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journal or publication title	Northeast Asian Study Series
number	6
page range	121-148
year	2003-09-20
URL	http://doi.org/10.50974/00133161

HORSE HUSBANDRY AND ABSENTEE LIVESTOCK OWNERSHIP IN THE SAKHA: HORSE TRUST RELATIONSHIP AND THE CURRENT SOCIOECONOMIC TRANSITIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on current horse husbandry and the related trust relationship in Central Yakutia from the viewpoint of absentee ownership. The socialists' development policies caused a transformation in the way of life of the Sakha as well as other indigenous peoples of Siberia, and in traditional cattle-horse pastoralism. Over the past seventy years the Sakha has the population increased 150% and changed from a half-nomadic life to a sedentarized life in larger administrative villages and cities in response to the collectivization and industrialization of traditional subsistence. One of the crucial effects of socioeconomic development was an increase in the variety and number of job opportunities available to the population. Many people could choose from a wide variety of work, including jobs once seen as traditional pastoralism even if they lived in rural areas. These trends were transformed again under post-socialist conditions. In this paper I would like to shed some light on changing aspects of Sakha lives with regard to horse trust relationships and absentee herd ownership in a land where an industrialized indigenous society is replacing traditional pastoralism.

There have recently been many ethnographical reports and considerations given to this transformation in the Western and Asian anthropological circles. Among them the subject of reindeer herding is most closely related to the focus of this paper. The tendency is for arguments to concentrate on the change and current nature of reindeer herding such as the socioeconomic structure of herders' organizations, ecological knowledge and the practices of herders. What seems to be lacking in previous studies is an examination of the relation between herders and those who choose different jobs. We also have to recognize the fact that non-herders far out-number the herders. The research trend has rendered only insufficient examinations of the Siberian pastoral industrialization and its consequences that continue at this very moment. I would like to try to explain the case of the Sakha by considering the current trust relationship in horse husbandry and its related matters.

The more concrete purpose of this paper is to present and discuss the current entanglements of socioeconomic aspects with ecological ones that are embedded in the trust relationship of horse husbandry. This topic follows from my previous paper (Takakura 2002): Focusing on the human-horse relationship as institutionalized under the socialist regime, I examined the cultural significance and the aftermath of management on horse reproduction. While my previous focus was centered on the practices and knowledge of herders themselves in literal fields or pastures, here I put the subject in the context of an industrialized indigenous society and examine it from both macro and micro view points.¹

POST-SOCIALIST CONDITIONS AND ABSENTEE HERD OWNERS

The ideas and discussions on “absentee herd owners” introduced in the research on current nomadic pastoralism have helped to set the perspectives examined in this paper. Absentee herd owners are people who own herd animals but have someone else care for and manage them. As the title of my paper implies the trend is to have herds who are owned by one person and managed by another, and this requires a trusting relationship between the owner of a herd and the hired herder/shepherd.

In traditional terms, a nomadic pastoralist, “one who migrates with his or her herds normally occurring in a family unit”, differed from a pastoralist, “any person whose subsistence depends directly or indirectly on the grazing of animals on native pasture” (Gilles and Gefu 1990:100). The separation between the herder of herd/livestock and the owners and/or the trust management of herds is not, however, an unusual occurrence in the history of traditional nomadic pastoral societies. Livestock in those societies signifies not only the main subsistent good but also one with a symbolic social exchange value (Sato 1995; Soga 1998; Toshimitsu 1986). The necessity for the emergence of terms such as absentee herd owner or hired herder/shepherd relates to the transformation of nomadic pastoral societies under the influence of infiltrating state policies and modernization. Shifts in market orientation accompanied with more sedentary societies has produced absentee owners and hired herders, while causing researchers to ask: what will these changes in their world mean to nomadic pastoralists.

This research trend is relevant to what Anders Hjordt brought up as a question in the early 1980s. He noted that research on pastoral societies should be done with perspectives shifted away from an ecological model or technical reductionism to the political ecology or an empirical examination of social-economic factors among other things (Hjordt 1982). There are many studies concerning absentee herders from this perspective (Beck 1980;

¹ I did six months of field work for this paper during 1999 to 2001. The main research area was in Tabaga village in the Megino-Khangalask district in the central part of the Sakha Republic. Here I present ethnographical data that I observed and learned from interviews from those who lived both in the village and the neighboring regions.

Fernandez-Gimez 1999; Konagaya 2001; Little 1985; Mearns 1996; White 1990). These studies have mainly focused on the conditions that lead to the emergence of the absentee herd owners and their role both within pastoral societies and outside of them.

An early example is the case of the Qashqa'i in Iran whose tribal role in the context of pastoralism was transformed. Changing government policies and national economic pressures had a huge impact on pastoralists in Iran in the mid 1970s. The nationalization of pastoral land, land reform, encroaching cultivation, and commercialization alienated tribal control of their pastureland, their migrations, schedules, and land use patterns. The simultaneous increase in market demands effected Qashqa'i's flock size and its composition. Traditionally they had reared animals for home use or for social exchange, but now they needed to focus on the market value of animals. As a result, "pastoralism continued, and household labor divided into an agriculturally settled part and a pastoral nomadic part". Social stratification infiltrated the pastoralist population. Then the contract herding of others' livestock developed, necessitating the appearance of hired shepherds (Beck 1980:341-348).

Another example is the case of the Flube in Niger. Since 1974 there had been an increase in investments in livestock by farmers, merchants and civil servants near the pastoral Flube. The livestock of these investment owners were managed by the pastoralists, although, this caused dramatic changes to their own livestock management, such as in the use of traditional wells, mobility, milking levels and animal loans. Gradually, due primarily to the attitude of the outside investors, the attitude of the pastoralists changed. The market orientation of these outside investors, or absentee herd owners, forced herders to keep the animals near the village where pastures were poor. Therefore, herders learned to separate those animals from those belonging to the herders both in physical spatiality and symbolically (White 1990).

Some researchers regard absentee owners as having a negative effect on the traditional use of pastoral land and its ecological condition. Peter Little (1985), who did field research on the Chamus in Northern Kenya, insists that the blame for overstocking and overgrazing in recent years should be placed on part-time pastoralists or absentee herd owners who came from outside local communities rather than with the local pastoralists themselves. Criticizing the famous "tragedy of commons", he suggests that the privatization of rangeland with the appearance of absentee owners resulted in the tragedy destruction of the grassland. On the other hand, Maria Fernandez-Gimez (1999), who examined the case of post-socialist Mongols, views the role of absentee herd owners' differently from Little. According to her, absentee herd ownership is a means of cultural survival that is mutually beneficial for both herders and town-dwelling owners in a post-socialist transition era.

