



HOUSEHOLD AND PROPERTY RELATIONS IN TUVA

by

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Finally, I cannot end without thanking my family members for their support in my studies.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I was born and grew in one of the remote provinces of Southern Siberia - Tyva Republic. My mother encouraged the idea of attending the University. She was a medical nurse and wanted me to be a doctor. Fortunately, I was not been accepted to the medical school.

Later I made my own choice of college. It was the Irkutsk Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages (now it is called the Irkutsk State Linguistics University) in Irkutsk province, Russia. My major was English as a Foreign Language and my minor was French as a Foreign Language. I received my diploma in 1995 and came back to Tyva. The first year I worked as a teacher of English Language in an Elementary School in Turan town. Then I moved to Kyzyl, the capital of the republic and worked as a teaching assistant in the Philological department of the Tyvan State University till 2007. Knowing English language has provided many new opportunities and greatly changed my life from what it might have been.

My interest in American Indian Studies motivated me to become a Fulbright Visiting Scholar of American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona, Tucson. During the 2006-07 academic year, as a non-degree exchange student, I had an opportunity to audit classes in two departments: American Indian Studies and Anthropology. I learned about the Indian nations of the Southwest – their lands, governments, and unique rights. It was the most interesting and exciting experience of my life. After my studies at the University of Arizona, I decided to change my area of

study from sociolinguistics to anthropology. Before long I was a PhD student in the Irkutsk State Linguistics University in Russia.

In 2007 I was accepted for a Master of Arts Degree in Anthropology at Boise State University. To get anthropological training in Russia is not an easy task, considering that there are very few anthropology departments there. I worked as a research assistant in the “Home, Hearth and Households in Siberia and Northern Canada” project sponsored by National Science Foundation. I am the first Tyvan who received western anthropological training.

My studies in the USA enabled me to travel for pleasure and business around the country. Almost every place I go, I try to see at least a few of the interesting sights. Over time, I have found this to be a valuable educational experience, adding to my understanding of the country, different cultures, institutions, art, history, and geography. Furthermore, I have found that to live and study in another country provide opportunities to meet with many interesting people.

## ABSTRACT

### HOUSEHOLD AND PROPERTY RELATIONS IN TUVA

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This thesis describes the transformation of households and property relations in one of the remote provinces of Southern Siberia - Tyva Republic. The thesis identifies continuities and developments in land tenure during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods and tests various theoretical propositions in Economic Anthropology. Land tenure and resource management is a central issue in Tyva.

Particular attention is paid to the segment of Tyvan people who have continued a traditional style of life – the herders and hunters who are now living in new political and economical conditions. Even though their number is not big, the people in the nomadic culture play an important role in social life in Tyva. Tyvan herders are not pure nomads as Tyvan society has undergone significant transformation shifted due to historical impact of different outsiders: Chinese Empire, Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union as well.

The economic problems related to the study of organization of modern nomadic Tyvan households is particularly important in post-Soviet period because it is unclear whether formal legal rights to land are needed and the economic exigencies of the time have forced many people to sell some of their domestic animals. In this

thesis I will discuss existing mixed economies and how the traditional resource-use strategies are maintained in response to social and economic changes of the post-socialist era in different parts of Tyva. Further, there is a question as to the degree that traditional management of herding and hunting is preserved and how that preservation relates to the protection of culture and identity.

The thesis describes and characterizes the main two types of property relations: (1) livestock and Tyvan household economy, and (2) land. The thesis examines the changes in property during the Soviet and Post-Soviet periods. Tyvans are seeking solutions for existing social and environmental problems and developing strategies in the current situation. I suggest that that the ideas about property in Tyva need to take into account Tyvan customs and how spiritual-emotional connections to the land are created and perpetuated. How Tyvans relate to the imposition of the Russian (western) concept of property and influence of the Russian culture itself also needs to be considered. I suggest that the exclusive aspects of property from this imposed system are a threat to the whole Tyvan culture and environmental sustainability.



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## INTRODUCTION

### **Overview of Tyva Republic**

According to the stereotypical view, Siberia is a barren tundra with a very cold climate. In fact, Siberia is a huge territory with different climatic and economic regions. Siberia makes up about 77 percent of the Russian territory. Approximately 40 indigenous ethnic groups reside all over Siberia, each having a different language and culture. The Tyva Republic is one of the provinces of the Russian Federation in Siberia. It is a federal subject of Russia. It is one of the less developed regions of Siberia.

In the beginning of the 1990s many autonomous republics drew up their own constitutions, signed treaties created by the Russian Federation, and changed their names from the previous Soviet designation. The Tuva Republic was one of these republics that changed its official name from Tuva to Tyva (Tyva is the etnonym)<sup>1</sup>. On 12 December 1993 a new constitution was passed in a referendum with an aim of seeking Tyva independence and sovereignty. I was born and grown up in Tyva Republic, and is where I conducted my fieldwork.

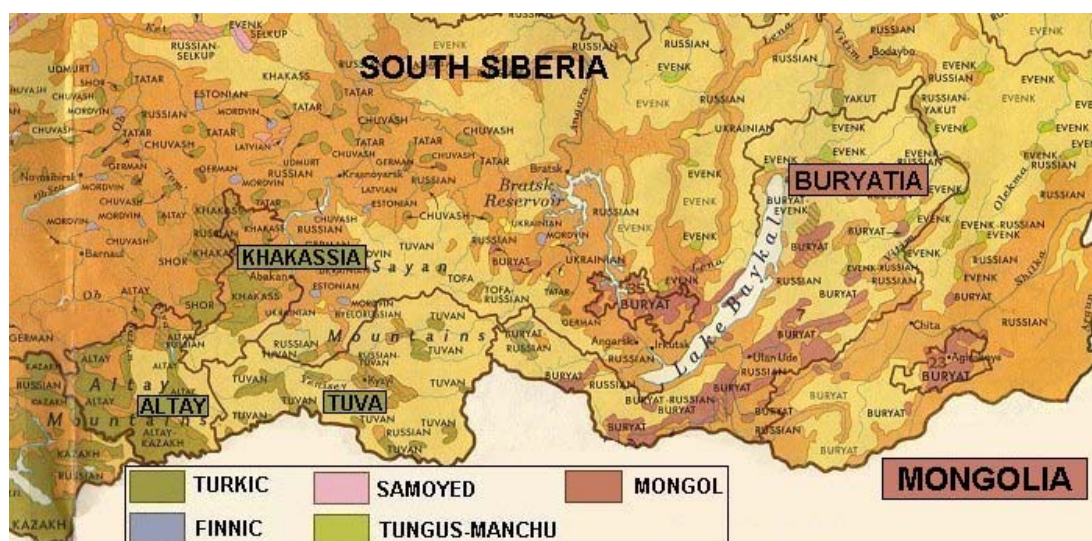
The Tyva Republic is located at the intersection of the Siberian taiga<sup>2</sup> and Central-Asian desert-steppe virtually surrounded by broad ranges of mountains. The

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<sup>1</sup> Tyva Republic – is an official name of Tyva Republic which is closer to the Tyvan word *Тыва*. An alternate spelling that Tuva is closer to the Russian pronunciation *Тува*. These both spellings are officially recognized. In this thesis I will refer to the area as Tyva or Tuva.

<sup>2</sup> Taiga – a boreal deep forest.

headwater of the fifth longest river of the world is formed in the territory of Tyva – the Yenisei River (translates as Mother water ‘*Ene Sai*’). The location of Tyva is a source of a special pride for Tyvans. They are also proud that Tyva is situated in the ‘geographic center of Asia.’ More than 80 percent of the entire territory of the republic is mountainous and less than 20 percent is intermountain basins. The average altitude of the basins is 520-1200 meters above sea level. The highest mountain of Eastern Siberia is Mongun-Taiga mountain at 3976 meters located in the southern part of Tyva.



Map 1. Southern Siberia and Tyva Republic.

According to the 2007 census, the total population of the republic is 309,43, but the ethnic Tyvan population is smaller at 280,000 (website of the government of Tyva Republic). Many Tyvans are proud of the fact that more than 70 percent of the total population is ethnically Tyvan. They like to note that this is the only province in Siberia where native population is more than Slavic population (Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians). Tyvans comprise almost 99 percent of the population in the western and southern districts of Tyva. The Russian population resides more commonly in central districts, in towns, and in the capital, Kyzyl, but still there the

Tyvan population predominates. Tyvans are not officially classified as a small-numbering indigenous nationality since the population is greater than 15,000. However, Tyvans are considered a titular nation because of the larger population and compactness of their settlement. This status gives some privileges in terms of economy, policy, and law. The Tuvan language was declared as the second (after Russian) official language of the republic along with the passage of the new constitution in 1993. There are sixteen administrative districts (*kozhuun*) in Tyva. Every *kozhuun* has an administration that is responsible for land management.

One of the most interesting and important social anthropological issues in for Tyva is the status of property relations. Since 18<sup>th</sup> century the development of property relations have gone through a number of transformations in Tyva. Significant changes occurred during the Soviet period when land became state property. Ambiguous and stressful changes have been ongoing since the fall of the Soviet Union, as Tyva is involved in new political and economic change. The origin of this ambiguity is a new system of law linked to post-Soviet transformations and market relations. Tyvan society has never been familiar with the concept of private land. They have their own concept how to 'respect' nature and people still follow it nowadays. Outsiders are bringing their own views on property which could threaten all Tyvan culture. The property rights system that has been developing in Tyva will have a big impact on Tyvan culture and the sustainability of local economies of herding and hunting.

## METHODS

My thesis links to existing debates in anthropology about the nature of property. Through an analysis of property relations and household economies in Tyva, I synthesize debates about land tenure in general. The data collection methods include review of ethnographic Russian and foreign literature on the given topic, my own observations, and unstructured interviews conducted during the summer of 2008. Literature reviewed includes studies dealing with Tuva, Siberia, Russia, and Mongolia in the Russian language.

To describe types of property and the structure of local household in rural communities today, I conducted unstructured interviews with five Tyvan herders' households from the western and central parts of Tyva and with one active hunter from Piy-Khem district (northern Tyva). I visited Teeli village and two herding camps in Bai-Taiga district in May and I visited three herding camps in Piy-Khem district during July-August 2008. In the western and southern districts 99 percent of the population is Tyvan; to a greater extent the population preserves more Tyvan traditions and follows more Tyvan philosophy in these districts. The Tyvan population living in the central districts of the republic has experienced more influence from the Russian population, and according to the popular view, the Tyva population in the central districts do not follow Tyvan traditions to the same degree. I chose to include the central part of Tyva in this research because this region is often neglected by native, Russian, and foreign scholars (except for researchers of the Tyvan language).



The interview process was opportunistic. I interviewed people who were available. The interviewees included four women and five men. Seven interviewees were more than 50 years old; two interviewees were in their middle 30s.



Map 2. Tyva Republic.

Three interviews were conducted with three herders' households in Piy-Khem district (north central Tuva). Two interviews were conducted with two herders' spouses: one couple was from Tandy district, south central part of Tyva; the second couple was from Ovjur district, a south-western part of Tyva. I spent three evenings with every couple; the first evening I had a conversation about my life, studies in the USA, and I told them what I know about Native Americans because Tyvans always interested in them; the second evening when I felt that these people were open to me I started to conduct my interviews; the third evening I asked some questions for clarifications.

