traditional” in the sense that they are linked to thinking of one’s former living space as one’s home. Both the premise and necessary condition of leading a traditional economic life is the preservation of the natural environment. Evenkis depend on it to a greater extent than do communities with different economic orientations.

Moreover, both socialization (understood as the way cultural experiences, skills, knowledge, and traditions are imparted) and state policy play an enormous role in how ethnocultural processes develop. They are both involved in how people choose their careers and, in turn, evaluate them as prestigious or socially important. All the above by no means comprehensively covers the multitudinous problems and conditions of transmitting cultural experience. Certainly, every new generation comprehends and interprets it in a new way. Observing continuities in the conditions under which people are obliged to survive, we realize that Evenki traditions, symbols, and cultural phenomena have more important meaning and value than previously thought.
This glossary gives terms in several languages. Common Russian proper names and the names of administrative units are in a regular font [Aleshka, Lakutia, uezd]. Evenki terms are in the nominative singular and printed in an italicized bold font (with dialectical variations provided) [baksə / baksha]. Russian language terms are in italics with their plural forms indicated in brackets [ambar (ambary)].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abdun</td>
<td>a shelter for dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleshka</td>
<td>dim. of Aleksei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alik</td>
<td>dim. of Aleksandr or Aleksei</td>
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<tr>
<td>amaka</td>
<td>bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambar (ambary)</td>
<td>cache; a type of storehouse in the taiga. See labaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>andaki / anda</td>
<td>from the Evenki anda &quot;friend&quot;, a social category in relations among Evenkis and Russians; cf. druzhki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aran</td>
<td>the fireplace in a lodge</td>
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<tr>
<td>argish, argishit'</td>
<td>1. trail n.; 2. caravan n.; 3. take to the trail v.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>artel'</td>
<td>a locally controlled type of co-operative organization in the early Soviet period preceding collectivization; cf. kommuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>babushka</td>
<td>an elderly woman, esp. an elderly grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baksə / baksha</td>
<td>posts supporting a storage platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balagan</td>
<td>a stationary dwelling made by Iakuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bania (bani)</td>
<td>steam-bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baza</td>
<td>in reindeer herding, a main camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>area in a lodge for sleeping or daytime rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belka</td>
<td>squirrel n.</td>
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<tr>
<td>birivun</td>
<td>flooring made of poles, for a platform cache; cf. ummevun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bor, borok</td>
<td>a pure grove of pine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bovadyl / bugadyl</td>
<td>[pl.] spirits; wooden representations of spirits. See malu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buchivun / butivun</td>
<td>a rack for drying meat over a fire; cf. telivun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chanke</td>
<td>sledge trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chimka / simka</td>
<td>special vertical pole in a lodge. See ikeptun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chona / chongo/ chonoko / chonga</td>
<td>place for kitchen and household utensils in a lodge near the entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chum</td>
<td>conical lodge. See diu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>darpe</td>
<td>a gallery in a dulu shaman lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dedushka</td>
<td>dim. of ded ‘grandfather’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delken / delkan</td>
<td>a platform on posts used for storage. See labaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delkekon</td>
<td>a small storage platform made in the summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>derevnia</td>
<td>village; cf. selo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagda</td>
<td>pine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diovani / diuvani / diugani</td>
<td>summer camp. See stoianka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diuvodian / diuvodian / diugadian</td>
<td>summer camp. See stoianka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diu</td>
<td>conical lodge covered with reindeer skins, birch-bark mats, or canvas. See chum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diukcha</td>
<td>lodge frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dnevat’, dnevka</td>
<td>1. spend the day (in camp) v.; 2. a day spent (in camp) n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dolboni</td>
<td>1. night; 2. the northern side of the lodge often associated with spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dolgan</td>
<td>a shelter for dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>druzhki</td>
<td>[pl.] friends. See andaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dulga</td>
<td>a ground cache; [among the Iakuts] a type of dwelling hut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dulu</td>
<td>a larger than usual skin lodge used for clan gatherings or shamanic performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duma</td>