Again, the catalyst of this research trend lies in a worldwide transformation among pastoralists. Gill and Gefu see this trend as "nomadism in crisis" and noted some features unique to the situation. The first was a drastic change in mobility of the nomads stemming

from the establishment of national boundaries, the expansion of cultivated areas, and new government policies toward a reduction in the nomad's mobility itself, for instance, through relocating them to sedentary villages. The second was a change in the pastoral production system. Modern states put considerable stress on pastoralists' tribal control and the regulation of pastureland. The inclusion of pastoralists in national economies and the expansion of the livestock markets intensely altered the nature of livestock ownership. Some pastoralists gave up their traditional life to become urban or rural wagedworkers for their subsistence; but at the same time non-pastoral investors whose animals needed to be entrusted to pastoralists appeared (Gill and Gefu 1990:105-107) - a perfect example of why researchers are focusing on absentee herd owners.

Corresponding to these transformations which modern states themselves have promoted, the governments believe that traditional pastoralism is no longer suited to current conditions. Modern governments brainstormed for alternatives such as the ranching system of the Americas, Australia and New Zealand; or the herding collectives of Mongolia, China and the Soviet Union. According to Gill and Gefu, for livestock development planners the ranching system would be an ideal solution because the system presents less of a threat to the environment and has a higher level of production not only for herders but also for urban consumers with the use of modern veterinary technologies. The differences in the ranching system and traditional pastoralism are the "primarily sedentary operations that exist on legally defined pieces of land", the private ownership or leaseholds of land tenure, and individual ownership of animals (Gill and Gefu 1990:109-110; Ingold 1980). In spite of these differences, the purpose of Gill and Gell's paper is to emphasize un-seeming similarities between ranching and traditional pastoralism, both of which have in common uneconomic motivations, self-image both of herders and ranchers, and economic un-profitability; then they give a balanced picture of nomadic pastoralism under present conditions. Their discussions led to a reevaluation of traditional pastoralism methods which are unilaterally criticized by policymakers.

Taking into account the features that Gill and Gefu define under "nomadism in crisis", my research focuses on an alternative for traditional pastoralism, that is, "herding collectives", which they remarked on separately from ranching. It is not enough to merely note that herding collectives are not traditional nomadic pastoralism. I believe that it is necessary to shed light on herding collectives in socialist and/or post-socialist countries in both a historical and social-economic framework, as well as to compare it with ranching. Socialist state policies such as sedentarization and collectivization need to be focal points in the comparative research on the transformation of current pastoralist societies.

It is evident that from the 1930s through the 1960s traditional nomadic pastoralism decreased rapidly from post-socialist region, in Mongol, Central Asia, and Siberia (Humphrey & Sneath 1999; Khazanov 1998; 1990; Krupnik 1998:231). Anatoly Khazanov suggested in his two articles that gave an overview of the transformation of contemporary nomadic pastoralists, that Russian colonialism had the same effect on the

Kazakhs in Central Asia as western colonialism had on the African pastoralists. This is because the impact brought to each of these people a loss of land, restrictions in mobility, a degrading of living standards and the natural environment inside the nomadic societies, and the increase of agricultural immigrants causing a dependency of those societies on the outside. The collectivization and sedentarization in the 1930s ended the nomadic pastoralism of the Kazakh as a way of life. One of Khazanov's conclusions was that "[t]he loss of control by pastoralists over the stock they were herding - it's alienation from the immediate producers and concentration in the hands of absentee owners - may also contribute to a serious ecological and social disequilibrium" (Khazanov 1990:89-90, 96). He also offered two types of possible solutions for governments and development agencies to try so that pastoralists could adjust to modernization more easily. The first one was the ranching system, as seen in western countries, to "transform traditional pastoralists into commercial stock producers, assuming there is a fully-developed market structure". The second one was sedentarization and collectivization as seen in socialist and some of the third world governments. Khazanov himself saw faults in both of these approaches: the ranching system had often failed because it was costly and many of the Third World countries could not afford to give subsidies and supports like developed western countries, and the second idea had already proven to be disastrous (Khazanov 1990: 94; 1998:12-16).

The object of this paper is to apply the concept of absentee herd owners to a post-socialist Yakutian society in Siberia and to make an empirical examination of some socioeconomic consequences with theoretical implications. Based on research cited above I would like to confirm the following three points: 1) the policies of collectivization and sedentarization are a way of modernizing nomadic pastoralists, 2) Siberian nomadic pastoralists completely changed from traditional pastoralist's societies to modernized ones in regard to the ownership of land tenure and animals, mobility, and labor (social) organizations, 3) the concentration of absentee ownership of livestock was set in the state or collective farm during the period of collectivization and sedentarization. The concept of absentee herd owners can elucidate not only some changing traditional nomadic pastoralists but also already transformed societies. The primary owner of livestock during the socialist regime was the government, and the state or collective farm, that is, an agent of the government could be regarded as an absentee owner who had to take the initiative in deciding the herd's migration, mobility, and herd composition. In the current post-socialist era, the concentration of absentee ownership in the government has shifted from the state or collective farm to individuals. I will examine who become absentee owners, what purpose they have, and what the consequences are in a (socialized) modernized society transformed from traditional pastoralism.

**ABSENTEE HERD MANagements AND ABSENTEE LIVESTOCK
OWNERSHIP IN A SIBERIAN CONTEXT**

In the last decade there has been a gradual but steady increase in indigenous Siberian ethnography in Western and Asian anthropological circles (cf: Krupnik 2000; Watanabe 2002:53). This topic of research has also inspired papers on reindeer herding which focused on the transformation of traditional cultures. These papers often contain new anthropological terms to explain both the Soviet and post-soviet conditions of reindeer herding such as production nomadism, professional herders (hired herders), brigade (working teams), state or collective farms, etc. While I consider the perspective true, it seems to me that the orientation of researchers including myself, is limited to field observations in pasture and interviews with those who are related to reindeer herding in one way or another (Anderson 2000; Fondahl 1998; Golovnev and Oshrenko 1999; Gray 2000; Ikeya 2001, Klovov 2000; Konstantinov 1997; Takakura 2000a, Yoshida 1998, 2001; Ziker 2001). However, to get an accurate picture of Siberian ethnography I think that it is necessary to focus on a small number of professional herders and a large number of other villagers who have different jobs in villages, as well as those in command positions from the cadre of state farm workers and working teams of herders. The various jobs for sedentary villagers were regarded the same as the job of reindeer herder by the former socialist government. People often had an opportunity to change jobs even though there were only a limited number of professions. This will enable us to ask questions concerning absentee herd ownership to a wide variety of people. Namely, what are the cultural and socioeconomic implications of a transformation from socialist to post-socialist conditions for leaders of the former state farms, professional herders working in pasture and the other sedentary indigenous village population?

