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978-1-107-63478-7 - Illness and Healing Among the Sakhalin Ainu: A Symbolic Interpretation

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney

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A symbolic interpretation

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In memory and with love to Husko

In gratitude to Jan Vansina

*With love and gratitude to my parents, Kozaburo and Taka Ohnuki,
and to my family members, Tim, Alan, and Roderic*

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>Ainu phonemes</i>	xiv
1 Introduction: aims and scope of the book	1
2 The Ainu	19
<i>The Ainu</i>	19
<i>The Sakhalin Ainu</i>	22
<i>The Ainu way on the northwest coast of southern Sakhalin</i>	25
3 The ethnomedical approach in anthropology and the Ainu domain of illness	31
<i>Ethnomedicine</i>	31
<i>The Ainu domain of illness</i>	34
4 Habitual illnesses	39
<i>General characteristics of habitual illnesses</i>	39
<i>Healing of habitual illnesses</i>	44
<i>Summary</i>	47
5 Classification of body-part and skin illnesses	49
<i>Taxonomy of headaches and boils</i>	49
<i>Wet-dry opposition in the classification of other illnesses</i>	56
<i>The nature of pain as a classificatory principle</i>	60
<i>Illness classification and grammatical structure</i>	60
<i>Summary</i>	62
6 Metaphysical illnesses and their healing rituals	63
<i>Epidemics</i>	63
<i>Somatic illnesses afflicting individuals</i>	65
<i>Mental illnesses</i>	69
<i>Shamanistic healing rites</i>	73

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63478-7 - Illness and Headling Among the Sakhalin Ainu: A Symbolic Interpretation

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

Contents

	<i>Spirits and deities involved in shamanistic rites</i>	76
	<i>Sorcery</i>	78
	<i>Summary</i>	80
7	A symbolic interpretation of metaphysical illnesses and healing rituals	82
	<i>Deities and humans in Ainu symbolic classification</i>	82
	<i>Demons in Ainu symbolic classification</i>	87
	<i>Illness and health in Ainu symbolic classification</i>	88
	<i>Symbols in medical rituals</i>	90
	<i>The power of anomalous symbols</i>	92
	<i>Anarchic anomaly and creative anomaly: demons and other anomalous symbols</i>	96
	<i>The use of senses in Ainu symbolic perception</i>	97
	<i>/Sacred:profane::nature:culture/</i>	98
	<i>Multiplicity of belief systems</i>	100
	<i>Summary</i>	103
8	Theories in symbolic studies and the Ainu data	105
	<i>Interpretation of symbols</i>	105
	<i>/Sacred:profane/ opposition</i>	108
	<i>/Sacred:profane::nature:culture/</i>	110
	<i>/Nature:culture::men:women/, or its inversion?</i>	111
	<i>Anomaly: problem of definition</i>	119
	<i>Anomaly and power</i>	124
	<i>Multiple symbolic systems: /public:domestic::men:women/</i>	129
	<i>Summary</i>	131
9	Modes of perception and the classification of illnesses: a synthesis	133
	<i>The domain of illness: problems of codification and subdivision</i>	134
	<i>Contrasts between habitual illnesses and metaphysical illnesses</i>	135
	<i>Degrees of subclassification</i>	140
	<i>Modes of perception</i>	141
	<i>Emotive and sensory patterns of perception</i>	147
	<i>Summary</i>	149
10	Language and cognition: theoretical and methodological problems in arriving at perceptual categories	151
	<i>Ethnosemantics</i>	151
	<i>Sapir-Whorf hypothesis</i>	156

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63478-7 - Illness and Headling Among the Sakhalin Ainu: A Symbolic Interpretation

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>		ix
	<i>Meaning of conceptual forms</i>	157
	<i>Summary</i>	160
11	Illness, the individual, and society	161
	<i>Shamans and their power: a description</i>	162
	<i>Multiple roles of Ainu shamans: an interpretation</i>	166
	<i>Shamans as healers of social ills and as covert politicians</i>	169
	<i>The politically peripheral, nonformalized power, and shamans</i>	172
	<i>Shamans in other Ainu societies</i>	173
	<i>Individual personality: imu: and shamans</i>	175
	<i>Symbolic power and sociopolitical power</i>	179
	<i>Summary</i>	181
<i>Appendixes</i>		
A	Details of Ainu habitual illnesses	183
B	Beings and objects used in the cures of habitual illnesses	196
C	<i>Imu:</i>	198
D	Biological, cultural, and linguistic identity of the Ainu	204
E	The history of the Sakhalin Ainu	213
	<i>Notes</i>	218
	<i>References</i>	226
	<i>Index</i>	239

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63478-7 - Illness and Headling Among the Sakhalin Ainu: A Symbolic Interpretation

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

This book is an outgrowth of my fifteen-year attempt to understand Ainu culture and of my quest to determine the role of culture in the ordering and, in particular, the classification of one's universe.