<td>The lower house of the Russian parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dymokur</td>
<td>a structure for producing smoke; smudge. See khammin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzhiiuvani</td>
<td>summer. See diovani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzhiiuvodian</td>
<td>summer camp. See diovodian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>edinolichnik</td>
<td>an independent hunter or herder whose family did not participate in collectivization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ellun</td>
<td>lower part of a lodge cover. See niuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enisei</td>
<td>a large river in central Siberia, often used to describe the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evenkiia</td>
<td>a short name for the Evenki Autonomous Okrug in Krasnoiarsk Krai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>familiiia</td>
<td>patrilineal surname</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>golbets (golbsy)</td>
<td>a mortuary structure made of logs that is trapezoidal in form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>golomo</td>
<td>a pit dwelling with a wooden frame, usu. pyramidal in form and covered with sod or bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goshchenie</td>
<td>a ritual of offering hospitality</td>
</tr>
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<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>govor</td>
<td>dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guberniia</td>
<td>in the Russian Empire, a regional administrative-territorial unit above the uezd, okrug, or raion; province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gule</td>
<td>Evenki term for a Russian log cabin. See izba, zimov'e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gul'ashchie</td>
<td>[pl.] vagabonds</td>
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<tr>
<td>gul'ashchie</td>
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<tr>
<td>gul'ashchie</td>
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<tr>
<td>gulashchie</td>
<td>[pl.] vagabonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gulik</td>
<td>a type of storage platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gul'maki</td>
<td>[pl.] headwaters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guluvun</td>
<td>campfire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gurumi</td>
<td>winter boots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iakut</td>
<td>a northern nation, speaking a Turkic language, located primarily (but not exclusively) within the boundaries of the Republic of Sakha/Iakutiia. At the beginning of the 21st century, they became known more commonly as Sakhas. According to Russian categories, they are not considered to be a sparse people (<em>malochislennyi narod</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iakutiia</td>
<td>a common short name for the Republic of Sakha/Iakutiia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iasak</td>
<td>tax tribute taken in furs for the Russian crown in the Imperial period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ikepten / ikeptun</td>
<td>vertical post in a lodge; horizontal pole for hearth-hook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ile</td>
<td>human being; person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilkan</td>
<td>notches on tree trunks, used for orienteering; cf. khuva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in</td>
<td>pit-cellar for keeping perishable goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inmek / inmekcha</td>
<td>saddlebag made of birch bark and covered with reindeer leg skins and ornaments; cf. <em>pota, torsuk</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inorodnyi / inorodets (inorodtsy)</td>
<td>alien; cf. korennoi, tuzemnyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iukagir</td>
<td>a small northern minority living in the far north of Iakutiia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iiumgulo</td>
<td>a type of meat cache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>izba / izbushka</td>
<td>a log hut. See <em>gule; zimov'e</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaltala</td>
<td>half (used as the name for a half-lodge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamlanie</td>
<td>shaman performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamys</td>
<td>reindeer leg skins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karas'</td>
<td>crucian carp (<em>Carassius carassius</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katia</td>
<td>dim. of Ekaterina (Catherine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kesha</td>
<td>dim. of Innokentii (Innocent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khammin / sammin</em></td>
<td>smudges for protecting reindeer from blood-sucking insects. See <em>dymokur</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khanalaun</em></td>
<td>beams set on stumps to support <em>birivun</em> flooring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kheran / seran</em></td>
<td>an evil spirit or devil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khivaki / sivaki / sevaki</em></td>
<td>wooden wedges; wedges used for securing cross-beams to platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khivek / khevek / sevek / sevak</em></td>
<td>pegs used for hanging clothing or other items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khokto / khoktokon</em></td>
<td>pack trail; flooring in a lodge, usu. of pine branches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khona / sona / suona</em></td>
<td>1. north; 2. frame pole for lodge; 3. smoke hole in a lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khonan</em></td>
<td>a cooking tripod above the <em>guluvun</em> campfire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khonngo</em></td>