As the previous section showed, collectivization and sedentarization were key factors which changed traditional nomadic pastoralists in the indigenous Siberian societies. Furthermore, the policies of forced relocation and the reinforcement of collective farms in the 1950s to 1960s should be noted (Fedorov 1997:239; Vakhtin 1994). These policies brought with them a boarding school system and a simplification of the local administrative structures. These factors resulted in a large concentration of indigenous peoples living in sedentary administrative villages whose central production sector formed a state farm. The younger generation who had been educated at boarding school had adapted to a Soviet way of life instead of a traditional one. Most of the indigenous population could choose to take a sedentary job in the administrative village, so that nomadic herding of livestock became just one job possibility rather than a predetermined way of life. Gradually the population learned to rely upon centralized supplies such as foodstuffs and manufactured goods from state farms and administrative villages instead of being self-sufficient. If a person got a job as a professional herder, he/she had to devote themselves to the job and had no time for any

regular subsistence activities beyond some episodic fishing and hunting. The state farm had control over the rangeland, herding-work organization, and migration. "By the 1960s both the free mobility of hunters and the former nomadic life style of reindeer herders was all but gone under the pressure of paternalistic modernization" (Krupnik 1998:231-235). There was no longer any traditional nomadic pastoralism; only the paternalistic collectivized industry of raising livestock. The state farm allotted their land into functional pieces to be used as pastures for reindeer, or horses and cattle; grassland for growing hay or farmland. The farm organized working teams (brigades) of professional herders for raising stock and allocated a clearly delineated piece of pasture to each team. Herders spent their lives supervising livestock within each defined pasture in a nomadic style separated from their families in the village. In the 1960s the ownership of the above land and most of animals lay in the hands of the government (state farm)².

In the relationship among professional herders, land-livestock, and the village-state farm, the administrators of the state farm played the role of powerful and decisive absentee herd owners. They had rights to dispose of (slaughter and sell) livestock within state policies and to control herds of animals and pasture, and then to hire herders for work teams while they themselves worked in the village. Concerning individual livestock, it was certain that herders had their own livestock for domestic consumption as well as riding or draft animals to use as they pleased in pasture, and even the village population could obtain some animals for their own consumption. The latter might be called an absentee livestock owner. Both individual ownership of livestock for herders and village settlers was, however, limited in number and in most cases their animals were just an aggregation of livestock but not a herd. These few individually owned animals were mixed with more state animals to form a herd which was the unit of supervision for a work team. Herders could take some initiative but were limited in how they could supervise the herd and its related reproduction (husbandry) management (Takakura 2002:16-17).

I would like to define terms concerning absentee ownership in a Siberian context. The term "absentee herd manager" refers to either an individual or an organization who has rights to dispose of livestock, has primary responsibility for deciding on herd composition, and is usually absent from the pasture where his/her animals are kept. It is different from the term, "absentee livestock owner". The latter is an individual who is usually absent from pasture, but who owns livestock irrespective of a herd and has little say over their daily management. The absentee herd manager does not necessarily own their herd of livestock in legal terms. The term, "absentee herd owner" is not used because the owner of livestock in the former state farm was the Soviet government, in rigid legal terms, and even the administrators were only agents of socialist institutions, so instead I use the term absentee herd manager. While these managers are administrating agents of the state farm and the successor organization in post-socialist conditions, they are also regarded as

² Forest land also belonged to the government.

concrete individuals who are prominent members of a village community. When they decide to handle affairs as an agent of an organization, their acts directly effect human relations in the village. The cultural and socioeconomic contexts of animal husbandry are created by these absentee herd managers, herders, and absentee livestock owners and their ties to the outer world, for example, commands from the former socialist administration and current market pressure.

Soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the paternalistic system of indigenous stock raising stopped. One of the biggest effects from this event was a change in the nature and order of absentee herd management established under the former regime. The absentee herd managers in the state farm began to lose dominance and were degraded socially, while, to the contrary, herders and individual absentee livestock owners sustained a social upgrade. Various indigenous stock management units emerged at this time like mushrooms after a rain and sometimes also immediately went bankrupt. The nature of these corporations is legally defined in Russian, republican (inner of Russian federation) and some other administrative units. According to previous research (Nefedova 2002:7; Morishita 1997; Yamamura 1997), we can classify them into three categories. The first is a production organization with a certain scale including the successors of the former collective or state farm: the collective production organization (*kollektivnoe Proizvodstvennoe Khozhiaistvo*), agricultural enterprise (*agrofirma*), the corporate (*koperativ*), etc. The second is a small scale or family business-style organization such as the farmer corporations (*krestianskoe khozhiaistvo*), and clan communes (*rodovaia obshchina*). The last is individual farmers (*podsobnoe lichnoe khozhiaistvo*). All of these new management units greatly effected pastureland use and herd compositions, as well as trust and social relations among herders, sedentary absentee livestock owners, and absentee herd managers both inside and outside of the village. To get a clearer idea of how these three entities interacted, researchers have to shift their focus from the vertical structure centered on the powerful absentee herd manager to a horizontal one relativized and diversified among the three major players.

AN OVERVIEW OF HORSE HUSBANDRY IN YAKUTIA

Historical Background

The framework of research on reindeer herding that I mentioned can also be applied to the indigenous horse husbandry industry of the Sakha (Yakut) in Siberia. The relationship between herders and pasture and absentee owners in a sedentary village is basically the same as that of reindeer herds. Horses are not kept in a stable but they are organized into horse-bands (*tabun*) and allowed to run free within the pasture year-round without need of fodder. Professional herders leave their family in a village and lead a

nomadic life in log cabins in the pasture, instead of the tents reindeer herders use, in order to supervise herds of horse-bands. The former state farm was the primary absentee herd manager and many of the villagers had a few horses making them absentee livestock owners.

The Sakha, a group of Turkic speaking people, live in the vast territory of eastern Siberia centered along the Lena, but which ranges from the Okhotsk Sea to the Anabar River. In the 19th century the colonial administration of the Russian empire registered the Sakha as nomads (IYA 1957:168). The traditional subsistence of the Sakha was horse-cattle husbandry accompanied by the making of hay and supplemented with hunting and fishing.³ The people lived in summer and winter residences, and between the two they spent a half-nomadic way of life according to the necessities of subsistence activities.⁴ Historical documents from 17th century Russia call the Sakha “the horse people”, however, the more the colonial administration infiltrated its way into lives of the people, the more the socioeconomic aspects of their lives changed. The emphasis was shifted to cattle husbandry, rather than horses, and social stratification intensified with an increase in the private-property orientation of land for making hay and some useful plots through the 18th and 19th centuries. Some studies shows that the Sakha had four or five times more horses than cattle before the Russian colonization took place, then, especially through the 19th century the ratio changed so that they had a few times more cattle than horses. The 1917 statistical account reports that Sakha households in the Central Yakutia had an average of 9.3 cattle and 2.4 horses. This meant an increase in the importance of mowing hay for cattle husbandry and the necessity of a defined plot in a settled condition, rather than nomadism through the territory. All of these changes resulted in increasingly sedentary lives among the Sakha (Gotovtsev 1995: 4; Ivanov 1966:202; Ivanov 1992; Jocheson 1933:190; Jordan & Jordan-Bychkov 2001:46; Tokarev1945: 189; Tokarev & Gurvich 1964:248).