The Ainu discussed in this book are a group of Sakhalin Ainu who during the first half of the twentieth century inhabited the northwest coast of southern Sakhalin, a region that stretches north of Rayčiska (Japanese call the place "Raichishika") to the former Russo-Japanese border. My fieldwork (1965–6, 1969, 1973) was carried out among the Sakhalin Ainu, who have been relocated on Hokkaido since the Russian occupation of southern Sakhalin in 1945.

I am most grateful to the National Science Foundation (GS 817), which supported my first field research (1965–6). Much of the research on anthropological theories presented in this book was accomplished during a leave in 1978 supported by the National Science Foundation (BNS77-12988). The Research Committee of the University of Wisconsin Graduate School has been most supportive of my research, and I thank the committee members.

There are too many individuals to mention in this Preface who have contributed to my growth, both professionally and personally. I must, however, mention a few. First, my deepest appreciation and affection go to Husko. Husko, which is her nickname, meaning "ancient," was born in 1900 in a winter settlement near Esituri and spent most of her life on the northwest coast of southern Sakhalin. Both her paternal and maternal ancestors had lived for many generations in the area. She was very shy when young and preferred to be with her parents and elderly people, from whom she learned the Ainu way more thoroughly than her contemporaries did. During her late teens, she married an Ainu who later became headman of Rayčiska, one of the largest settlements on the northwest coast. She had five children by him. After World War II, she moved to Tokoro, Hokkaido, where she lived until her death in 1974 with two of her remaining daughters and their families. Any fieldworker realizes that only a few individuals are able to explain their own culture well, especially when the investigation involves such complex matters as world view. Husko was one

of those few precious individuals. Without her patience and genuine interest in the purpose of my work, this book, or, for that matter, any of my work on the Ainu, would not have been possible. I cherish our relationship, however, not simply because of my anthropological interests but because it was a most fulfilling experience for me to get to know her – a brilliant and warm woman who shared her joys and sufferings of life with me. Although this book, I am sure, falls short of the expectations of this woman who held an unshakable pride in her own culture, it is dedicated to her memory.

My other Ainu friends at Tokoro are also gratefully remembered. Either individually or often during our fireside group discussions, they supplied me with rich ethnographic information. My deep appreciation also goes to my many Ainu friends at Wakasakunai. I thank Miharuru Fumio, the head of the local community, who, without hesitation, took the entire responsibility for my presence even at the beginning when others were not certain of the purposes of my work. Emiko Kawamura, who let me stay with her and has since extended a close and enduring friendship to me, is also affectionately acknowledged here. Her daughter, then four years of age, taught me the beauty of sharing when wealth is not plentiful. I will never forget her face when she pulled a piece of candy from her mouth and asked me if I wanted to suck on it for a while. I also thank Shirayama no Baba, as she was fondly called in the community, who taught me much about Ainu religion and other matters.

Numerous scholars in Japan, the United States, and elsewhere have contributed either directly or indirectly to this book. My indebtedness to Professor Jan Vansina of the University of Wisconsin, my former professor, is long-standing as well as multifaceted. When I was a student, he first introduced me to the field of symbolic anthropology, and since then he has painstakingly read almost every paper I wrote and generously offered me his suggestions. As I grow in my profession, I am even more amazed at his generosity in imparting to me his most original ideas and analyses, many of which I “stole” and attempted to develop. His review and criticism of Chapters 1, 7, and 8 were most helpful. I dedicate this book to him as a small token of my appreciation for his guidance and personal encouragement through the years.

I am most grateful to Professor Toshi Yamamoto, former director of the Sakhalin Museum. The superb quality of his ethnographic work among the east coast Sakhalin Ainu has been a source of inspiration. In 1972, he hand-carried from Japan to Madison, Wisconsin, many illustrations, which he originally prepared for his publication, and various Sakhalin Ainu ethnographic specimens. My long hours of discussion with him about the northwest coast Ainu whom he had visited while in Sakhalin were most instructive as well as inspirational to me.

Somehow, I have been lucky in my anthropological career in that some

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xiii

of the established scholars, with whom I originally had no personal connections, have opted to encourage me in my research endeavors. Professor Robert J. Smith of Cornell University, in particular, has generously extended his help and encouragement. Others include Professors Alfonso Ortiz, John J. Stephan, Shinichiro Takakura, Shiro Hattori, and Chester S. Chard. I have learned from them how to give to my students and young scholars.

My warmest personal appreciation goes to my parents, Kozaburo and Taka Ohnuki, whose unconditional love has been the source of strength in my life. They have also helped me in my research in many practical ways. I thank my husband Tim and our sons Alan Ohnuki and Roderic Kenji for teaching me the meaning, beauty, and joy of life. They have been most generous in letting me be obsessed with writing, especially during the summer of 1979, when they even had to go on vacation without me. I dedicate this book to my family members with profound gratitude and affection.

EMIKO OHNUKI-TIERNEY

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[More information](#)

Ainu phonemes

Ainu spoken on the northwest coast and used in this book is one of the six Sakhalin Ainu dialects investigated by linguists and is labeled the *Raichishika dialect* (Hattori, ed., 1964:18).