August is a busy season for herders in the central districts because they cut hay for winter time. Thus, when I came to the herder's camp in Piy-Khem, close to Turan town, I had to wait for men who went early in the morning to cut hay. Women stayed in the camp; in the evening they milked cows, and were in the process of making *araka*, milk wine. At the beginning they were too shy to talk with me. When men returned we all sat down at the one table for a dinner outside and I was forced to drink *araka*. Summer is a season for making *araka* because many herders have plenty of milk. I was told first I should drink *araka* then they would talk with me. Considering that warm *araka* is served only in bowls, everybody was getting drunk gradually and the women finally became willing to talk with me. I had to hurry to write down all information. My hosts insisted me that to drink *araka* when I tried to miss a bowl of *araka* using the *sartyk* rule<sup>3</sup>. I met my relative in this camp, and he was the most talkative and helpful interviewee. From him I found out who resides now in the former camp of my grandmother. To my joy, the relatives of my grandmother's clan, the grandchildren of my grandmother's second and third cousins reside there. I completed my interviews in the complete darkness. After conducting these interviews and drinking *araka*, I was very sick.

The interview included questions on sociodemographics, seasonal migrations, livestock, land use and its resources, and conducting ceremonies. The interviews were held in Russian and Tyvan languages. I grew up during Soviet period of time when predominant ideology in Kyzyl was that it was not important to know the native language; it was more important to master Russian language. My elder brother is hard-of-hearing; that is why my mother and grandparents had to speak with us in Russian (because the children in special school for deaf and hard-of-hearing are

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<sup>3</sup> An individual can refuse to drink alcohol drink saying *sartyk* 'the rest, leftovers' and passing the bowl or shot to another individual. It is considered as a sign of respect to another individual sharing a drink with him/her. In anyway, some people use *sartyk* to avoid drinking.

taught only in Russian and their family members are encouraged to speak in Russian at home). Because of these reasons I am not totally proficient in Tyvan language. My passive knowledge of Tyvan language is much better than active knowledge; that is why I am not able to lead the conversation in Tyvan. Even if I can say something in Tyvan many Tyvans become irritated by my Russian accent. I understood almost everything of what my informants told to me. I spoke in Russian with the bilingual informants (I mean people with good knowledge of Russian), and they replied in Russian or Tyvan. Sometimes I asked my husband to translate some questions into Tyvan in order to double check some information because the answers could sound totally different in Russian and Tyvan languages. In particular, questions about the performance of family ceremonies were asked mostly in Tyvan. Thus, when I asked in Russian what is prohibited to put into the fire, one of my interviewees replied in Russian: “to put trash into the fire”. When she was asked the same question in Tyvan, she replied in Tyvan: “You can put in to the fire only ‘good things’, it is prohibited to put ‘bad things’ into the fire”. When my informants didn’t speak well in Russian, I used my husband, who is fully proficient in Tyvan, as a translator.

I also participated in the sanctification ceremony in Bai-Taiga. I couldn’t participate in a major part of the ceremony at the top of the mountain because it is a taboo for females to participate in it. This ceremony was important to describe using common-pool resources among natives, what symbolic meaning and value it has nowadays for Tyvans. My husband participated there and shared with me what he saw there, along with my advisor, John Ziker. While this method has its own limitations, the strength is to get information which is not available or new for describing types of property. In addition to these interviews, I had personal conversations with two native scholars from Tyvan State University and other Tyvans.

## Theoretical Review

In this section I discuss various theoretical propositions in Economic Anthropology that are relevant to this thesis. Over the past decade, the problem of sustainable land tenure and resource management under the conditions of intensifying globalization has increasingly drawn the attention of anthropological researchers. Modern research shows that land tenure and resource management have broad implications for all human populations and are connected to a number of other problems: indigenous rights, preservation of biodiversity, property relations, and legal pluralism. A standardized model of private ownership has been spreading to most societies, including the former socialist societies of Eastern Europe and Asia. It is considered as a necessary condition for economic development and maximization of investments to the land. Liberals support this model as more efficient; they also allege that communal forms of land tenure bring a rise of overexploitation of scarce resources, which has been labeled the ‘tragedy of the commons.’ In many parts of the world indigenous peoples resist implementation of private property with regard to land. Recently, numerous studies about common forms of property show that liberal fears of overexploitation and absence of private property are exaggerated (Hann 1998: 29). “Because the importance of land for the livelihood basis of the peoples,” anthropologists pay attention to the myriad of ways in which land is held by individuals or groups (Hann 2002: 321). Officially, some colonized people were allowed to ‘hold’ their land in their own traditional property regime. In practice it was different; property rights had all kinds of intervention from colonizers, who altered the previous practices, sometimes rather dramatically (Hann 2002). In anthropological writing on property relations Bronislaw Malinowski made a major contribution, he understood the importance of studying traditional land tenure for anthropology and

“insisted on the need to transcend the legal standpoint” (cited in Hann 2002).

Malinowski defined the landed property as “the relation of human beings, individuals and groups, to the soil which they cultivate and use” (1936: 376). Although anthropologists emphasize the cultural diversity and historical contingency of property relations agreement on a core definition within anthropology has been difficult. Neither lawyers nor philosophers have come up to universally accepted definition (Hann 1998). Hann argues that “property commonly refers to the ‘thing’ over which a person claims more or less exclusive rights of ownership” (Hann 1998: 4). Property entails rights that people hold over things which guarantee them future income. They own not thing itself, but only the incorporeal rights. In this view property relations are seen as social relations between people concerning particular resources. It follows that the manner in which people relate concerning the land would reveal all the invisible facts on which society is based (Hann 2002: 321).

The role which land rights play is not equal in all societies. In some hunting and pastoralist societies, relationships with animals are revered above the right to the use of certain territories. For example, in pre-revolutionary Tyva, domestic animals held a place of extreme importance as the sources of economic production, and animals were considered to be private family property. Arable lands, however, were in personal possession only while they were in use (Potapov 1969). Vaishtein supposes that “private ownership of livestock originated in ancient times together with pastoralism itself, as economic form” (1980: 101).

Economic anthropology attempts to explain property relations using tools both from both economics and anthropology. The formalist-substantivist debate within Anthropology concerning the economic systems of non-Western societies goes back to 1960s. The ‘formalist’ approach, which is closely linked to neoclassical economics,

presupposes that all economies can be studied using econometric tools founded on assumptions of utility maximization under conditions of scarcity. As an attempt to use neoclassical theory to analyze subjects outside of its traditional purview, formalist economic anthropology can be linked with new institutional economics. The other approach is the ‘substantivist’ model first proposed by economic historian Karl Polanyi in his book The Great Transformation (1957). Polanyi argued that in modern capitalist economies the concepts of formalism and substantivism coincide since people organize their livelihoods based on the principle of rational choice. However, in non-capitalist, pre-industrial economies people are embedded in social and political contexts and based on redistribution, reciprocity, and exchange (Hann 1998: 27). Reciprocity is defined as sharing and based on mutual sense of obligation and identity. Redistribution is defined as the existence of a strong political center such as kinship-based leadership, which collects and then redistributes different things back according to culturally-specific principles. Exchange is calculated trade, which comes in several varieties (Wilk and Cliggert 2007).

Hann warns (1998) about the dangers of imposing Western conceptions of ownership where they did not belong. According to Hann (1998), Polanyi’s concept of ‘embeddedness’ where pre-industrial economics differed from those of market capitalism can be very useful in studies of property in non-Western societies. Hann also (1998) argues that “the focus on property must not be restricted to the formal legal codes which play a major role in our own society, but must be broadened to include the institutional and cultural contexts within which such codes operate” (p. 7). If one were to adopt a broad analytical concept of property in terms of the ‘distribution of social entitlements’ then it can be investigated anywhere in time and space.

A growing body of literature traces the debate over management of commonly utilized (non-private) resources. Many scholars are suspicious of community-based initiatives, and they argue that common-pool resources are vulnerable to overexploitation. For these scholars common-pool resources create social dilemmas, “whenever an individual’s decision is to maximize short-term self-interests” (Borgerhoff and Coppolillo 2005: 129). Others support the protection of communal resource regimes with evidence that community-based ownership and management provides the best choice for the sustainably managing a natural resources. The questions related to this debate require a more careful scrutiny of the conditions under which individuals cooperate with community-based ownership and use, and thereby look beyond the maximization of short term self interest. A broad definition of property should be used to capture more subtleties in local human-environment relations.

The Anthropological debates have diversified in a number of directions, but the core issues still exist. The rest of the thesis is devoted to finding approach, thinking, and the goals in property relations in Tyva.

## ECONOMY, PASTURES, AND MIGRATIONS

Tyvans like other nomadic and pastoral peoples in Eurasian maintain several species of animals to rely on. The principles of herding are similar in Tyva, Buraytia, and Mongolia because of similarities of climate and landscape. The main domesticates are: sheep, cattle, horses, rams, goats, and to a lesser degree, camels and yaks. Tyvan herders in northern part of Tyva - Todzhu district have only reindeer as do reindeer herders in taiga and tundra of Siberia. A mainstream of herding economy in most of Tyva is sheep breeding. The second most important animals are cattle (Markov 1976: 104). Hunting plays the secondary role in subsistence after herding. Some Tyvan families still move to designated pastures in four-season rotational cycle: in summer, autumn, winter and spring because aboriginal Tyvan as well as Mongolian and Byraytian animals are on extensive open-range grazing for all year, versus being able to feed on hay or other livestock staples. The duration and number of migrations varies, depending on several conditions: the weather, the condition of pastures, the size of livestock herds, and the number of families in the camp. Many Tyvan *arats'* (herders) households try to continue historically developed four-seasonal cycle of migrations, which allows for the sufficient recovery and preservation of a vegetative cover of previously grazed pasture.

The preferences in choices of pastureland remain the same. The herders spend more time in a winter camp. The choice of a winter pasture depends on a sheep herd because it is more difficult for them to forage on open-grazing land than other animals. Winter pastures are usually located on the slopes of mountains where the



snow is carried away by the wind. Low and midland areas with certain native vegetation and moisture conditions exhibit faster recovery (Tumenbayar 2000: 6). The choice of a spring pasture depends on the presence of a water source. Again, it is preferable to be situated on a pastureland located on the gentle slopes of mountains or on the slopes of valleys (Dongak 1995). If spring is warmer and a household is smaller, the camp can remain on one place longer. The choice of autumn pasture is determined by the same criteria as for the choice of the spring pasture. Spring camp is placed on well warmed places, so as to avoid herding the cattle already exhausted during winter time spent on hillsides. Usually, spring and autumn camp is set up on the same pastureland. The camp is placed at a water source and the livestock moves during the day from one area to the next area, coming back for a night to the camp. The most closely situated camps are found on summer pastures, where the high-mountainous meadow steppes are capable of supporting dense herds of cattle. In behavioral ecology, the marginal value theorem (MVT) predicts a forager behavior exploiting resources that occur in patches. This formal model predicts that decisions to leave a patch to start searching for new one occur when return rates begin to level off (Charnov 1976). An application of the MVT to Tyvan agropastoralist movements could be used to model herders' behavior when they leave one seasonal camp and move to another camp. However, good pastureland and the size of livestock are not the only key factors to stay longer in one camp. There is another key factor – the number of families in the camp, and access to pastureland (property). *Arats*<sup>4</sup> usually do not move from a pasture to another pasture alone, they usually unite in groups of several families, but they do not stay together throughout the year. They have a

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<sup>4</sup> *Arat* – a herder in Tyva and Mongolia.

fission-fusion settlement pattern with the camp splitting out in the winter and joined together again in summer (Figure 1, Appendix).