Some historical studies examine life and pastoralism of the Sakha in the Central Yakutia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. At that time there were two categories of dwellings among the Sakha. The first was permanent dwellings called “yal” which also means family and neighbors; the second was the temporary dwellings for seasonal and supplemental subsistent activities such as hay mowing, hunting, and fishing, but which had no general term like the yal. There were three different types of yal that were used in different seasons: the winter-dwelling (kystyk), the summer-dwelling (saiylyk), and one type of dwelling that was used less than a month in autumn (otor) - but this was not very common even at the beginning of the 19th century. On the other hand, there were numerous temporary dwellings but they did not fall under a general term; instead they

³ Some groups of Sakha live in Northern Yakutia where they also engage in reindeer husbandry - an idea which they borrowed from neighboring indigenous peoples (Jochelson 1971 1926 363-367; Gurvich 1977).

⁴ Some researchers called their way of life “transhumance” (Jordan and Jordan-Bychkov 2001:48).

each had a concrete designation: the house for the mowers (otuu), the place of mowing (otchuttar), hunting hut (bulchut iuteene), the place of yurt (sir baragana), and so forth. These dwellings were usually constructed in lowland areas along rivers or in *alaas*, which is a kind of geographical feature unique to Central Yakutia which is a circular meadow surrounding a small lake, also known as a type of *themokarst*.⁵ The axis of nomadism in their life lies between the winter dwellings and summer ones, and the distance between the two ranged from a few kilometers to ten or more. According to the need for supplemental subsistence activities, they sometimes moved to some place and stayed for a while, such as “the place for mowing”. These seasonal moves were only for a few families (*kergen* or *yal*) for the winter dwelling, but these tended to number more than for the summer one. In the early 20th century statistics show that the average population in the winter dwelling in Central Yakutia was twenty. However, as sedentary orientation increased through the 19th century the tendency to combine winter dwellings and hay mowing plots (*khoduha*) strengthened (Fedorova 1998: 31; Zikov 1986: 13-15). These living conditions were mainly adapted to cattle husbandry rather than horses. The Sakha had long practiced two basic systems of livestock breeding: stabling and pasturing. The former was for cattle and both kinds of seasonal dwellings were equipped with a cattle shed called as *khoton*. Although cattle were pastured, they slept and rested in close proximity to herders. Their winter fodders basically consisted of hay collected during the summer. On the other hand, horses were ranged freely year-round around human dwellings. Horses were pastured in a unit called a horse-band (*tabun*), which consisted of one male and numerous females (Alekseev 1997:72; Tokarev & Gurvich 1964:248-249). Taking account of the average number of horses per household, 2.4 head in 1917 as mentioned above, the major tendency may not have been to have a single owner but a more complex situation. Unfortunately, I have no concrete ethnographical data to support this theory at the present time.

Many Sakha experienced collectivization from the 1930s and then forced relocation in the 1960s like other indigenous Siberian people. According to interviews I conducted in Central Yakutia, many Sakha worked in collective farms and lived either in traditional winter dwellings in *alaas* or small villages until the 1950s; after the relocation in the 1960s they moved to larger administrative villages established with state farms. The transformation of living conditions continued until the socialist regime had been replaced by professional horse-herders, state farms with absentee herd managers, and many villagers as absentee livestock owners. A loss of the cultural significance of horses from the people of Sakha had simultaneously occurred as that process continued. On their traditional calendar there was a “month to catch foal (*kulun tutar*)” signifying late March through the first half of April, and a famous festival celebrating *kumis*, a horse-milk beverage. Horses had been a social and religious symbol used for marriage gifts or sacrifice (Jochelson 1933:106; Matsuzono 1967; Tokarev & Gurvich 1964:276). However, as

⁵ The size of *alaas* ranges from 0.5 ha for a small one to 2000ha for a large one (Saito 1995:139).

ownership changed and herders became professional, the cultural implications changed to assign horses to an unimportant place in Sakha lives. On the other hand, the two traditional ways of herding, stabling for cattle and pasturing for horses, were basically left unchanged. Pasture was provided around the large administrative village, and professional horse herders worked in remote pastures while leaving their families in the village. Of course, some changes in pasturing were introduced as advised by veterinary medicine and the biology of animal husbandry. But the practice of pasturing horse-bands in remote areas far from both traditional dwellings and administrative villages continued. As for cattle breeding, there were no herders who continuously had to work in distant pastures. There were huge stables (khoton) in the village for cattle owned by the state farm, and a small shed (khoton) within every plot as an individual residence for each owner.

***Agricultural Policies and Statistical Facts on Socialist
and Post-socialist Horse Husbandry in Yakutia***

According to the "Atlas of Agriculture in Yakut ASSR" published in 1989, animal husbandry accounted for 86% of all agricultural production at that time. This is most likely because of agricultural policies established in Yakutia by the early Soviet government that put primary significance on animal husbandry, second on farming, and hunting and ranked fishing as subordinates. The influencing administrative decisions on the industrial formation of socialist horse husbandry were: 1) the establishment of state breeding centers of Yakutian pedigree horses in nine collective farms of the Verkhoyansk district in 1943, and 2) the resolution put forth by the Supreme Soviet (council) of Yakut ASSR, the 19th of March, 1963 calling for the "development of meat-oriented horse husbandry with the use of horse-bands (tabun)". These two decisions contributed to the survival of a pedigreed line of horses and to the adoption of horse-bands as the unit of pasturing for socialist economic production. Some modern techniques and guidelines for better herd management have been introduced so that presently the preferable number of horses in a horse-band ranges from twenty to thirty, there is protection for pregnant dams, there is special treatment for foals or young horses that allows them to have fodder within a corral or stable during the winter, construction of equipment for selection and slaughter, and so forth (Atlasov 1992: 3, 87-88; Gotovtsev 1995: 52; Korotov 1989: 109). Encouragement and information have been given by specialists since the 1950s, including advice on the preferable percentage of dams in a horse-band - more than 55%, so that the number of animals slaughtered then depends on the birthrate of foals. These two decisions work together to make a model that maintains the ideal consistency of horses with respect to sex and age within the horse herd (NPOYa 1993: 3-6). These policies when carried out by a state farm can have a powerful influence on horse husbandry. During the 1960s through the 1980s there was an administration for the state farm or a branch of it in every village,

therefore, the rural population had a neighborhood absentee herd manager in their midst everyday.

Population statistics help in comprehending the relation between professional herders and villagers as absentee livestock owners. Because of the socialist regime, many of the Sakha people lived in rural areas. The ratio of the rural population to the urban population was 97% to 3% in 1926 for the total number of Sakha (235,926). This ratio changed in 1989 so that of the total number of 365,236 people, 74.3% lived in a rural area while only 25.7% lived in an urban area (Ignat'eva 1994). This shift, however, did not seem to effect horse herding noticeably. One should bear in mind that there are usually five to six professional herders on a work team (brigade). A study shows that a single herder can supervise either 90-120 head of mature horses, 120-140 head of young horses, or 50-60 head of foals (Gotovtsev 1995:38). In a nutshell, it is not necessary to hire many professional herders. According to my field data from the Tabaga village in the Megino-Khangalask district in Central Yakutia, the total population of the village was 1220 or 383 households in 1999. The state farm in this village had the following departments and workers that same year: the central administration · 13 persons, horse husbandry · 16, construction · 7, cattle husbandry · 52 (and they hire additional temporary workers in summer · 20, and in winter · 2), fur animal breeding · 8, grain cultivation · 14, garage and driving · 19. The former state farm had 455 horses and provided two working teams for horse herd management, each with 6 herders. Only 1.0% of the total population needed to be active professional herders. In other words, except for a small percent of the village, the population could all be absentee livestock owners.