<td>one-way gates in a <em>kure</em> reindeer fence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khoziaistvo</em></td>
<td>a household; enterprise; corporation; economic unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khundysal</em></td>
<td>master of dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>khuva</em></td>
<td>pointers made of sticks, used for orienteering; cf. <em>ilkan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kniaz'</em></td>
<td>prince. See <em>shulenga</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kochevoi</em></td>
<td>mobile; nomadic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kolbo</em></td>
<td>a storage platform with a room made of gabled branches among Orochen Evenkis in the Transbaikal; variant form of a <em>delken</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolia</td>
<td>dim. of Nikolai (Nicholas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kolkhoz</em></td>
<td>after collectivization in the Soviet period, a state-controlled rural enterprise where tools and animals were owned by local producers but land owned by the state; acronym of <em>kollektivnoe khoziaistvo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>koloda</em></td>
<td>a coffin made of a single piece of wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kommuna</em></td>
<td>a generic term for early Soviet collective institutions which in Eastern Siberia stood for a number of different types of organisations, ranging from PPOs to <em>artely</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>koopzveropromkhoz</em></td>
<td>co-operative hunting and/or fur-farming enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>korennoi</em></td>
<td>indigenous; cf. <em>tuzemnyi, inorodnyi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>krai</td>
<td>a large administrative-territorial unit in the late Imperial period, the Soviet period, and in the Russian Federation; above the raion and the okrug, the krai is roughly equivalent jurisdictionally to a guberniia or an oblast', but is much larger in area and always has smaller units within it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kulak</td>
<td>a pejorative term used to designate a wealthy rural entrepreneur accused of exploiting the labour of poorer relatives or neighbours; in the 1930s, the property of kulaks was expropriated to form the first collective institutions, and some kulaks were tried and executed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kultir / kultyr</td>
<td>1. threshold, step at the entrance, porch; 2. framed opening set within an autumn lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kure / kurekan</td>
<td>a fence enclosing an autumn or spring camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kur'ia</td>
<td>a bend in the creek, lagune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labaz, (za)labazit'</td>
<td>1. a generic term for various kinds of storage structures n.; 2. to store in the labaz v.; 3. specifically, a storage platform on piles n.. See delken, neku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laika</td>
<td>a local breed of hunting dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lavka</td>
<td>an old Russian term for a shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lokogor</td>
<td>a pole used for making ritual offerings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lokovun / lokoun / lokobun / lokovan</td>
<td>a horizontal rod both inside and outside used for hanging clothing and objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malochislennye narody</td>
<td>“sparse” (lit. ‘unnumerous’ or ‘numerically small’)) peoples—a Russian statistical and demographic category for peoples with a population of less than 30,000 individuals; used to refer to indigenous peoples in Russia, and often qualified with the adjective korennye (indigenous)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malu / matu / maro</td>
<td>1. in a lodge, the place of honour for visitors n.; 2. personal protector god n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manatki</td>
<td>someone's belongings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meg (megi)</td>
<td>a local Russian term for the bends in a river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meneen</td>
<td>permanent (often winter) camp of Evenkis, situated on a riverbank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muko</td>
<td>a meat cache, or sometimes a platform built quickly on the ground for storing meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikanorka</td>
<td>dim. of Nikanor (Nicanor, Nicanorus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nimat</td>
<td>honorary gift exchange, esp. of food and all hunted products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>niuk</em></td>
<td>a lodge covering made of animal skins; cf. <em>tiski</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>noku / neku</em></td>
<td>a storehouse built on stumps; a storage platform for Transbaikal Evenki groups; cf. <em>labaz</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nymnandiak</em></td>
<td>a shaman’s lodge; cf. <em>shevenchedek</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>oblast'</em></td>
<td>in the USSR and Russian Federation, an administrative-territorial unit above the raion; province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>v oblo</em></td>
<td>a construction method in log cabins where corner logs are overlapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>obshchchina</em></td>
<td>community, commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>okrug</em></td>
<td>in the USSR and Russian Federation, an administrative-territorial unit, above the county-level raion, that has special responsibilities for representing sparse peoples, often found within a krai; in the USSR, during the 1920s it was the lowest administrative-territorial below the krai; province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>olenevodstvo</em></td>