Despite enormous historical and social changes in 20th century, the basic structure of Tyvan *aal*<sup>5</sup> has not undergone big changes. *Aals* form a social unit in the herding economy. While the individual families are dispersed in the winter, during the remainder of the year families set up their yurts at a distance of fifty meters. The territory of intensive use of one *aal* has a radius of three kilometers on average” (Dongak 1995: 85). More often, *aals* consists of two-to-four yurts where the heads of the yurts are, in most cases, related to each other by kinship or marriage. It is inconvenient and unsuitable to migrate as a separate group all the time. Families herd together, help each other during migrations and join efforts in carrying out different work. Also, the demands of a severe climate require the unification of the people. It is impractical to pasture a large-scale herd in one place because it forces herders to migrate continuously. This would unfavorably affect animals and would be inconvenient for herders, too. That is why *aals* of two to three yurts are prevalent all over in Tyva.

The herder usually does not have exclusive rights on the pastureland, but their rights are recognized by other members of the community. These rights are based on such criteria as ancestral land, kin or friendship of present user of the land, and membership of the community. Traditional grazing practices regulate the use of pastureland and water resources. No one herder will lead his herd to somebody’s pastureland. If it happens for some reason, the stranger and the recognized user of the pastureland make an oral agreement with each other. These indigenous grazing

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<sup>5</sup> *Aal* – a small unit of few households (Humphrey, cited in Vainshtein 1980: 13).

practices were disrupted by the federal Russian intervention implementing its own institutions which I describe in the next section.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### Chinese Colonization

To better understand existing contemporary property relations, particularly resilience to legalized privatization, it is important to understand how the first formal regulations worked under the control of Chinese colonizers and how formal regulations of the Russian policy were implemented. The first big changes in property rights in Tyva started with Chinese colonization. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Tyva and Mongolia were under control of Manchu Ching Dynasty of the Chinese Empire. The Chinese Empire imposed its own system administration on the political and economical system of Tyva for about one hundred years. According to Vainshtein and Manay-ool (2001), the Chinese administrative rules divided territory of Tyva into military-administrative units - *hoshuny*<sup>6</sup>, The Dynasty determined the territorial boundaries and gave reigns of government to Tyvan and Mongolian feudal lords, *nojons*, making them hereditary rulers of territory and population of *hoshuns*, the order was obliged to bear military service and to provide their troops to the ruling dynasty. Mongolian and Tyvan land was proclaimed by conquerors as the Chinese territory. Within *kozhuuns*, pastures were allotted to nomadic communities by the *nojonIs*<sup>7</sup>. Sometimes the boundaries of the *kozhuuns*' pastures were disrupted, especially in the years of the bad harvest of grasses. But in general the boundaries were usually kept. However, a migration from one *kozhuun* to another required a permission of both feudals. According to Markov (1976), the

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<sup>6</sup> *Hoshun* – an administrative unit, a district. Nowadays it is called *khozuun*.

<sup>7</sup> *Nojon* – a feudal lord in Tyva and Mongolia.

boundaries of summer and especially winter pastures of each *aal* were marked by heaps of stones. A specific feature of feudal property was the right of the Chinese Emperor to take away any territory of any lord at any moment, to change his boundaries, and to force one or other group of population to move to any assigned place. A *nojon* could make the same actions within his district (Vainshtain and Manay-ool 2001:266-7).

The Chinese administration ignored the fact that Tyvans resided in their clan-based territories; this new imposed system broke their clan's boundaries and *kozhuuns* started to have members of different clans. Vainshtein (1980) notes that clan affiliation was severely weakened by this territorial division. Before Tyvans never sold or bought the land and they did not have any concept of alienation of the land. According to Markov (1976:109), from the end 19<sup>th</sup> century Mongolian and Tyvan rulers began the seizure of the best pastures for their personal use, as well as hunting grounds and water sources. With the expansion of the Chinese colonization, they also began to lease communal land to incoming migrants. This concept of formed or "hierarchal" land was new, but the *nojons* were neither juridical nor practical owners of the land even though they could dispose land and other common-pool resources.

At the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century Russians began to settle in Tyva, resulting in an 1860 Chinese-Russian treaty, in which the Chinese government allowed Russians to settle down in Tyva. The first Russian merchants came who often gave bribes and presents to *nojons* to get agreement to take a plot of territory to live (Vainshtain and Manay-ool 2001). Later they purchased some of the pastures. A division into *hozhuuns* has an impact on herders; some of them reduced a distance of migration. By the end 19<sup>th</sup> century the main changes in land tenure were lease and the purchase of

some spots in some districts in Tyva by the Russian merchants. But this process was not widespread, and it was interrupted in the course of releasing the Tyvans from the yoke of Manchu Dynasty.

### **Under Soviet Rule**

General changes in the Tyvan economy became evident at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and lasted through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From 1921 to 1944 Tyva was an independent state – Tyva Arat Republic. It began putting into action the ideas of People’s Party which were a copy of the policy of ‘an elder brother’ – the Soviet Union. A new life began for Tyvans under the republic. The first acts abolished serfdom, *albyn*<sup>8</sup>, liquidated the local instate of feudal governance, persecuted traditional spiritual authorities, and proclaimed land as the government property.

One of the main goals of Soviet government policy was forcible transition of the nomadic indigenous peoples of Siberia into a settled way of life. Following Soviet models of forced collectivization and industrialization in the late 1930s, small *arats*’ households were transformed into large collective farms: *kolkhozy* (collective farms) and *sovkhozy* (state farms). The Soviets encouraged the Tyvan government imposing new forms of organization and management on herding and agriculture. Everybody who joined collective farms and chose a settled way of life was exempted from agricultural tax for three years in Tyva (Klopov 1973). From the beginning the government of the Soviet Union chose to exercise no real authority in Siberia “and made no efforts to rein in exploitation of natives” (Osherenko 1995: 1081).

Manchen-Helfen traveled in Tyva in 1931, he witnessed the beginning of this force transition: “In a single month (of which something yet will be told), the five

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<sup>8</sup> *Albyn* – a tax in the form of pelts.

students<sup>9</sup> with whom I went to Tuva expelled two thirds of the [Tuvan people's revolutionary] Party [TPRP] membership and raced across the steppes, forcing the confiscation of all livestock over twenty head from the nomad families in order to set up government herds of camels, sheep, goats, and cattle - an original way indeed of socializing the means of milk production" (1992: 5). The expropriated animals became the property of *kolkhozy*. A majority of people were settled in a villages and towns. Some people resisted to this rapid transition. They delayed to move to the collective farms they could not give up the land of their ancestors, but they were pressured to do it later. A few families escaped to Mongolia to avoid forced collectivization.

Tyva joined to the USSR in 1944. In the framework of this planned economy, the government proclaimed a well-known slogan 'All land belongs to people' in reality it acted as the exclusive proprietor over land. Collective agricultural enterprises received animals and land in free and termless use: land was transferred to the enterprises for agricultural use without any financial obligations and for an unlimited time. The enterprises had no claims over the animals and the land, they could only use them (Altanbat 2000:4). The enterprise defined the times of migration for the herdsman to move their livestock to specific seasonal pastures and the admissible amount of a livestock to be migrated. In some places of Tyva the farms' herders were allowed to choose their ancestral seasonal pastureland which was used in pre-Soviet period (Damdynchap 2006). Migrations were usually conducted on pastures within the borders of a district territory to which households were attached. In the territory of the administrative unit, the majority of *arat* households had permanent winter camp and winter pastures where they constructed a house, a byre, and a pen. Materials were

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<sup>9</sup> Five young Tuvan graduates of Moscow's Communist university of the Workers of the East.

provided by the collective farm. All herders had the right to keep few animals per family as a private stock as this helped in their requirement to look after the collective enterprise's animals. In the event of the loss of animals during the course of migration, other than for the allowable losses due to disease or predators, herders were held personally responsible for the loss. They were required to replace the lost animals from their private livestock or had to pay reparations. Collective farms were the main source of meat and milk products for the population of the republic.

Kolkhozy were divided into herding brigades (a group of workers). The government encouraged hard-working collective herders to excel in food production; they were often rewarded by different government letters of commendation (at that time they were appreciated very much)<sup>10</sup>, prizes, cash, and other bonuses such as the privilege of buying a car out of turn (Ziker 2003: 327). These changes affected the structure of herds, the forms and ways of conducting herding, and seasonal migrations.

Government interventions were particularly invasive with regard to animal husbandry and agriculture. The government decided to increase the number of livestock up to two million (Shoigu 2001). The first step was improving the local breed of rough-coated sheep into fine-fleeced and semi-fine-fleeced sheep. This was supposed to be due to local breeds birthing fewer offspring in comparison with other breeds. Also, to increase meat and dairy production in Tyva, a large quantity of livestock was brought in from Kazakhstan, Kalmykia, and other regions (Klopov 1973). The new and improved breeds were more demanding to feed and they needed to be kept in stalls in the winter. This is why a wide network of farms and systems of

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<sup>10</sup> In addition to this, if someone has 30 years of experience and several letters of commendation at least with one letter from Tyva Republic government and one from federal Russian government he or she is supposed to receive a status of Veteran of Labor which gives a 50% discount on utilities fee and some other privileges.



preparation of winter feed was formed in the larger drainages. Vladimir Salchak states that during this period, the first 500 Angora goats purchased in Kazakhstan were brought into Bai-Taiginsky district, and since then the Angora breed of goats began to breed in the republic (Tuva-Online, 21 October 2008). Hay for feeding these animals was prepared in meadow steppes in central part of Tyva, Piy-Khemsy, Tandynsky, and Ulug-Khemsy districts and on under bajadas of the Ubsunursky Hollow. Anyway, the Angora breed could not adjust to a cold climate, and many goats died. Also, *kolkhozy* created wide network of water pump wells. Wells allowed herdsmen to use remote pastureland which were far way from water resources (Sambuu 2000). Some herders' summer camps received water brought in water tracks in every two-three days.

Where most household economies were based on pastoral nomadism, agriculture was a minor activity practiced among considerable part of Tyvans. Historically, Tyvans did not use any fertilizers, precipitation was scarce, and the traditional plow did not penetrate deeply. Tearing out the plants could take nutrients from the soil. Tyvans did not have a lot of harvest. Soil depletion necessitated leaving the land fallow for several years on end (Manchen-Helfen 1992: 77). Arable farming was an addition to seasonal migration rhythms which required time for plowing, crops, and harvesting, and thus, investments in agriculture by the nomadic population were minimal.

After the end of the period of collectivization, the government decided to develop agriculture intensively. As the native population which by this time had in large part transitioned to a settled way of life it became necessary for the state to create employment. Development of agriculture was a means to create these employment opportunities in settlements across the republic. As one of the goals of

the five-year planned economy was to increase the overall amount of livestock, this naturally required an increased production of animal feed. Thus, the use of land area for grain and feed crops increased. The majority of the lowland pasturage areas were turned into plots for crop production. The basic crop was spring wheat. The harvest was very successful for the first year, but declined afterwards (Shoigu 2001: 192-3).

The Soviet policy in regards to agriculture was reflected in the forms and terms of migrations of *arat* households. The settlement pattern changed in the late 1950s and early 1990s when the distance on which *arats* migrated was considerably reduced, and moreover, many Tyvans began to make only two seasonal migrations yearly which made them more sedentary. The reorganization brought a boundary division between districts because of the crop fields reducing former flexibility that Tyvans practiced before in case of climatic changes and bad grass harvest. Today, many herders have a summer and winter camps. It is common to see the Tyvans live in a permanent building – a log house in a winter camp and a traditional dwelling – a yurt (or a tepee in the north) in a summer camp. Thus, Soviet agrarian policy altered seasonal cycles of migration which had developed for centuries and had provided for the security and stability of pastoral lands. More sedentary lifestyles meant that the area used for pasturage was reduced and the quality of vegetation declined as well.