It may be contrary to one's expectations, but even during the socialist regime rural villagers usually owned individual livestock irrespective of the rigid legal restrictions on ownership. One study states that most rural Sakha possessed cows in the mid-20th century: 63% had only one cow, while another 32% owned two (Jordan & Jordan-Bychkov 2001:73). Medvezhekh (1995: 292), who presented a general outline of agricultural policies in Russia during the 20th century, indicated that the socialist government had permitted the ownership of a single horse by households in special areas including Yakutia in the 1970s, and then the Supreme Soviet of Russian Republic (RSFSR) resolved to allow individual ownership of livestock to all citizens in 1982. Field data that I gathered in Batagay-Alyta of the Eveno-Bytantaysk district in Northern Yakutia supported the existence of individual ownership of livestock as mentioned above. There was a population of 1,734 or 627 households in 1994, and the former state farm owned 785 horses that were handled by two working teams comprised of three to five herders each. In addition, of the 627 households, 148 owned a total of 203 horses privately and the average number was one to two head (Takakura 2002:5).

Table 1. Horse ownership in the Sakha Republic

Sector & management type	1990		1997	
	Head	%	Head	%
Governmental sector	167,900	84.2	65,800	52.6
Agricultural enterprise	164,900	82.6	64,000	51.2
Subordinate management	3,000	1.5	1,800	1.4
Private sector	31,600	15.8	59,200	47.4
Individual subordinate management	31,600	15.8	40,600	32.5
Farmer management	-	-	17,000	13.6
Clan commune	-	-	1,600	1.3
Total	199,500	100.0	125,000	100.0

Source: Ivanov 2000:28

Many changes have taken place in the wake of post-socialist political reform. Agricultural production including horse husbandry in Yakutia has generally decreased since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Official statistics show that the agricultural workforce declined from 65,000 in 1992 to 47,400 in 1998 (RSTs 1999: 32). There were about 210,000 horses in Yakutia in 1992; however, in 1997 there were only 140,000 head. The number had decreased by 33.3% during the five years (Ivanov2000: 3; Mateev 1999:220). See table 1, which represents the dynamics of horse ownership in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). While the governmental sector owned more than 80% of the horses in 1990, this percentage declined to just over 50% in 1997. On the other hand, the private sector increased its ownership from 15.8% in 1990 to 47.2% in 1997. Within that sector, private households or individual subordinate management increased the percentage of horses from 15.8% in 1990 to 32.5% in 1997. In addition, two new legal categories of horse ownership appeared: a farmer corporation and a clan commune. Their ratios in 1997 were 13.6% and 1.3% respectively (Ivanov 2000: 28).

Table 2. Agricultural land and Management in the Sakha Republic in 1995

category of management	size of land	
	thousand ha.	%
Association of farm	48.0	0.1
Collective enterprise	511.8	0.7
Goskhozy	17012.2	24.1
(including Sovkhoz)	(14732.1)	(20.8)
Collective management	4459.8	6.3
Supplemental management	1690.3	2.4
Clan commune	46572.0	65.9
Farm	152.6	0.2
Individual tenure	210.4	0.3
Other enterprise	65.2	0.1
Total	70722.3	100.0

Source: Matveev, 1999, p.20

Because horse-band herding needs pastures situated far from sedentary villages, we must also grasp the relationship between land and horse husbandry. Of the entire territory of the Sakha Republic, 22.9% or 70,722.3 hectares was agricultural and pastoral land in 1995 (production land/sel'skokhoziaistvennoe ugod'e). While I don't have the data on agricultural plots and pastures separately, table 2 shows the relation between the different categories of management and their land in 1995. The most surprising fact was the huge portion assigned to the clan commune - 65.9% of all production land. The former state farm which turned into a collective enterprise, "Goskhozy", and collective management (in the table 2) was assigned a total of just over 30% of the land. While all of the production land was owned only by the state farm under the socialist regime, ownership and the land itself had been diversified in the post-socialist era. In 1995, there were 54 state farms, 164 collective enterprises, 12 agricultural farms, 4 horse-factories (konezavod), 114 clan communes, and 3,638 farm corporations (krestianskoe khoziaistvo) and private farmers (chastnoe khoziaistvo) (Mateev 1999:18-21).

The general picture of socialist/post-socialist horse husbandry in Yakutia was a set of monopolizing absentee herd managers, a small number of working professional herders, and numerous sedentary absentee livestock owners in each village. On the other hand, after the collapse of the socialist regime, socioeconomic repercussions following the transformation of the state farms in each village effected the order and relative power among the people. Privatization of state farms brought about the emergence of numerous types of agricultural enterprises ranging from organizational corporations to family businesses. The strategy of newly emerging enterprises is to diversify their primary production between horse or cattle husbandries (meat or dairy products) and agriculture. The monopolized nature that absentee herd managers enjoyed in the state farm has been opened up in the area of horse husbandry. Although a collective corporation succeeded in supervising herds with professional herders at the state farm, some family business enterprises such as the farmer corporation (krestianskoe khoziaistvo)⁶ also began to undertake herd management and sometimes to employ herders. This brought about a new situation: some former absentee livestock owners (and professional herders) became absentee herd managers and socioeconomic opportunities chosen by the herders and villagers increased. During the socialist regime only professional herders engaged in herd management and that took place in remote pastures of the state farm; however, currently there are even part-time herders. Also there has been diversification among the employers of herders. Absentee livestock owners, old and new, in villages and now some in cities, all have more say in the supervision of their horses and their choice of herders; which makes current relations among absentee herd managers, herders, and absentee livestock owners more complicated than in the past.

⁶ Major managers or most members of the clan communes are indigenous peoples but do not include the Sakha in Yakutia. Instead, the Sakha people choose the legal category of the farmer corporation under the current post-socialist conditions.

**HORSE CULTURES OF SAKHA IN THE CURRENT SOCIOECONOMIC
SITUATION: FOAL FLESH AS A LOCAL CUISINE**

Horse husbandry in Yakutia, established under the socialist regime, contributed not only to meat production but also to the production of horse milk known as kumis, and the hides utilized for clothing, rugs and special car covers in winter. The price of horsemeat is cheaper than that of beef or pork because horses do not need fodder under year round pasturing (*kruglogodovoi tebenevka*) (Gotovtsev 1995:6). Recently the symbolic significance of horses in the Sakha culture has been more valued in response to a national revival of the kumis festival. The ministry of agriculture of the Sakha Republic has encouraged horse-milk or kumis producers to increase the quantity and types of milk available. In the food culture, foal meat in autumn has been a Sakha favorite since it was made available to the public during the socialist regime. The transformation of production organizations and of property relations between the land and livestock as mentioned above has offered average people in villages and even urban areas, rather than only administrators of the former state farm and professional herders, a new possibility to trust their animals to whom they please and/or to become absentee livestock owners. Once absentee livestock owners, in principle, had to trust their animals to the state farm which was located in their village. Now they can choose whom to trust from among numerous absentee herd managers or herders themselves from within or outside the village. In order to understand newly arising situations among absentee livestock owners we should first examine the local consumption of foal meat, the methods of purchasing a horse, and the horse trust relationship for ordinary people at the present time.