<td>reindeer herding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *olen', olennyi* | 1. reindeer  
2. relating to reindeer; a reindeer-herding people *adj.*                                                                 |
<p>| <em>ollan</em>    | hook for <em>khonan</em> cooking tripod                                                                                                       |
| <em>olochi</em>   | summer footwear made of <em>rovduga</em>                                                                                                       |
| <em>onan</em>     | gallery in a <em>dulu</em> associated with the lower world                                                                                   |
| <em>palatka</em> | canvas tent                                                                                                                             |
| <em>v paz</em>    | in the construction of log cabins, a mortise-and-tenon joint (cf. <em>oblo</em>)                                                              |
| <em>perestroika</em> | any process of economic and political reform; a term which became associated with the market reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986 |
| <em>Petro, Pet'ka, Petia</em> | var. and dim. of Petr (Peter)                                                                                                          |
| <em>pokruta</em> | in the Imperial period, purchase on credit, to be repaid later with the proceeds of the hunting/fishing season                           |
| <em>poselok</em>  | town                                                                                                                                     |
| <em>potakui</em> | reindeer saddles                                                                                                                        |
| <em>pota (poty)</em> | canvas saddlebag                                                                                                                       |
| <em>PPO</em>      | <em>prosteishoe prizvodstvennoe ob&quot;edinenie</em>—in the early Soviet period, a simple co-operative where the means of production was not collectivized (cf. <em>kommun</em>) |</p>
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<tr>
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<th>Definition</th>
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<td>profil'</td>
<td>a straight corridor cut in the forest to allow petroleum exploration crews to lay seismic cables; cut-line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promkhoz</td>
<td>state production/industrial enterprise (in this case, hunting); acronym of promyslovoe khoziaistvo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promyshlennye liudi</td>
<td>commercial trappers (in the present context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puri</td>
<td>the name for a type of cache on the ground, as used by Evenkis in the southern parts of Katanga district. See <em>noku</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pykteraun</td>
<td>movement-restricting wooden “rifle” put around the neck of restive reindeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raion</td>
<td>in the USSR and Russian Federation, a low-level administrative-territorial unit, below the oblast' or okrug, corresponding to a county</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIK</td>
<td><em>raionnyi ispolnitel'nyi komitet</em>—in Soviet jurisprudence, a county-level executive committee, directing the implementation of policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rovduga</td>
<td>a general creole term used by Siberian Russians to denote any smoked and tanned skin, usually of reindeer, caribou, or moose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russkie starozhily</td>
<td>a local category for people whose ancestors arrived in Siberia centuries ago, who often are intermarried with both Russian and indigenous populations, and who have mastered various forms of local skills, including native languages and sometimes the use of reindeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rybkhoz (rybkhoy)</td>
<td>a state-run fishing enterprise; acronym of <em>rybnoe khoziaistvo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sania</td>
<td>dim. of Aleksandr (Alexander)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selo</td>
<td>village; cf. <em>derevnia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sel'sovet</td>
<td>a rural community council (in a territorial as well as administrative sense) that usually encompasses more than one population point and also nomadic populations; acronym of <em>sel'skii sovet</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serge</td>
<td>engraved lakut horse tethering post, used by northern Evenkis as a mortuary structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shaitan / saitan</td>
<td>1. a powerful (or evil) spirit 2. an idol, usually made of wood, representing a powerful spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shaman, shamanit'</td>
<td>1. a ritual specialist who defends or heals an extended family group by acting as an intermediary between people on this world and various spirits <em>n.</em>; 2. to practice shamanic rituals <em>v.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>shapka</td>
<td>a round, slightly tapered, brimless fur hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shevenchedek</td>
<td>see <em>nymnandiak</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>v ship</strong></td>
<td>a construction method common in the <em>golomo</em> where a notch is carved in a central pillar in order to hold one or more roof braces which radiate out from it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shulenga</td>
<td>shaman elected as prince of a clan; cf. <em>kniaz'</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shura</td>