With a transition to market relations in the 1990s, the majority of *kolkhozy* (*collective farms*) and *sovkhozy* (state farms) were dismantled. This led to a sharp decrease of in the livestock population. In 2005 compared to 1990 there were 2.2 times fewer small livestock, 1.9 times fewer cattle, 3 times fewer pigs, 2.4 times less grain production, and 1.7 times less milk production (Sevek 2006:362). Today, only two *sovkhozy* are in operation. Difficult economic conditions aggravated the situation. The disappearance of wells on watersheds, the lack of materials, the lack of technical

knowledge, and cattle stealing have led to a situation in which many herders were not able to follow a four-season migrations (Sambuu 2000). The *kozhuuns'* administrations were unable to cover the expenses of maintenance service, replacements, or the reconstruction of old, or building of new, water wells. Some parts of *arat* households live almost all year (two-three seasons) in one place – concentrating themselves on river valleys while driving livestock on neighboring pastures during the year. Despite the decrease in the amount of general livestock by 1996, the load on pastures grew in some parts of Tyva (Sambuu 2000).

The irrational past and present use of pastures also has had negative impact on ecology as a whole. After intensive agriculture, wind erosion has become a factor destroying arable lands and causing desertification. According to Sambuu (2000), in a southern part of Tyva, the Ubsunursky Hollow, one third of the territories were not used for pasture because of their remoteness from water sources. This pressure on pastures coupled with the additional affects of wind and water erosion then led to a decrease in biodiversity: from more than forty kinds of grass, vegetation decreased to between ten to twelve varieties. In addition, the grass coverage decreased from between seventy to eighty to between thirty to forty percent. Decreasing grassy vegetation led to a decrease in the numbers of herbivores and birds, in particular large predators and a black stork. One Russian biologist suggested as resolving the problem of the land degradation is to switch from extensive open-range grazing into a new management strategy: removing local land users from land, enclosure heard in pens, and use stall feeding. These recommendations are similar to the recommendations of the Chinese scientists for Mongolian herders in China. However, the scientists ignore social factors in implementing these recommendations in a nomadic culture (Williams 2000). Biologists Potahin (1990) and Sambuu (2000) suggested grassland

management strategies improving local resources that are to return to a previous traditional cycle of four seasonal migrations as an optimal strategy. Secondly, they recommend to stop grazing on the most damaged sites for two-three years, or to at least decrease the load placed on this land by fifty percent. Interestingly, these differing arguments about rehabilitation of Tyvan grasslands today reflects positions taken in the formalist-substantivist debates in anthropology in the 1960s. It can be argued that the resolution of the anthropological debate through incorporation of elements of both sides of the debate (i.e., recognition of both MVT and embeddedness) could be instructive for the situation on the ground.

One of the districts that experiences desertification in some places is Piy-Khem where I conducted my interviews. The land in this district was considered more suitable for crop fields, so its *kolkhozes* ploughed up many virgin lands. Thus, one of my interviewee, Boris Salchakovich Khovenmei, a horse herd wrangler living in aal (Number 1) near Turan, explained the current situation in Piy-Khem *kozhuun*.

BS: We migrate two times in a year: in the winter and in the summer. There is no more place for us to migrate: there is no water here nor there. Many water sources dried up and are overgrown with bushes. Turanchik river's banks are swampy. Why they dried up, we do not know. The scientists need to make research there. Look at this field (points out a meadow across us). It has not been sowed for several years. It was our pasture from time immemorial and then *sovkhozy* and *kolkhozy* ploughed it up, then *chernozem*<sup>11</sup>, a wind blew it off, clay plowed, clay was extracted. This clay is dead, nothing grows after that. Then they gave it up and there are a lot of lands like this across allover in Tuva. The grass became another. The majority of pastures are ploughed.

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<sup>11</sup> *Chernozem* – black earth

TA: What do you mean the grass became another?

BS: I do not know how to tell using scientific terms. It is just not useful for livestock. They (sheep) run on the pasture, but they do not stay too long on this field, they eat a little there, and go away.

TA: How many of little use pastures are there in Piy-Khem?

BS: Probably ten thousand hectares. Many pastures are ploughed and gave up, ten thousands. Now we Tyvans are returning to our past. Many shepherds will live in the yurts. We will migrate somewhere in two-three years where good grass grows. If everything is good, we all will be able to migrate well. We will have summer, autumn, winter, and summer migrations. They (Tyvans) will always migrate because it is so convenient. In spite of the fact that the given field has not been sowed more than twelve years and has a vegetative cover, it nevertheless remains unsuitable for a pasture. Nobody knows how much time it will take for pasture restoration and how much of this process is irreversible.

Another situation is found in western part of Tyva in Bai-Taiga. The heavy load on pastures of the steppe bajadas and on high mountains is observed here, too. However, because the overwhelming majority of *arats* hold a traditional ordered pasture rotation, the situation remains relatively better than in Piy-Khem. The traditional practice of resource management has not undergone considerable changes for the last several years. This traditional four season rotation has been practiced and sustained in the environment of this area (Karjakin, 2000). The question of pasture regeneration demands the further study and input of anthropologists working with people who live on the land, making daily observations of the environment, and who have a nuanced practical understanding of it. Undoubtedly, the Soviet agrarian policy neglected local climatic and economic conditions and caused loss that has affected of

the biological diversity of the republic. These effects have had entailed negative consequences on conducting of traditional households of Tyvans. The removal of anthropogenic pressure on pastures due to intensive production and return to the aboriginal regime of pasture rotation with four migrations should be considered as the better choice for long-term conservation. The next section discusses the kinds of property relations and rights found in Tyvan agropastoral communities in order to better understand their role in institutions that manage social dilemmas about resources.

## TYPES OF PROPERTY

We start to look the typology of property in this section to understand properly the design of property relations in Tuva. While studying property rights and institutional change in the Far North, Osherenko came up with the division of property rights into four categories such as: proprietary rights, exclusionary rights, disposition rights, and use (usefructory) rights (1995: 1086). This typology reflects the wide variety of rights found in indigenous property relations, but does not reflect the degree to which rights are private or public. With the implementation of legalized privatization in the Russian Federation, it is important to track the degree of codification of rights (i.e., the level of formality), as well as the dimension of inclusion/exclusion in institutions managing rights, conflicts of interest, and resources.

Following Ziker's (2003) intersection of these two dimensions of property, I will describe changes in property institutions through time. Ziker developed a typology of property with four categories for the Taimyr Region of Krasnoyarsky Kray. As Ziker notes (2003), the first dimension of "ownership principles are divided into inclusive and exclusive property (Carrier 1998; Gudeman 2001) or shared/common or divided relations" (p. 341). The inclusive property includes common-pool resources as well as collective rights, for example, livestock. Exclusive property "divides resources among community and non-community members, for example, brigade grounds of hunters" (Ziker 2003: 341). The second dimension divides formal and informal management. According to this dimension, it is possible to allocate four constellations of property relations in Tyva.

Type I: informally-managed shared (inclusive) property.

Type II: informally-managed divided (exclusive) property.

Type III: formally-managed shared (inclusive) property.

Type IV: formally managed divided (exclusive) property.

For the last decades Russian government imposed new political and economical reforms on the population it is important to look how property system have been changing and developing. The significant change was transition from government property to private property with adopting of numerous laws and regulations.

### **Property Relations Today**

This section provides a description of property relations in Tyvan agropastoral households mainly with regard to livestock and land. Beginning in the 1990s rights to *kolkhoz* and *sovkhos* animals were transferred to individual/family ownership. Now, the land is shifting from state to private ownership. This shift has an impact on resource managing of livestock and ecological stability. Let us to look at all four types of property.

Informally managed (exclusive) property (Type II). Arat camps traditionally have a tethering post (Figure 4, Appendix) which has strong symbolic meaning: this campsite is taken. In other words, the yurt, or winter log house, livestock, pens, and enclosures belong to the family that lives there. The tethering post was traditionally made twice during someone's life: at a marriage or inheritance. It is not acceptable to break a tethering post. All hunting and fishing implements can be considered as personal property and can be included in this type of property.



Type III property is formally-managed, shared (inclusive) property. Rights are usually distributed among at least five family/clan members. *Krestyanskie/fermerskie* (peasant/farmer) or *aratskie (herder) khoziaistva* (household enterprises). From the early 1990s through 2007, registration of such collectives has become predominant among arat households. This represents the development of household-level organization in the agriculture of Tuva at the expense of the larger community-based collectives developed during the Soviet Union. The organization of *arat* households is similar to how it was decades ago in pre-Soviet period in that they have to do things themselves, rather than rely on the government farms.

Oorzhak (2007) states that in November of 2007 there were a number of all these new forms in Tuva: 142 *arat* households; 3,800 *lichnoe podsobnoe khoziaistvo* (personal subsidiary households); 87 agricultural consumer co-operative societies (SPoK); and 8 agricultural credit consumer co-operative societies (CKPK).<sup>12</sup> The personal subsidiary household enterprises are on paper more exclusive (Type IV), but some of them are really arat households, and other ones are used by city dwellers.

Most of these households live close to rural settlements where native Tyvan populations live. All these small agricultural holdings have been formed in the former territory of state farms; they are territorially based and formally managed mostly in continuity from the socialist period (Anderson 2000, in Ziker 2003), but they have new way of resource managing. This type of property is often overlapped by, or operates in conjunction with, other property relations that are informally managed and inclusive (Type I) or formally managed and exclusive (Type IV).

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<sup>12</sup> It's not clear if the number is self-reported by a herdsman or it is based on legal registration. If it is based on legal registration the number of these agricultural enterprises could be less because some people created fake enterprises to have access to get bank loans and purchase the land.

In northern Tuva, assigned hunting territories (previously brigade territories of *gospromkhozy*)<sup>13</sup> remain after their former hunters and pass in an informally hereditary possession (Type II). A son (or relatives) of died hunter keeps the right to the land, the right to hunt on a spot though officially the land are not belong to them. Other inhabitants of a nearest settlement recognize his right and respect it. As a rule, other hunter needs to ask a permission of the owner for hunting in his *promyslovo-okhotnichie ugodie* (hunting spot), the owner usually agrees. Especially it's very obvious for the spots located close to Turan town. Moreover, owners are developing a strong sense to their land and call it “*мээн майгам,*” or my taiga, which would have been impossible historically because the taiga belongs only to spirits. If some people interfere in the territory, even if it they are inhabitants from the next village, the owner of a spot has feeling that he can have the right to expel them. “Why did you come here? It is my taiga. Is your taiga not sufficient for you?” Such informal division became important mostly because of difficult economic situation in Tuva: commercial hunting brings income that led the development to exclusive rights on the hunting grounds and natural resources.

In addition, with implication of legalized privatization, some territories were sold in Piy-Khem to natives and non-natives (more to Russians). Thus, the whole territory of one former *gospromkhoz* near Turan was sold out to one businessman. This *gospromkhoz* was specialized in breeding marals (Siberian elk stag). In the Soviet period many herders went to its territory to cut hay for a winter. Also some settlements Piy-Khem has more Russian population compared with other parts of

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<sup>13</sup> *Gospromkhozy* – in Tyva were mostly specialized on furbearer's hunting: a squirrel, a sable, a fox, a marten, an ermine, a weasel, and a tomcat. Insignificant remoteness of hunting grounds from the settlements (on the average one day of a way), relatively isolation, and a small population assisted a more development of *gospromkhozy* in Piy-Khem and Todzhy districts. *Gospromkhozy* also had some seasonal activities: berries and mushrooms collecting, cedar nut collecting, and herb collecting.

Tyva. The first Russian settled down in this area in 18<sup>th</sup> century (Aranchyn 1967). The population of Piy-Khem has experienced more influence from Russian culture.

So, the community's common-based pool recourses had expanded in the early 1990s, and now with legalization of private property on land throughout Tyva, property relations in Piy-Khem are beginning to change again. Multiple rights of property can be seen here against of private property.