The production of horsemeat accounted for 20-22% of all meat production in the Republic in the middle of the 1990s. The average number of slaughtered horses was 35,000 to 40,000 head, producing 10,000 to 11,000 tons of meat per year. The foal, five to six months after birth, was the main animal slaughtered for consumption (Gotovtsev 1995: 5). According to official records for 15 Feb., 2000 issued by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic, the total number of horses in Yakutia on that date was 125,486 head including 71,257 dams (14 Jan., 2000). The ministry's production plan for horse husbandry in 2000 anticipated that 48,472 foals would be delivered (with an average annual birthrate of 68.0%) in spring of 2000 and that the total slaughter for consumption (including payment in kind for workers) through the year would be 30,598 head. The ministry calculated that after taking into account increases from purchases and decreases from disease or predation, at the end of the year 129,860 horses would remain⁷.

⁷ Doc. / Zadanie ozhidaemoe pogolov'e loshchadei na 2000g. (15/02/2000) , in the File/ Postonovlenie # 559 reserved in the sector of horse husbandry of the department of animal husbandry and breeding in the ministry of agriculture of the Sakha Republic.

Table 3. The Acquisition and Disposal of Horses in 1999

The production organization		Erel	Algys	index	
Head of stallions as of Jan. 1999		41	62	a	
Head of dam as of Jan. 1999		439	419	b	
Income of foals in 1999	delivery	male	140	174	c
		female	146	153	d
	purchase	male	-	-	e
		female	60	50	f
Consumption in 1999	foals to be sold (slaughtered)	male	130	166	g
		female	25	90	h
	the others to be sold (slaughtered or transferred without killing)	89	40	i	
Ratio of delivery by dam *1		65.1%	78.0%	j	
Ratio of slaughtered foals to total consumption *2		63.5%	86.5%	k	
Ratio of slaughtered foals in the income-foals in 1999 *3		44.8%	68.1%	l	

$$*1 = (c + d) \div b \times 100$$

$$*2 = (g + h) \div (g + h + i) \times 100$$

$$*3 = (g + h) \div (c + d + e + f) \times 100$$

The number of foals slaughtered has varied widely depending on the year and the production organization. The concrete relation between delivery and consumption can be shown in some data from production organizations, which has been reorganized by former state farms. Please look at table 3. In the table are the income and consumption for horse husbandry of the “Erel” organization in the Tatt district of the republic and of the “Algys” organization in the Abyi district in 1999. The ratio of slaughtered foals to total consumption including the slaughter and transfer to other organizations without killing was 63.5% and 86.5% respectively. While the consumption of other horses, for the exception of foals, included meat from older stallions, dams or other horses, and the transfer of colts and fillies to other organizations. Foals are only to be killed for meat in autumn. Another ratio for income-foals, including delivery and purchase from other organizations shows 44.8% and 68.1% respectively⁸. For example, the data for the Erel organization show that 439 dams gave birth to 286 foals, 140 of which were male and 146 female. Of the total 286 newborn foals, 51.4% or 155 head were slaughtered. As for the sexual proportion, 130 head of the 140 male foals born and only 25 head of the 146 female foals born were consumed. These numbers fluctuated depending on conditions and business strategies for each year, and this year the Erel bought 60 female foals from other organizations. I can conclude from this data that the horse meat that is consumed is that of foals, and in particular, male foals. According to an interview with the head of the horse husbandry section of the Baikarov production organization in the Tabaga village of the

⁸ Doc. / otchet formy # 24 za 1 Feb. 1999 – 1 Jan. 2000, p/k Erel in Tattinskii ulus, and Doc. / Oborot loshadei GUP Algys za 1999god- Abyiskii Ulus, in the File/ Postonovlenie # 559, reserved in the sector of horse husbandry of the department of animal husbandry and breeding in the ministry of agriculture of the Sakha Republic.

Megino-Khangalask district, although it is difficult to say what percentage of foals will be slaughtered each year, a rough standard prevails at approximately 40% of the new-born foals, and the sexual ratio is usually 3 males to 1 female.

When do the people of Sakha consume horseflesh? There are two special seasons for eating horsemeat among the Sakha today. The first is in early summer during the kumis festival and the other is in autumn for foal flesh. The kumis festival offers a kind of holiday cuisine with the horse milk beverage, kumis. The former state farm or absentee herd managers usually prepare their mature livestock for sale or the cooked horseflesh to the public in the period of the festival (Takakura 2003). Since the absentee livestock owners usually own few animals, they rarely consume their own livestock at this time. On the other hand, during autumn foal flesh from October to November, absentee livestock owners tend to consume their own newborn foals from their private dams. Sakha, almost without exception, are proud of the taste of foal meat and expect each other to eat it. The way to get the flesh is 1) to be an absentee livestock owner and eat your own foal, 2) through social exchange and hand over among kin/relatives or friends, or 3) purchase from a shop/market or joint-purchase through work places. The price of foal flesh, for example, was 60 to 75 rubles per kilogram in the Saisali Market at the city of Yakutsk in 2000. I found the price tag that also mentioned the area of production such as *Megino-Khangalask*, or *Namtsi*. According to the vendors, the sale of foal meat is for a limited time only from the beginning of October through November. During that year I also found some vacuum-packed foal flesh in some capitalistic style supermarkets. However, the most common way to procure foal flesh is the first and second methods. Allowing the private ownership of livestock has accelerated the popularization of the first way, that is, the consumption of one's own foals as an absentee livestock owner. Easy access to foal meat is the major incentive to becoming an absentee livestock owner. It is no exaggeration to say that in order to get foal flesh each year, village and urban dwellers want to have their own horse.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN SOCIOECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN TRUST MANAGEMENT

Methods of Purchase and Trust with Private Dams

Any person, who wants to own a horse, whether they live in a rural or an urban area, has to either purchase a horse or receive one as a transfer from someone else. As mentioned above, horses run free all year in remote pastures in horse-bands. Village/urban settlers who have their own horse must build a trusting relationship with absentee herd managers or directly with herders who will charge some commission. The object of transactions is usually young dams or nearly matured fillies because they can

produce a foal each year. While I do not have enough collected information to reduce these transactions to a general formula, I can introduce some field materials from my interviews and some relevant trends that will illustrate the prevalent types of transactions.

Ms. V. Fedorova (born in 1939, fictitious name) had a temporary job in the dormitory at the musical boarding school in Yakutsk. She had been born in and lived her entire life in Yakutsk. When she wanted to purchase a dam in 2000, she tried to do it at the Yakutskii sovkhos in the village Syrdakh where she had a friend. The head of the horse husbandry section of the sovkhos quoted a price of 15,000 rubles for a pregnant dam, and 10,000 to 12,000 rubles for a young dam not yet pregnant. In addition, the commission charge was 1,500 rubles and due every year in the autumn when the foal meat was handed to her.