<td>dim. of Aleksandr (Alexander)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibir'</td>
<td>Siberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sokhatyi (sokhatye)</td>
<td>a general term for any representative (and jurisdictional) council, from the most local to the federal level; cf. <em>sel'sovet</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sovet, soviet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stoianka</td>
<td>a temporary camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stoibishche</td>
<td>a long-term camp; mobile camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suglan (suglar)</td>
<td>a regional assembly of Evenkis, usually in the spring, where general political issues would be discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taiga</td>
<td>the coniferous evergreen forests of the Russian sub-arctic; Boreal forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telgekon</td>
<td>a type of platform cache for meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telivun / teliu</td>
<td>a net made of twigs on which meat and fish are cured over the fire or in the sun; cf. <em>buchivun</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tepke / typken</td>
<td>wooden stakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiski / tyski</td>
<td>birch bark lodge coverings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>togo</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>togo musunin</td>
<td>spirit of the fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>torsuk</td>
<td>saddlebag. See <em>inmek, poty</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trudoden'</td>
<td>in the early Soviet period, a unit of labour (see footnote §2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tungusy / tangusy / tongusy</td>
<td>older (pre-Soviet) name for the Evenki people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tungusiia</td>
<td>a local Russian term for the region where Katanga Evenkis live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tungusnichanie</td>
<td>the exploitative practice of bartering fur from Evenkis for alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turgu / tur</td>
<td>main poles in a lodge; cf. <em>kheran</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turu</td>
<td>main poles in a lodge; shaman tree in a <em>dulu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuvani / tugani / tugani</td>
<td>winter camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>tuvodian / tugedian / tugedian</td>
<td>winter camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuzemnyi</td>
<td>native adj.; cf. inorodnyi, korennoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuzrik</td>
<td>in the early Soviet period, an executive committee for reindeer herders (cf. RIK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uchak (uchakil)</td>
<td>a reindeer used for carrying people; a riding reindeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uezd</td>
<td>in the Russian Empire and early Soviet period, an mid-level administrative-territorial unit that was below the level of a gubernia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ugdama / ugdan</td>
<td>Evenki type of balagan, with a rectangular base, a frame covered with bark, and a flat roof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ugod'ie</td>
<td>a hunting territory; an area for hunting or cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ukhikan</td>
<td>small leather straps for niuki ellun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uklaun</td>
<td>small sharpened wooden stick, used as a chisel in removing bark (usu. from larch trees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uldaksa / ugdaksa</td>
<td>bark covering for a cache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ummevun</td>
<td>flooring, a prepared level area for storage at summer camps; cf. birivun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uneken / unokon</td>
<td>upper part of a lodge covering. See niuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unty</td>
<td>winter boots made of reindeer skins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uprava</td>
<td>in the Russian Empire at the end of the 19th century, a lower-level administrative district for non-Russian minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urikit</td>
<td>seasonal camp of reindeer Evenkis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urke</td>
<td>entrance to a lodge; gateway in a kure reindeer fence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utuvan / utuvak</td>
<td>hut or shed for smoking hides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uvo / ugo</td>
<td>wood blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasia, Vas'ka</td>
<td>dim. of Vasilii (Basil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verstsa, (versty)</td>
<td>a measure of distance equivalent to 3,500 feet or 1.067 kilometres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volodia</td>
<td>dim. of Vladimir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volost'</td>
<td>in the Russian Empire, a county-level administrative rural district, below the level of a gubernia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vyselok</td>
<td>hamlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>zemstvo</td>
<td>one of a system of elected local assemblies, established in 1864 by Alexander II after the abolition of serfdom, for the administration of local affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhiznedeiatel'nost'</td>
<td>life-world; lit. life-activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zimov'e (zimov'ia)</td>
<td>1. winter cabin; 2. winter camp. See izba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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GAIO. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Irkutskoi oblasti. Irkutsk.


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