We can find the opposite situation in Tozhu district, the next province to Piy-Khemsy. The Tyvans-Todzhintsy (Tozhu) differ from other Tyvans by their cultural-economic type, which includes reindeer breeding and hunting. According to Donahoe (2003), the Tozhu did not completely accept a settled way of life during the Soviet Union; they have never had exclusive rights to the land. There are some families engaged in reindeer herding. Despite the same existence of the *gospromkhozes* in Tozhu, as well as in Piy-Khem and importance of subsistence hunting, the Tozhu Tyvans don not have exclusive sense to the land and it is their distinctive feature.

Commonly, Tyvan herders move on their ancestral land, so for some people legalized privatization sounds nonsense, despite, that majority people resisted to it, but it was implicated in Tyva. So, it is not surprising that some households are still remaining informally managed. Some herders do not care about papers and other documentation. Let us look at one of such holding.

*Aal* No. 1: household 1 consists of one single hoarse heard wrangler Boris Hovenmey (born 1948) and five owners of the animals. Boris joined for summer camp with another household 2. Boris's case seems to me very interesting. Boris took herding horses of other people two years ago. He is single and has never been married. He migrates to winter and summer pastures. Boris's (and other owners of the animals) household is informally managed clan holdings which uses common-pool

pastures (Type I). He lives in a new small trailer in a summer camp and moves to a log house in a winter camp. It is necessary to describe livestock which Boris is herding, the owners of animals are: 1) Boris – one mare; 2) Mergen Salchak, Boris's nephew – five mares and three cows; 3) Damchat-ool Mergen, Boris's nephew – one mare and one riding horse; 4) Bolat Arakchaa, a friend of Boris – thirty mares and one stud-horse; 5) Kombu Bajys-ool, a cousin of Bolat – four mares (he joined in spring 2008).

The total number of livestock is more than fifty horses and foals. Two women from Rodion's household who live in the yurt help Boris to milk his three cows. All eat shared food products and helped each other. All Boris' animals' owners live in Turan town—he herds for other people. Boris has no legal registration of his *arat* household, he leaves things to themselves. He is originally from Sush village (about thirty minutes ride from Turan) of Piy-Khem district, where his parents' camps were. Boris father, Bulgashpan was a head of the *sovkhos* for many years. He was an honest and hard-working man and people respected him a lot for his honesty. When he retired he became a state herder. After the death of Boris's parents, he and his two brothers were not able to continue traditional activities as their parents; soon their livestock gradually was eaten and sold. The winter camp was destroyed and plundered. Boris told that he would like to receive land as a lifetime lease. Now, he has built a small house, a byre and a pen in former territory of his parent's camp. When the buildings are finished Boris will move there. The owners of the animals deliver food products to Boris and often help him with animals and household too. So, during my arrival to the camp in August, all of them participated in hay cutting for a winter time. All owners have a firm intention to buy more horses. The studhorse was bought recently for 40 thousand rubles (US \$1,200) in Khakassia Republic for

participation in races during celebration of national holiday of *Naady*<sup>14</sup>. A distance of races is thirty kilometers; the main prize is a new car.

It is necessary to mention another informal management of property that illustrates overlapping rights (proprietary and use). It is the fact that it is not seldom among Tyvans both rural and urban to receive to livestock from their relatives, friends, and acquaintances. In most cases they ask relatives who are herdsmen to herd their animals. The number of livestock varies, but it is usually not big. If herders are parents, then the number of animals could be much more. Usually officials of *kozhuuns*' administrations have a lot of livestock; they split it and give it to several herdsmen to herd them.

Tyvan family usually acquired its own first animals (a sheep, a calf, a cow) as gifts from the relatives during celebration of a family holiday *urug toi*, three years birthday, or the first-hair cutting. This celebration is very meaningful for a child because Tyvans consider that from this moment the child becomes 'a real person'. If the child receives his or her first animals (even though at least one animal), a *toi* is seen as a successful celebration. A child's parents could wish to remain the animal in the herd of the grantor in order to receive more livestock in the future.

The endowment of young family with animals during a wedding party plays an important role in making and maintaining social connections. Relatives on both the bride's and groom's side, practically relatives from four clans give gifts, watch each other, and count how many livestock, gifts, cash each side gives to a young couple (sometimes they could compete with each other who gives more). It is also Tyvans consider a good wedding party if the young couple receives several head of cattle and small livestock. That is why relative who are *arat* are often the most welcome guests

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<sup>14</sup> *Naady* - a Holiday of the Herdsmen, this holiday was created during the Soviet period of time.

in the wedding party. The young couple also could wish to remain its animals in the herd of the grantor in order to receive more livestock in the future.

Some continuity in formally managed, divided property (Type IV) remains the same and some has been developing through 1990s. This property institution was brought by outsiders to Tyva. The only successors of all the state farms in Tyva are eight industrial enterprises: six state unitary enterprises (*GUP*) and two agricultural industrial enterprises *selsko-proizvodstvennue kombinaty (SPK)*, and few hunting enterprises (*promkhoz*y). Soviet system of state farms almost is broken. *SPK 'Balgazyn imeni . Shoigu'* is the only one local supplier of milk products in Tyva. Other milk products have been coming from the neighboring provinces mostly Khakasia Republic and Krasnoyarsk Krai. These new agricultural enterprises have been developing new relationships with herders. Thus, the hunting enterprise in Bai-Taiga, in the vicinity of Teeli consists of several *aratskie khoziastva*. The *promkhoz* has the right to allocate a pasture to arat households who continue indigenous activities and the land is still officially government property. These *arat* households are located very close to Teeli village. Households have animals belonging to the *promkhoz* herd as well as their own family herd. The herders use pastures assigned by the *promkhoz* and slaughter one *promkhoz* sheep per month as fee for their job. If a family needs cash it can sell sheep or goats in the settlement. *Arat* households also receive a subsidy from the government.

A similar situation is found in Todzhu district. Tyvans in Todzhu are reindeer herders. According to the data of Ministry of Agriculture in Tyva there are 1255 reindeer, 953 reindeer are property of *MUP 'Odugen,'* which is pedigree factory on breeding and preservation of reindeer. There are no more meat-production quotas. So reindeer herders do not butcher the animals, without rhyme or reason, as was the case

in the few years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Reindeer herders receive special subsidies. The government pays from the budget of the republic – 1,200 rubles every year for every reindeer – for protection of rare animals. Reindeer herders also receive from the federal budget, under the paragraph “Government support of northern reindeer herding” – 260 rubles a head per year. Plus, they receive 4,000 rubles a year for each adult pregnant female for the preservation of the gene pool. Government agents calculate the number of pregnant females like this: total number of females is multiplied by 0.3, the result is multiplied by four thousand. If you add everything together, the income of a reindeer herder of a herd of 130 reindeer is 20,816 rubles a month (Tuva-Online September 22, 2008). Considering the data of Government statistics, the average salary in Tuva was 12,400 rubles in January-May 2008 in Tyva, reindeer herders are doing well. Other herders also receive subsidies from the government.

In some parts of Tyva where there is no any agricultural enterprises some *arat* households rent land from *kozhuun* administration. To better understand some of the economic aspects of a Tyvan household, I will describe a structure of some *aals*. They all locate in different districts.

*Aal* No. 2: Arat household near Kochetovo village of Tandinsky district. It migrates in the winter and in the summer. It has the following structure: 1) Semen Ojun – the head of the family, was born in 1948; 2) Raisa Ojun – his wife, was born 1949; 3) a female worker; 4) a worker<sup>15</sup>. The *aal* maintains the following private livestock: small livestock (sheep and goats) - about 7 hundred; cattle (cows) – forty; horses – five-six; pigs – eight.

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<sup>15</sup> The workers' names are not specified because they don't work on a continuing basis.

The size of the herd is a main feature in identifying the wealth and status of a herdsman<sup>16</sup>. Thus according to Tyvan standards, the head of this family is an *arat* of average means. He considers himself to be prosperous. Semen and Raisa were *kolkhoz* herder from their early youth. The family rents one hundred and twenty hectares of a plot of land. They use a solar battery as an energy source. They received it from the Tyvan government in 2007 as a prize to be “1000 owners”<sup>17</sup>. Housekeeping demands large amounts of labor, which is why it is necessary to employ workers. This family hires the workers only among their relatives. It is also necessary to employ one woman who does female tasks in the household. Payment for these services is subject to negotiation; the owner and worker make an oral agreement. The payment varies from three-four thousand rubles<sup>18</sup> per month, or it could be an equivalent of agricultural production – one sheep or goat per month. Considering of existing severe unemployment in the rural parts of Tyva, this option for the unemployed people means to have something than nothing. In addition, the workers have enough food in the camp and also can get some milk products when they complete their job and go back home. At least, they can support themselves somehow. Thus, this household consists only of two relatives, although relatives could be close or far relatives, agnatic or cognatic relatives. It is remarkable, that during a Soviet period this couple worked as shepherds in the *kolkhoz* and had much less personal livestock: usually two cows, two calves, two of one and a half-year old heifer, and thirty-fifty sheep. They have four adult children; three of them live in Kochetovo village, one son lives in Kyzyl. They live not far from Kochetovo, as many other herders in Tyva, because of the convenience of the close location to the market and stores. This family lives in

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<sup>16</sup> It's impolite to ask the number of the animals. Herders are afraid of to loose good luck and to be curse on their livestock. So, the herders can say little different number of their animals.

<sup>17</sup> The government encourage the owners of big livestock, if it is number reached to 1000 heads.

<sup>18</sup> In summer 2008 it was an equivalent of US \$120-160.



summer in the yurt. They use their log house as a kitchen because it is hot and not comfortable to cook in the yurt. Raisa told that only three families live in the yurts in summer in their vicinity others have permanent log houses (those who reside not far from Kochetovo) because they are more influenced by Russians and Russian culture compared with other districts in Tyva.

*Aal* No. 3 is near Turan in Piy-Hemsky *kozhuun*. The households migrate to winter and summer pastures. A summer pasture is on Elkin place. The first yurt is an *arat's* household which belongs to a dentist Rodion Mongush who resides in Turan town: 1) Tatyana Chamjan – Rodion's mother-in-law, was born in 1950; 2) Grigory Norzhumaa – Tatyana's husband, was born 1957, 3) Alexey Mongush – Rodion's father ; 4) Shonchalaj Majny – Rodion's relative, was born in 1971 (has moved from Bai-Taiga).

All members of this family told that they have been helping to Rodion. It was impossible to get more information because Rodion manages all affairs of the household himself, he comes to *aal* almost every day. The *aal's* livestock include: small livestock – one hundred and ninety eight; cattle – twenty eight; pigs – ten; horse – one. According to general Tyvan measures, Rodion is below than average animal owner, but considering that a livestock belongs to an extended family is number of animals it is not so bad particularly for Piy-Khem.

Tyvan society has never been familiar with the concept of private land ownership of land and other forms of alienation. The Russian economy progresses to free market relations and economic development, so the absence of private land was considered by Russian economists as an obstacle for economic development and restricts investments in agricultural sector. As a result, despite the resistance of Tyvan population, the Constitution of Tyva Republic approved legalized privatization

brought by Russian government. With legalized privatization some herders even they resisted started to purchase the land. This is new type of property (Type IV) imposed recently has been developing in Tyva quickly. Here you can see that this type of property is expanded too. Today land and animals can be shared within the community or be private individual/family property.