Phonemes

vowel – /i, e, a, o, u/

length – /:/

consonants – /p, t, k, č, s, m, n, r, h/

semivowels – /w, y/

Syllabic patterns

V – as in /oha/ “empty”

VC₂ – as in /ah/ “Japanese wych elm.” S. Hattori does not include this pattern (Hattori, ed., 1964:34).C₁V – as in /kačo/ “drum”C₁VC₂ – as in /kimun/ “mountain”Where C₁ = p, t, k, č, s, m, n, r, h, w, yWhere C₂ = s, m, n, h, w, y

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back	English approximation
High	i		u	/i/ as in <i>sit</i>
Mid	e		o	/e/ as in <i>bet</i>
Low		a		/a/ as in <i>rod</i> /o/ as in <i>obey</i> /u/ as in <i>put</i>

/i/ – A high front unrounded vowel

/e/ – A mid front unrounded vowel

/a/ – A central low unrounded vowel

/o/ – A mid back rounded vowel

/u/ – A high back rounded vowel

Length

I heard a clear contrast between short and long vowels. Hattori also interprets length as phonemic in the Raichishika dialect (Hattori, ed., 1964:42). Chiri, however, claims that length is not phonemic in all the Ainu dialects (Chiri 1956:123).

Consonants

/p, t, k/ – Bilabial, alveolar, and velar stops. They have both voiced and voiceless allophones.

In my analysis, the stops at the initial position are more often voiceless, but this is merely a tendency. By usage, in some words they are pronounced usually as voiceless and in others as voiced regardless of the position. For example, /kakhkemah/ “wife of a great person,” was always [gakhkemah], and /putuhka/ (a personal name) as [butuhka], whereas /kaama/ “to set a trap” as [kaama] and /pu:ri/ “custom” as [pu:ri]. There are also words pronounced either with a voiceless stop or a voiced stop. For example, /tonkori/ is pronounced sometimes as [tonkori] and other times as [donkori]. On the whole, words with a voiceless stop at any position outnumber those with a voiced stop.

Chiri states that the voiceless allophones are the more standard pronunciation and that the voiced ones are used more often by Japanized Ainu (Chiri 1956:124–5). Hattori claims that the stops are usually voiceless at the initial position, especially at the beginning of an utterance (Hattori, ed., 1964:34). According to Tae Okada, in the Hidaka dialect of Hokkaido, the voiceless are used at the initial position, but are in “free variation” elsewhere (cited in Raun et al. 1965:124).

/č/ – A predorsal affricate, with [j] as a voiced allophone.

/s/ – Voiceless alveolar spirant, with an alveopalatal spirant as an allophone. /s/ is more frequent. It is highly palatalized before or after /i/, as in /sis/ “eye.”

/m/ & /n/ – Bilabial and alveolar nasal resonants, respectively.

/r/ – A short voiced alveolar flap.

/h/ – A voiceless glottal fricative. At the final position, it is a very soft voiceless fricative with the same articulation as that of the preceding vowel, e.g., /ahkas/ “to walk” = [aʰkas], /ohkayo/ “man” = [oʰkayo].

Semivowels

/w/ & /y/ – Bilabial and alveopalatal resonants, respectively.

In my analysis, accent is not phonemic in the Raichishika dialect used in this book. Hattori considers accent as nonphonemic in the Bihoro and

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Raichishika dialects but phonemic in all the other Hokkaido dialects (Hattori, ed., 1964:35). Chiri, however, argues that accent is phonemic in all the Ainu dialects, including all the Sakhalin Ainu dialects (Chiri 1956:142–56).

Hattori includes /ʔ/, which is [ʔ] at the initial position and simply a tension in the throat between two vowels (Hattori, ed., 1964:34). I did not hear such a sound. Moreover, in Hattori's notation it is predictable, appearing either at the beginning of a word when the next (in his interpretation) phoneme is a vowel, or between two successive vowels when the vowels are different (Hattori, ed., 1964). Therefore I do not consider it necessary to postulate the existence of this phoneme.

Both [ŋ] and [l] may be phonemic. Each was heard only in one word, however. [ŋ] was in the Ainu pronunciation of a Gilyak personal name [koyŋahte] and [l] in onomatopoeia of the cry of a crow [holowlowlow] with the same pronunciation as the English dark /l/.

The most important works by linguists on Sakhalin Ainu include Kindaichi (1960:337–62), Chiri (1942, 1953, 1954, 1956, 1962), Hattori (1957, 1961; Hattori, ed., 1964), and Pilsudski (1912). Works by Pilsudski and Kindaichi are based on the dialects on the east coast of southern Sakhalin. Chiri's works include dialects as far north as Ustomonaypo but do not include the Raichishika dialect. Hattori worked intensively with my key informant, Husko, and his analysis of the Raichishika dialect is of high scholarly quality.