Another example is the case of Dr. T. Alekseev (born in 1945, fictitious name) who works at Yakutsk State University. He usually purchases dams from his birthplace of Pavlovsk village in the Megino-Khangalask district. When he bought a young dam from his relatives in the village, the price was 6,000 rubles. He noted that the price was especially inexpensive - the ordinary price for a dam is about 12,000 rubles. As the average monthly salary for workers in Yakutsk ranged from 3,000 to 5,000 rubles in 2000, the standard price of a dam is approximately three times more than a worker makes in a month. Dr. Alekseev ended up paying an additional 1,000 rubles plus some bottles of vodka as a commission to his acquaintance, a herder, each year.

According to many settlers in the Tabaga village of the Megino-Khangalask district, both absentee herd managers of the production organization and ordinary people irrespective of ownership of livestock agreed to set the price of a dam at around 10,000 rubles, however, the commission charged varies greatly; it can be an annual charge as in the previous example, a spot transaction of hay for cattle⁹, a work charge that asks for cooperation in hay making or other labor, a return of 25 - 30 kilograms of foal flesh, or bottles of vodka at predetermined intervals.

From these materials I can assume an average fixed price for a dam to some extent, but the commission charged would be dependent on the social relation between the buyer and the seller. I must add that most settlers in the Tabaga village refuse to use a written contract for the commission; everything is based on verbal agreements. In some cases one can become an absentee livestock owner if an animal is given from a family member or relatives for the happy event of marriage or childbirth. The commission in that case would not be charged to the owners but paid in some reciprocally agreeable fashion between the buyer (taker) and the seller (giver). What must be noted is that most absentee livestock owners rarely lay eyes on their own animals except to give comments on the build or body color of the horse at the time of purchase. In cases when there is a free transfer or an

⁹ Unlike horses, cattle are stabled in a shed (khoton). The hay collected during the summer is used for fodder in winter. See my previous paper (Takakura 2000b) on their hay collecting activities.

inexpensive purchase among relatives or friends it is not unusual to get a horse without even glimpsing the animal.

A young driver A. Ivanov (born in 1968, fictitious name) in Yakutsk was given a foal from his uncle (MB) in spring 2001 as a gift on the birth of Ivanov's child. He had never seen the foal, and at the time of my interview, July 2001 had no idea whether it was male or female. He said, if the foal were male, he would wait until the male were grown and then exchange it for a female. If the foal were female, he would also wait for the female to be matured enough to give birth, and then he expected to get foal flesh every autumn.

The unconcerned attitude toward their own animals is based on the fact that absentee livestock owners are primarily concerned with the foal flesh produced by their own dams. Occasionally absentee livestock owners who live in villages milk their dams; however, this is neither a regular event nor very popular. For owners living in an urban area the chance to milk their dams seldom if ever presents itself.

The Owners of Stallions and the Role of Herders

Absentee livestock owners ordinarily do not feel the necessity to see their own animals. Their attitude toward the animals is based not only in their focus on foal flesh but also on the free "pasturing" system, the method of herding used on horse-band units. As mentioned in previous sections, the horse-bands run free all year in remote pastures and herders spend a seasonal nomadic life in the pasture separated from their families in the village. The production organizations as well as individuals exemplify this life style and attitude towards horses.

The first case I will introduce is a typical farmer corporation in Yakutia managed by N. Nazarov (in his 50s, fictitious name) in Ektem village in the Khangal district. His business is cattle husbandry and cultivation. He also has three dams and trusts them to a production organization (the former state farm). He usually does not take care of his dams since his horses are pastured in an area far from the village. He pays the herd managers a commission in cash which includes a charge for stud services¹⁰, since what is important to him as an absentee livestock owner is to receive foal flesh every autumn. Dams that become too old to conceive are put down. Mr. Nazarov decided to have one dam slaughtered in the late spring of 2000 because the dam had not delivered for several years.

The focus on foals and foals alone, shows that Mr. Nazarov's attitude as a manager of the farmer corporation is the same as that of the individuals mentioned earlier. Absentee livestock owners, both individuals and organizations certainly are not concerned about the condition of their own animals. How do the professional herders treat those animals

¹⁰ The same things can be applied in the case of cattle or pigs. There is a veterinary station in this village and some owners of female cattle pay for stud service. However, most females mate freely during the summer pasturing season which does not require payment. This pasturing is different from that of horses. Cattle sleep in a shed in the village and they are put out to pasture in the morning and then go back to the shed in the evening.

committed to their care?

A professional horse herder (tabunshik), P. Romanov (born in 1969, fictitious name) who works in the production organization (the former state farm) of Biuteideekh village of the Megino-Khangalask district, explained as follows:

The principle job for horse herders is to supervise the government horse-bands in pasture and we have nothing to do with private horse-bands or other livestock if we are not paid to look after them. A private horse-band is usually not owned by a single person but multiple people. If a person has a stallion [as private property], he is a very important guy [to the management of that horse-band] because the person must own more dams [who follow the stallion in the band]

The “ government horse-bands ” in this statement are the ones owned by the production organization which took over the former state farm. Unless the herders are commissioned to care for private horse, or the absentee herd manager orders them to do so, the herders seem to consider that private livestock is none of their concern. From the latter half of the statement, we can assume that the owner of a stallion has a greater influence over the horse-bands than any other owner. This is true in any horse-band whether it is owned by the government or privately. In fact, the majority of stallions are still owned by the production organizations. The absentee livestock owners, at least those whom I met, could only allow their dams to be mixed into the government bands in the past¹¹. The existence of private horse-bands, which recently appeared under the new regime, has allowed the private ownership of livestock after the break up of the socialist regime and the emergence of newly institutionalized production organizations which succeeded or divided from the state farms. At some point in time someone claimed stallions with their numerous dams as their own private possessions and started to take responsibility for the composition of horse-bands. Even in that case, though the ownership of a single private horse-band is usually divided among the owner of the stallion and the numerous owners of the dams.

S. Borisov (born in 1959, fictitious name) is a manager of a farmer corporation named “ Bosh’aakh ” in the Pavlovsk village in the Megino-Khangalask district. His family and his brother’s manage this corporation. The production sectors include horse and cattle husbandry, the raising of chickens and hogs, and the cultivation of vegetables. The Bosh’aakh has two stallions and twelve dams or fillies and pastures them as two private horse-bands¹². The corporation leases a pasture for their private horse-bands from the former state farm. These bands consist of not only the corporation’s livestock but also those belonging to the managers and the brother’s friends. Borisov does not charge the friends a commission because of their close relationship. There are no professional herders

¹¹ There are some owners of geldings for riding, who are an exception.

¹² They also have a few horses for riding.

for the horse-bands among the employees of the corporation. Instead the manager employs part-time herders who work for another production organization in the same village, and sometimes he and his brother themselves help with the herding.