Thus, aal No. 4 – is registered as a *selsko-khoziastvennyi proizvodstvennoe cooperative*, an agricultural industrial cooperative, near Sagly in Ovjursky *kozhuun*, usually migrated four times a year, but for the last two years they have migrated only twice. Its structure: 1) Sergey Ondar – the head of the family, was born 1952; 2) Alexandra Ondar - his wife, was born in 1950; 3) sister of the head of the family; 4) two small children of sister. This couple are owners of a large number of livestock: small livestock – 7 hundred; cattle – one hundred and thirty; horses – six; hens – ten.

The parents of Sergey and Alexandra were herders of state farms. Sergey received a high education in Krasnoyarsk city, he worked as an electrician. Alexandra received training as a medical nurse in Kyzyl. They both lived and worked in Kyzyl for three years until Sergey was hit by current. After that they decided to go back to Ovjursky *raion*<sup>19</sup> and to do what they knew from their childhood – herding. They became the herders in a state farm. One prominent feature of this family from others families that it has a strong sense of preserving of Tyvan traditions and self-identity. Sergey is proud of that the Tyvans in the western part of Tyva preserve more traditions and carry out rituals of sanctification of a clan, the spirits, and the land; in other words the members of these family are ‘real Tyvans’ with their ‘knowing of the land’ and ‘respecting the land’. These concepts will be discussed in more detail in the

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<sup>19</sup> *Raion* - district

next section. They are important to understanding the operation of informally-managed, shared property (Type I).

No Russians live in this district except Russian soldiers in one frontier post at the border with Mongolia. So due to this reason the Tyvan population experience minimal influence from the Russian culture. From 1991 this household was registered as an *arat* household. However, in 2001 it was transformed to *selsko-khoziastvennyi proizvodstvennyi kooperativ*, an agricultural industrial cooperative. The family has a private plot of two hundred and forty nine hectares. Recently, their cooperative rented three hundred and eighty hectares for twenty five years. Both of these plots could be considered as more formal and more exclusive (Type IV). The household grows wheat, oats, barley, and potatoes. The family has two tractors. They also use a solar battery which they received from the Tyvan government in 2007 as a prize to be “1000 owners”.

Since many Tyvans relinquished a nomadic style of life and dispersed thought of Tyva because of wage job, many Tyvans live in Kyzyl (almost 1/3 part of the population of Tyva). Despite this change, there remains a network of overlapping ties that link relatives thought of Tyva. Depending upon circumstances, an individual may call upon relatives for help or cooperation. Sometimes Sergey’s niece comes and helps them around the household. He also hires the seasonal workers. The number of the workers depends on the season and the volume of tasks to do. This family tries to manage as much as they can do by themselves. The hired workers may be relatives or non-relatives. Payment is subject to negotiation, usually is paid by agricultural product – one sheep or goat.

Some herdsmen from others districts of Tyva started to move to Piy-Khem. Usually if some pasture is left and is not taken by somebody for certain period of time

then, other herdsmen move on it. People move to their relatives. For example, inhabitants of one *aal*, near Erbek village Piy-Khemsy *kozhuun*, in twenty five kilometers from Kyzyl informed that they moved from Tes-Hemsky *kozhuun* (Southern Tyva) to their relatives in spring. They rent the land. A summer camp, *aal* No. 4. includes: 1) the head of the family<sup>20</sup>; and 2) his wife. A second family lives in a separate yurt: 1) the head of the family; 2) his wife, a sister of the first head of the family's wife.

All of members of these families are more than fifty-five years old. One of the reasons of moving to this district is closeness to Kyzyl where their adult children and grandchildren live. Before all of these herders had the government jobs in Tes-Khemsy district in the southern part of Tyva. With retirement, these two families decided to establish an *arat* household because all of them grew up in herding families and had experience in sheep breeding. One of the women was a doctor, another was a veterinarian. The difficult economic situation in the republic made some people realize that it is better to come back to their traditional subsistence in order to support their extended families.

A number of *arats* farms have increased for the last three-four years. While the official registration of these farms is a formal act, it is necessary to understand that informal relations among family and kin through mutual aid plays an important role in resource use and management. Among Tyvans it is very important to support an extended family. Almost all informants underlined that they live for their children and grandchildren, constantly helping to their adult children and grandchildren who live in the settlements or in the towns: providing them by meat, dairy products, and cash.

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<sup>20</sup>They preferred to be anonymous. It was also impossible to figure out the number of a livestock.

While the households with small livestock can make ends meet, the prosperous households are quite self-sufficient. In the past people described the less or more prosperous person with the saying: 'He has enough cattle for his mouth.' Some herdsmen help their extended families a lot, including their children, grandchildren, and other close relatives. The scheme of assistance is similar: first, they help to buy a house/apartment or a car for the eldest child; and then they help the younger child. Usually herders families have many children, a minimum four children. After parents help one child, they have to restore the number of sold livestock. When they achieve the necessary quantity of livestock they can again to sell it and help the younger siblings. Then grandchildren grow up too, it is time to help them. More often the grandparents try to buy them an apartment in Kyzyl.

As anthropologist Caroline Humphrey noted "Most of people just keep a private livestock to provide their food and social responsibilities for wider kin" (1989: 9). The shepherds use their livestock "like saving accounts on the hoof" (Humphrey 1989: 9), each time they need to buy something they sell a few animals. Sometimes to sell cattle in a village is difficult because many inhabitants have their animals or they just do not have money for it. The price is lower in the rural parts than in Kyzyl<sup>21</sup>. If the *arat* needs to sell many sheep it is better to go to the republic's capital. In rural areas it is possible to sell them to a dealer for a reduced price. In general, breeding of livestock demands a huge investment of work. In addition, herders are confronted with difficulties, such as livestock illnesses (brucellosis and tuberculosis), attacks of predatory animals (wolves, snow leopard, and bear), and livestock stealing (presently a scourge of all Tyvan herdsmen).

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<sup>21</sup> The price of one sheep of a good quality was US\$200-240 in summer 2008 in Kyzyl.

## ‘KNOWING THE LAND’ AND ‘RESPECTING THE LAND’

### “My Mother is Earth, My Father is Sky”

I would like to start with an examination of Tyvan cosmological traditions about the relationship developed under century long contact of people and nature. Till pre-Soviet time Tyvan society protected their biological resources needed for subsistence and survival by means of customs and traditional practices that limited excessive use. Customary regulations protected some species and areas. Traditional cosmological knowledge reveals an intimate and very deeper understanding of the natural world which does not exist in industrial societies. Tyvan are still preserving their shamanic views generating elaborate cosmology. Many scientists recognize the importance traditional knowledge for their ecological and social impact. Similarly, Anderson (1996) points out a concept of ‘knowing the land’, a means by which Siberian Evenki hunters ‘appropriate’ their environment and maintain their relationship to the land. This concept is applicable to all indigenous cultures in Siberia. “Knowing how to use the land and how to maintain a proper relationship with the sentient persons that one may encounter are necessary skills for gaining an entitlement to land for a *pastuhk*<sup>22</sup>” (Anderson 1996: 69-70). According to Anderson (1996) ‘knowing the land’ gives the right a legitimate right to ‘appropriate’ environment it. The native Tyvan herder knows when and how to ‘take’ resources from the environment as well. Being an insider of Tyvan culture I can say that Anderson’s description holds true. Maintaining a proper relationship with the land is characterized by a strong spiritual relationship with supernatural personages. That

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<sup>22</sup> *Pastuhk* – a herdsman (in Russian).

relationship is facilitated through rituals that show a respect to the earth. In Tyvan thinking, 'knowing the land' and 'respecting the land' are inseparable. Respecting the spirits (owners) of a place and land is supposed to be a part of everyday life of humans.

In this section I describe the ancient shamanic views and relations to nature which are still practice today by Tyvans. The main idea of the Tyvan worldview is that land and its natural resources make all people's (communal) wealth. A human should maintain harmonious relations with nature, keeping the customs and traditions of the ancestors because nature is more powerful than humans. Forest, steppe, mountain, a stream, river, lake each have their own spirits who possess supernatural powers. Their role is to keep a fragile balance in the universe. To avoid confusion it is necessary to explain the word *eezi* which is translates as "master" in both Russian and English languages, although a more appropriate meaning would be "owner" because the main concept is possessing a specific place. It is also translated in both languages as "spirit." I will use these three terms. As a result no human can master nature. There are numerous rules how to treat correctly natural objects and living beings. They are not always followed and when some people flouting the rules it causes resentment of others (Humphrey 1993: 51). Tyvans consider the earth as a personified deity, the most beloved deity, a mother, a wet nurse; she feeds humans with her wealth. A Tyvan refers to the earth as *cher iem*, my Earth Mother. Since most ancient times Tyvans worshipped an earth cult (Mongush 2002; Kuzhuget 2006). "If there is no woman, the human race will come to an end, as they say. And that is why, if there is no earth, there will be no life, as they say" (Mongush 1997: 57). Until recently Tyvans

had a custom to bury a newborn child's placenta into the ground where there was a yurt, it means "a man's soul is firmly bound with his native land, as they say" (Mongush 1997: 70). Tyvans have traditional high boots turned up toe (Figure 2, Appendix) in order not to hurt Earth Mother. These boots are popular among rural Tyvans and small children in winter time because they are also comfortable and warm.

Old Tyvans believe that if "to cut down a living tree with leaves, which rises from depth of the earth, the trouble will come to a human life" (Mongush 2002: 35). If to cut down a thick tree a soul from an old person will leave him/her; if it is a young tree *k'ut*, a soul, will run away from a child. It is possible to cut only a dry tree (Mongush 2002: 35).

The second personified important deity is the White Sky<sup>23</sup> which is considered as a father of a Man. "Without the White Sky there will be no life on the Black Earth. Sky father gives wellbeing to all beings. A Tyvan prayer says: "I am a human being; my father is the sky; my mother is the earth" (Mongush 2002:9). This worldview is similar with the Navajo worldview. As Griffin-Pierce states, this attitude explains "the reciprocal quality of the Navajo's relationship with nature" (1995: 27). This metaphorical kin relationship is very important in Tyvan and in Navajo societies, as well as in other many small-scale societies. This relationship recognizes the mutual responsibility: "nature will take care for of humankind if humankind fulfills its kinship responsibilities by taking care of and behaving responsibly towards nature" (Griffin-Pierce 1995: 27). People say that the roots of Tyvans are their ancestors and the land. They give energy and power to humans. The class of other deities includes the sun. Old Tyvans called it symbolically my Sun Mother because a mother spends a

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<sup>23</sup> It is sometimes called Forever Blue Sky.



lot of time with her children in a yurt. The forth deity is the moon. It is considered as a father. “Man’s father is always away and doesn’t stay long in the yurt, likewise, the moon doe not come out every day in the sky too, it either appears or disappears” (Mongush 1997:57). All living beings, mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, and streams are harmonic components of the universe. The spiritual connection that Tyvans have to the land is evident when a female showing respect to the earth gives an offering to it; she sprinkles fresh tea with milk or milk by a *tos-karak* spoon<sup>24</sup> every morning. The first a female sprinkles into the fire, it is considered as a small sun. Than she goes out and sprinkles tea in four directions of the world appealing to the spirits of mountains, woods, and rivers saying good wishes to them. She usually starts sprinkling to give an offer to Sun Mother because all living beings depend on it. White color means happiness that’s why offering is usually tea with milk or milk.

Tyvans never say “to respect the land” but they demonstrate this concept in their performances of the family rites, sanctification rituals, and other ceremonies. It is an important aspect of their spiritual life and family. Family and kin play an important role in Tyvan society. I remember when I was a child my grandmother prohibited us, grandchildren, to pick flowers growing from the earth and break the branches of the tress because they connected to the earth. Picking flowers means a child’s soul will leave a child. It is a great retribution for a human to loose his or her soul, because without a soul a human will get sick or even die. It was also prohibited for us to treat badly other living beings. If a bee or a tarantula came into the house we must to catch it and let it go outside as my grandmother told that it could be a soul of our dead relative who came to visit us. One time she caught me picking up flowers in front of neighbors’ house she began to scold me and hit my arms several times.

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<sup>24</sup> *Tos-karak* spoon has engraved nine eyes, the number nine is considered sacred in Tyvan culture.

Cultural traditions are passed from generation to the next through an extended family. Although rural areas remain more traditional, Tyvan culture will continue to survive through ties of extended family. Elders play an important role in bringing up children even in urban areas. Traditionally children have to listen and watch only with the certain age they have to right to speak in the presence of adults. The elders transmit their knowledge and expected behavioral norms of the society. That is how it was before and it still continues now when young parents are busy with their studies or jobs, retired grandparents spend time with their grandchildren. Elders tell Tyvan traditions, customs, and taboos to their grandchildren. It would be an ideal exaggeration if I state that all families keep these or others Tyvan customs. As I mentioned previously rapid acculturative changes happened in Tyvan society. Despite these changes, many Tyvans still follow their traditional philosophy and ceremonial system.

According to Tyvans beliefs, the universe divided into three worlds: the high world where deities live, the middle world where humans and other living beings live, and the lower world where spirits live. It is not my intention to describe all these three worlds in I would like to stop on the middle world where humans and spirits interact. The middle “world is forceful; it animates, it kills, it blesses, it damns” (Tschinang 1999). As I mentioned above, true owners of natural resources are powerful spirits associated with the ancestors. The powers of the entities of the nature “may appear to people western cultures as somehow ‘supernatural’ but within the terms of Inner Asian culture they are precisely ‘natural’, that is they derive from the indigenous concept of nature (Humphrey and Mongush 1993:53). The most important and powerful are masters of a taiga or mountain. Usually they are described<sup>25</sup> as a very

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<sup>25</sup>The description and the behavior of the masters vary a little in different parts of Tyva.

beautiful girl in a white or blue coat or an old man with a white hair and white beard. Sometimes he or she rides on a horse. They are not visible but they are capable of transferring into a human form. Sometimes they can take a form of animals, usually a bear. They have the ability to make visible only some part of themselves: clothes, a horse, or just themselves (without a horse). Only shamans can see them without any form. "Thought is creative and attractive in the sense that people create their world through thoughts" (Griffin-Pierce 1995:25). The word is powerful and creative in the sense that people can create something thought name it and as a result it awakens. According to Tschinang (1999:1), "among shamans the spirits are not named specifically; instead they say: "His things, they are coming." Only the shaman (Figure 3, Appendix ) himself may name the spirits by name when he is calling them forth". They spirits can be seen indirectly; express themselves through strange sounds or they can talk with one. They hear and see you what someone is doing. Some people can meet them but it happens very seldom. If it happens that a human meets a master he will become good lucky and he will have a beautiful life in prosperity. If a hunter sees in his dream owners: an old man with white beard on a white horse or a girl, suggesting him a gift, it means that animals will run to him and good luck will come to him. Some hunters can have sexual relationship with a female master. The most important thing is not to talk to anybody about this meeting because a good luck will leave one forever.

All my informants told me that when they move to a pasture they carry out a ritual for an establishment a contact with the masters of a place asking his/her permission. This ritual has a family character and varies a little in every family. The family ritual is interesting because that it is not fixed in the modern sources. So, my informants, Ondar's family, carries out a ritual at every camp in order to inform the

master of a place about their arrival and ask his permission to set up a camp and use a pasture. Alexandra described her family's ritual when her family comes to a seasonal camp:

The master of a taiga of our place is a grey-haired old man. Even he is not visible but it's necessary to interact with him because he hears our wishes, blessing, and signing. We apologize to the master for coming to his place. We feed him with 'white' food<sup>26</sup>. I roll nine small balls from *talgan*, nine pieces from a fatty tail (of a sheep), nine small balls from *byshtag*<sup>27</sup>. I also take nine sweets or cookies of light color. Our family's number is nine. All families have different numbers. I put a white sheet of paper on a Figure and then I put prepared food on a Figure. Then I burn *artysh*<sup>28</sup> and I put it on the sheet of paper. We make a fire and put the Figure on the fire. I say a prayer. We sprinkle *araka*<sup>29</sup> in four directions. It's necessary to sprinkle it below to the waist; tea is necessary to sprinkle higher to the waist. Higher sprinkling is better. It is also necessary to say good wishes, it's better to say them more beautifully as possible because you need to please the master; you need to be liked by him. Some people say them in beautiful verses but I don't have such talent to create verses. It is vitally important to speak with a spirit-master in an elevated language. One is not to repeat praying in the next ceremony because the master will be angry by such disrespectful attitude. I also ask the master his assistance for my family's members and a herd. We are always grateful to him and he is gracious to us.

Carrying out of this ritual demonstrates these people's ideas of the proper relationship of the natural world providing balance between people and environment, a high degree of respect and deep affection to earth and other personified beings.

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<sup>26</sup> 'White' food means milk products and food of white color: cheese, milk, *talgan* (*fried flour*), etc.

<sup>27</sup> *Byshtag* means cheese.

<sup>28</sup> *Artysh* means juniper.

<sup>29</sup> *Araka* means milk wine.

According to Tyvans' beliefs, the true owners of taiga, land, and its resources are spirits. No human being can be a master of taiga and other natural resources. This metaphorical kin relationship allows people use land and other community-based resources on conditions that they will take care of them. Humans are responsible to maintain this balance.

The spirits sometimes take care of humans by helping a hunter during hunting, find his lost animals, or provide guidance in his crisis moments. All these spirits are powerful and at the same time they can be dangerous for humans. They can hurt or punish them if they behave not appropriate, if they show a bad attitude to the owners. They owners can inflict a great harm or even a death upon humans if somebody breaks 'the Law of Taiga' - 'taiga gives to you and taiga takes it away.' In other words, nobody can take a lot from nature than he needs for livelihood: not too hunt too many animals, not to break taboo, treat nature correctly. If someone treats nature incorrectly, the master of taiga becomes angry and will punish one and send him/her misfortune. Killing without necessity is often condemned. The concept is spread among all indigenous culture in Siberia, in the north instead of taiga it is tundra (Ziker 2002).

In traditional Tyvan nomad's thinking, the major principle is 'everything mine I carry with me' in other words it means do not be stingy; you can take what you can carry yourself and only what you need to support your family, leave something for other hunters, do not accumulate a lot of wealth in your yurt (house, apartment). Thus, my husband's grandfather became almost blind more than twelve years ago, he thought that the reason of his blindness in his excessive hunting. He began hunting as being a child. He was an excellent shooter and an experienced hunter, he knew everything about taiga: when and which animal to start to hunt, what cycle of taiga

(like cycle of bears or wolves) etc. He knew that he broke a taboo of his ancestors; he did not follow prescribed rules of behavior, that's why a female master<sup>30</sup> of taiga punished him severely (taiga in Piy-Khem). He often said: "Taiga gives to you and taiga takes it away. I am blind now, it's my fault. I often hunted, sometimes too much, a passion seized me. I took a lot from taiga, now I have been paying for my bad attitude to taiga. The female master punished me for this".

Tyvans have their own indigenous hunting practices: the hunting of certain species in a specific period of time and place. The rules prescribe not to hunt during spring time when female animals are pregnant in order to give animals time for reproduction. Unfortunately, many modern Tyvans violate this custom, especially urban Tyvans. It happens quite often that hunters break this taboo, and begin hunt during a spring season. I have heard myself often how hunters make the excuse of that they go hunting only for roebuck and they do not kill female roe. But it is difficult even for a skilled hunter to distinguish a female roe from a roebuck from far distance. Even skilled hunters happen sometimes to make mistakes. Market relations have impact on hunting. It is considered a big sin to kill a panther (*irbis*), someone who kills this animal will lose his soul and die. But because the fur of the panther is very expensive and outsiders suggest a very good price for the pelt some hunters violate the ancestor's taboo. Despite breaking hunting taboos, the hunters give an offering to the spirits passing a pass. Usually the eldest hunter sprinkles vodka from the first small drinking glass in four directions and ask owners of the place luck during hunting. Then all hunters share vodka drinking it from the same drinking glass in turn clockwise. At the camp a hunter sprinkles a fresh tea and feeds a fire by pieces of food. It's a big sin not feed *ot eezin*, the master of the fire. Nobody violates this

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<sup>30</sup> Master of taiga in Piy-Khem is a young woman

ancient tradition. It is also a tradition to share food with other hunters, to leave some food in a hunting log house which is in common use. The climate is harsh and taiga sometimes is not predictable. You never know what can happen in taiga especially if someone goes hunting alone.

It is clear that Tyvan institutions had detailed traditional conventions for managing local resources. These have potential in design of federal government protective regulations if they would be properly understood. The relationship and mutual aid with the masters of natural objects give the legitimate right to humans to use land and its resources as common-pool resources.

### **Sanctification Ceremony**

The majority of Tyvans express land and nature through their shamanistic views. Some ceremonials have been lost because Soviet policy considered them as relics of a primitive life of uncivilized people. These relics prevented the building of socialism and all ceremonies were prohibited. Shamans and lamas were massively persecuted, deported, or killed. The whole generation of shamans disappeared. Despite this prohibition, some people kept carrying out the ceremonies secretly.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, people returned back rebirth of traditional relations to their ancestral roots. Restoration of lost culture and traditions began. Some rituals are held nowadays are still changing, but there is continuity in such major ritual as *Dag dagyry*, sanctification of a mountain spirit master. Since Tyvans hold some rituals, it will be helpful to describe the main one, *Dag dagyry*. Beginning as a clan-based ritual, historical changes in Tyvan society have resulted in it becoming a republic-wide ritual.

I have been in May 2008 in Teeli town, Bai-Taiginskii<sup>31</sup> *kozhuun* when the biggest sanctification ceremony (Figure 5, Appendix) in Tyva – *Ulug Darylga* was held. It is considered that the main and the most forceful spirit among all owners of Tyva is an owner of Bai-Taiga Mountain, a young beautiful female in beautiful clothes. The main purpose of all this kind of ritual is to propitiate spirits, masters of a place, ask wellbeing of an extended family or a clan for a year. The ritual is also ‘sanctifying’ or purifying the natural objects themselves (Humphrey and Mongush 1993). If to sanctify Bai-Taiga Mountain it means that all Tyva will be sanctified. According to beliefs of the ancestors of Tyvans, ancient Turks, the land is a copy of universe, the clan’s land is the middle of the world and clan’s mountain is its center. The Tyvan’s emphasis on motion and cyclicity is a main idea of their world view. In the ceremonies motion and cycle play a role not only in the ritually directed movements (four directions starting from the east), but also in the whole idea of the universe. Motion and cyclicity represent two categories: space and time. Winter cold months are considered as the time of extinction, death, and vice versa, spring and summer months are periods of regeneration and life (Kuzhuget 2006:81). All everyday life of Tyvans connected to the concept of renovation and cyclicity: rotation of pastureland, hunting seasons, and taboo. If some year would be a cycle of bears it is time to for successful hunting on them; if one year would be a cycle of berries and cedar nuts it is time to collect them a lot. Sanctification ceremony takes place early in the morning in May or in the beginning of June. Beginning at sunrise signifies regeneration and beginning of a new cycle of life.