Because the manager is the owner of stallions and has private horse-bands that they supervise by themselves, this is an example of an interesting type of absentee herd management. Mr. Borisov and his brother are sometimes the absentee herd managers that employ part-time herders, and, at other times, they are the herders themselves. There is a vague boundary in the role between the absentee herd manager and professional herder in this case. This may be viewed as the unification of the two roles, which were each established differently under the socialist regime. It is probable that some professional herders, when they aged, became the cadre of the horse husbandry sector of the state farm, that is, absentee herd managers under the socialist regime. However, even those persons could not become independent managers of the production organization, nor owners of their own horse-bands. In this respect, the example of Mr. Borisov is a newly emerging role in horse husbandry. We might assume that this case is a sort of restoration of traditional pastoralism which did not distinguish between ownership and management of horse-bands. However, this is an over-interpretation of the social facts, since their lives are based in a sedentary village and their business targets are the management of multiple rural products, such as vegetable crops, and the raising of chickens and hogs in addition to horse and cattle husbandry. Moreover, the horse-bands consist of not only the manager's animals but also those of their friends. Mr. Borisov's horse-bands reflect the trust the owners have in him.

How can I interpret the existence of this newly emerging production organization in the context of a rural community? Imagine that the former socialist structure of the rural community, which is hierarchically centered around the absentee herd manager of the state farm, accepted professional herders and absentee livestock owners. Now there are some alternative choices to whom to entrust with an individual's livestock. As a result, the trust relationship became more complex than the before. The once-established hierarchical relationship between the absentee herd manager of the state farm and the individuals who had to entrust their animals to them has all but collapsed. As in the case of Mr. Borisov, the different roles performed by the absentee herd manager and the professional herders are even disappearing. Besides, the people who trust their animals to the absentee herd managers are not limited to those inside the village but also include the outsiders or urban residents. All of these conditions minimize the power centered in the structure of the absentee herd manager system. The situation also extends to the issue of land use. We already know that Mr. Borisov rents the pasture land. The former state farm of Tabaga village of Megino-Khangalask district recently started to rent pastures to horse which belong to another former state farm in the neighboring district. More concretely, the first cadre of horse husbandry found a suitable summer pasture for groups of old foals or colts that had been separated from the matured horse-bands. Under the socialist regime the

employment of herders, herding and husbandry managements, and land (pasture) management was arranged inside the administrative village, a branch of the state farm. Under the present conditions, however, the once-established socioeconomic power order is beginning to collapse, and in its place combinations of aspects from the prior system are being adopted into more complex relationships and being used for broader applications.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I discuss the socioeconomic transformation from the former socialist regime by focusing on the way of industrialized indigenous society of the Sakha in Siberia. The Sakha's traditional half-nomadic way of life became more sedentary in the 19th century and continued to be transformed during the socialist regime to the present. The enlargement of collective farms into a state farm, and the paralleling policy of forced relocation into comparative large administrative villages instead of traditional settlements in 1960s can be recognized as the symbolic temporal indicator. As a result, there emerged an industrialized Siberian indigenous society in which the range of job selections enlarged and even the rural population learned to obtain a livelihood without engaging in modernized pastoralism, i.e. animal husbandry. Their horse husbandry, which this paper focused on, has somehow managed to survive through an intermediary trust relationship whether under traditional or industrialized settings. The continuity is caused and supported by the traditional herding method using units called horse-bands. This method had been adopted under the socialist regime and emphasized with meat-oriented production. The supplied horse flesh, in particular foal fresh, consumed by Sakha's industrialized society became a traditional food. This food culture with its symbolic meanings and relationship to socioeconomic institutions, has become more valued since the post-Soviet era. Since the cultural/national resurgence of the Sakha has been apparent since the later 1980s, the government promoted privatization as a means of promoting and developing private production organizations. With that, any person whether living in rural or urban area, if he/she wants, is able to privately own a horse for foal meat. Simultaneously the choice of whom to trust with his/her livestock is wider than ever before.

In order to define and discuss the process of the transformation and the nature and relationship of the actors embedded in that process, I apply the idea of 'absentee herd ownership', which is seen in studies of current nomadic pastoralism. I introduce the absentee herd manager, absentee livestock owner, and herder with some modifications to their original meanings, and objectify the trilateral relationship in the process of the transformation to a post-socialist era. These three actors have different crucial roles in the current horse husbandry industry. We must understand the different permeations of each of these three terms in order to comprehend the fluctuating relationships established under the socialist regime among professional herders, the state farm and the other villagers, and

the current more complex relationships. These perspectives predominantly elucidate “the other villagers who do not engage in the animal industry”, which had emerged in the regime of the socialist economic institutions, rather than the dual relationship between herders (and the related population) and the state (collective) farm. The focus on trust relationships, in particular, with absentee livestock owners, makes it possible to approach the socioeconomic dynamism in an industrialized indigenous society. The ethnographical descriptions in this paper can be connected with numerous statistics and policies which were established by the former soviet government. Then I discuss the transformation of the production relationships, i.e. the employment of herders, trust relationships and herd management. I conclude that the hierarchy and order of the production relationships which had once been centered in the administrative village and state farm are being relativized and collapsing; on the other hand they have become expanded to outside the village and become more complicated. Concretely, the monopolized nature of absentee herd managers has been abolished, and absentee livestock owners can widely select whom to trust with their animals and so forth.

In the end, I would like to make some methodological suggestions toward future research following the framework of this paper. First, I would like to analyze the trilateral relationship (absentee herd manager, herder, absentee livestock owner) in order to evaluate the transformation of modernized pastoralism in an industrialized indigenous society. The results of such analyses can be more or less applied to all of the soviet-socialist modernized societies - the common experiences of collectivization and sedentarization - which were changed from the traditional pastoral societies. Second, the focus on trilateral relationships becomes effective in analyzing the combination of microscopic ethnographical materials with agricultural policies and related statistical facts. Although my method is just one of several we should be careful to handle as data, I can present a methodological way for connecting the ethnographical observations with statistical materials which have been massively stored since the socialist regime. I believe that the two above-mentioned methodological implications might be valid not only in Siberia but also in other post-socialist areas such as Mongolia and Central Asia. Needless to say, the purpose of ethnography is to explore the historical, cultural and sociological contexts embedded and occurring in a given society. However, it is insufficient if the decoding of these contexts is applicable only to a particular region or ethnic group. Our interpretation of socialist institutions such as *kolkhoz* (collective farm), *sovkhoz* (state farm), and brigades should lie both in local contexts and in comparative perspectives. In order to fulfill these tasks I suppose that it is necessary to broaden our perspective on the modernization of pastoral societies. The fact that the terms used in this paper are originally from the studies on nomadic pastoralism shows that it is possible to use this research on Siberian pastoralism in the broader context of comparative studies.

NOTE

This present paper is based on a report I presented at the international symposium "The Raven's Arch: Jesup North Pacific Expedition Revisited", Sapporo, Japan, 24-28 October, 2002 on "Absentee livestock ownership and horse husbandry: The socio-economical and ecological implications of horse culture of the Sakha."

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