The ceremony space is divided into two places: sacred and secular. A mountain or an elevation is the main marker of the clan’s land. Sacred place is a top a

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<sup>31</sup> Bai-Taiginskii *kozhuun* or Bai-Taiga for short.



mountain because spirits reside on it that is why the major part of a ceremony is held here. A secular place is a valley. It is opposite to a mountain. It is a place where humans live with their happiness, misfortune, illness, and sins. That is why in order not to enrage spirits by their more free actions a final part of the ceremony – sport competition and a feast take place in the valley (Kuzuget 2006:80). The second sacral symbol of a space is a tree. A tree is a space axis, a symbol of a life. Every participant ties up to its branches *chalamalar, kadaklar*<sup>32</sup> ribbons of white or light color saying good wishes, the higher someone ties up is better. The third marker of a sacral place is *ovaa* (Figure 2, appendix). *Ovaa* is built in the form of a hut from the branches of young trees by a size one meter or one and a half. Every year it is renovated, usually the top branches were replaced; it becomes big for several years. A sacred space has a round form with a tree or *ovaa* in its center. And the last marker is a fireplace, it's important to make sacrifice there.

*At the Ulug Dageylga* at Bai-Taiga Mountain in 2008, participants did not have special clothes but they try to put clean clothes to look tidier. Women are not allowed to participate in the major religious part. Men were in hurry to go to the sacred place before the sunrise they need to prepare for a sanctification ceremony. They took prepared offering – ‘white’ food: milk, tea with milk, cheese, cookies, candies etc. They climbed to the mountain preparing themselves for the ceremony. They needed to be calm and quiet, not to talk loudly. Right thinking is the most important for participants; people create their world through their positive thinking. As Tyvans say only ‘good thoughts’ should be in the head. The next step when lamas<sup>33</sup> start reading their praying - sutras. According to Kuzuget (2006: 82), before Buddhism came to Tyva, a leader of the ceremony was the wisest and most respected elder in the clan. It

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<sup>32</sup> Kadak – a wide blue scarf.

<sup>33</sup> Lama – a Buddhist's priest in Tyva, Buryatia, and Kalmykia.

was considered that he had a divine origin. Nowadays, sanctification ceremonies are held only by lamas. Buddhism and shamanism coexist together as officially recognized religions of Tyvans. The sanctification ceremony was related to all spirits, the lamas read sutras to invite *taigalar eelerin*, all masters of taiga<sup>34</sup> like Todzhu *eelerin*, Tandy *eelerin*. “The main characteristic of natural entities is that they are powerful rather than that they are either good or bad” (Humphrey and Mongush 1993: 57). The spirits are powerful and capricious, particularly the female master of Bai-Taiga. If masters want to come they come, if they do not want to come they do not. They often play with humans and change the weather causing a cold wind, rain, or even hail during major part of the ceremony - praying. Through positive thinking participants created desirable experience for them: about wellbeing, good weather, good luck, and health for his family, relatives, and animals; bless and ask as the help of the spirits. The balanced and harmonious thoughts are also vital. Participants could enjoy the beauty of a ceremonial space: the soul-blue sky, the bright sun, and majestic surrounding mountains, colored *ovaa*, and a big fire. The culmination of the ceremony happened when the lama proclaimed that the owners of taiga arrived. A leader of ceremony, a higher rank lama, asked from the name of all participants the spirits about assistance of wellbeing for humans. Then men went around *ovaa* three times and bow to four directions giving offering. They sprinkled *araka* or vodka to *ovaa*, left some food at *ovaa* and give the most of food to the spirit of the fire. The high lama poored bottles of vodka into large bowls. A young lama consecutively tossed tubs of vodka into each of the four directions. The lama proclaimed that the masters of taiga took the offerings and they are gracious to the people. It is interesting that many men brought Mongolian vodka “Gengis Khan”, it is more prestigious than Russian

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<sup>34</sup>Taiga – a deep forest in Siberia. It means a mountain forest in ancient Turkic language. More than 80 percent of territory in Tyva is a mountainous area with deep forest on them. In Tyvan thinking, mountains and taiga are inseparable.

vodka in Tyva because of high quality and it is very expensive<sup>35</sup>. It is also meaningful for Tyvans because they consider themselves as descendants of Great Genghis Khan's Empire. So, people prepared for the ritual before and made orders to purchase "Genghis Khan" to somebody who traveled to Mongolia. After finishing the ceremony they went to the valley where women and children waited for them. When men came to the valley at Teeli, a main town in Bai-Taiga sport completions began: horse races and *huresh* - Tyvan restring. There were several yurts in the valley with prepared food. One yurt represented the *kozhuun's* administration. Others from different *kozhuun's* divisions or different villages of Bai-Taiga. Some people came from Kyzyl most of them who originally is from Bai-Taiga. They told to me that they try to come very year for this ceremony.

When the men arrived from the mountain they had a lunch in a yurt. All of them brought several sanctified candies or tea from the mountain. It is necessary to hide the caramels from someone's eyes and keep them the whole year in the house. Tea is supposed to drink if one has some crisis moments like feeling unwell or misfortune come to your house. The dancers and singers from Tyvan Sate Philharmonic gave their performance. The lamas read their sutras again for all people in the valley. The schoolchildren of Teeli, a main town in Bai-Taiga finished the performance. The sun shined in the steppe more severely. It was very hot and people tired, but everybody was satisfied they did what they supposed to do and they could leave the place peacefully.

Despite big transformations in the society, Tyvans are reviving their primordial shamanic religion and are following the customs. The *dag dagyry* ceremony has symbolic and real value. Participating in the ceremony demonstrates a

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35 A bottle of 0.75 litter cost 1,500 rubles in summer (US \$60).

profound spiritual and emotional connection and affection to the land. The essence of *dag dagyry*, a sanctification ritual of a mountain, is propitiating a spirit – a master of a place, establishing of contact with him/her for the wellbeing the year. Humans become involved in this act they are responsible not to disrupt the balance. Peoples believe that they can show proper respect to the spirits through their offering and keeping traditions and rites. As my interviewee Sergey said, “Our ancestors did it from ancient times and we do it. We are not more clever than our ancestors”. Conducting the sanctification ceremony gives the right to humans to manage a common-property system on land and its resources.

### **Cult Places**

The second spread tradition to show proper respect to the owners and land is *ovaa* (Figure 4, Appendix A). This rock piles with the branches of tree are widespread in the Tyva, Buraytia, and Mongolia (it is called *obo* in Buraytia and Mongolia), as a rule it is on the mountains’ peaks and on the pass at the paths and roads. Up till 1930s Tyvans had a ritual of sanctification of a clan’s *ovaa* – *ovaa dagyry*, one of the most ancient rituals. This ancient cult among peoples of Sayan-Altay reflected a clan’s property on the land (hunting grounds, pastures, and camps) (Chanzan 1998 in Kuzhuget 2006). Each *ovaa* has its owner; the offering is given to it: food, milk wine, vodka. *Hadak*, patches of fabric, ribbons, and pieces of paper with Buddhist’s preys are tied to *ovaa* and closer trees. The colors of ribbons and patches of fabric play a role although are not very important; it is better to put things of light or bright colors, the most favored colors are white and blue. As I mentioned earlier, white means happiness. Blue represents a Forever Blue Sky. Bright colors mean energy of life. It is important to give sacrifice regularly in the form of food in front of *ovaa*, although the

spirits are immaterial essences. It is required to stop at every passing and give a sacrifice to the owner of a place, and add a rock on *ovaa* saying blessing. That's how it gradually grows. It is considered if a wind sways the ribbons and patches of fabrics a pray will reach the sky even one is far away and busy at that moment. Tyvans consider as sin not to stop at *ovaa's* place. Nowadays people travel by cars not everyone has time to stop at every *ovaa*. If someone cannot stop at *ovaa* he supposed to stop at least at a big *ovaa*, particularly if he on a long trip.

One of the most significant places in Tyva is an *arzhaan* – a mineral water spring. Each *arzhaan* (Figure 6, Appendix) has a place for the offerings. It is required to tie ribbons and give an offering twice: on occasion of arrival to ask to give health and on occasion of departure to show respect and gratitude. If someone stops at *arzhaan* to carry out the rite one time is enough. An individual should wash his/her hand three times, drink three times *arzhaan* water, and rinse a face three times. All humans should behave correctly in all these sacred cult places: to be quite, not to be loud, and to come with good wishes and thoughts.

Now, near sacred places a large number of empty bottles are left. This is a feature for all sacred places. Usually shamans' ceremonies are conducted with the use of alcoholic means to help a shaman in his journey to the spirits. People stop at these places to sprinkle alcohol to the owner of the place to show proper respect to owner and share drink with the owner. Instead of the food sometimes the pinch of tobacco, coin, and a button are left in sacred places like *ovaa* or *arzhaans*. The value of these things is no object; the most important is the fact of giving an offering itself. Here you can see generalized reciprocity between humans and spirit owners. This passage explains the reciprocal quality of the Tyvan relationship to with nature. On human level, the highest expression of maturity and responsibility is proper treatment of the

relatives. This relationship has often emphasis on reciprocity, everyone should take care of his/her relatives. Tyvans have deep affection and love to the nature of Tyva, they think it is the most beautiful place of the world. They deeply connected to its nature and land. In rites and rituals, “participation in the ritual’s symbolizes the people acceptance of the ancestrally defined contract with nature: respect and mutual respect” (Ziker 2002:122). Tyvan rules and norms of behavior emphasis on proper treatment and use of places and natural resources.

## THE RIGHT TO THE LAND, TAIGA, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Soviet power introduced its own state protective law for the nature, ignoring indigenous system of hunting, fishing, and preservation at all. Despite this new state law system, Tyvans do not follow it. They went hunting ignoring state prohibitions; they violated law and still violate it. Hunters try to escape to encounter with the inspectors of different state departments (the names of these departments are often changed) who are searching to catch the poachers; it reminds a game ‘cat-and-mouse’. If the inspectors catch a poacher they can give a penalty, take away a hunting license, or even take a firearm.

Today, the majority of hunters complain about limit of permission for hunting license for seasons of 2008-09 on some fur-bearing animals by the State Committee of Tyva Republic on Hunting and Fishery. The committee issues only 9810 licenses for sable each year. Streamlining of realization of sable production at Saint-Petersburg’s auction increased the importance of licenses and reduced the number of possible licenses. It became difficult and complicated to obtain licenses, especially for ordinary people in the republic. Licenses are easily obtained by officials or their relatives. As informant №1 said:

“Now we hunt without any licenses, it’s impossible to obtain them. How to obtain one, I do not know. Licenses have distributed among *targalar*<sup>36</sup>. Now we became the poachers deprived of civil rights on our native land. Earlier when we Tyvans hunted according Tyvan customs and rules there were a lot of animals. Now

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<sup>36</sup>*Targalar* means officials.

when all these protective laws began to work the animals became less. If we keep all these Tyvan customs, not to hunt during hunting season the animal always will be. It is not my opinion, all elderly hunters talk about it.

According to Myshlyavtsev (2002) this opinion relates to the concept of representations about restoration and renovation of life, after the end of a certain cycle. Many hunters reject current situation of limits for getting hunting license one interviewee told commented: "It is like somebody comes into your house and closed a He studied Tyvans attitude to the land and asked questions about their attitude to the privatization of land. He received such answers: "Why will only these people use the land? People are free, they live where they wish, and it's their business. For example, we had a summer camp at the Mongolian border, and then we moved Dort-Khol Lake. Who can prohibit us to do this? Our yurt is here and everybody can come here too if they want and we will tell nothing". "Only Americans can sell the land, they don't respect the land at all. We are not Americans (2002: 3)." door of a refrigerator!"

The preservation of high degree of relation to the land and its natural resources is major feature of western districts of Tuva. The population believes in the existence of the owners of mountains, taiga, lakes, and rivers. They carry a number of big collective annual rituals, family /clan rituals and ceremonies devoted to consecration of the place they live. Absence of exclusive rights to the land and natural resources are explained by remoteness of areas from Kyzyl and absence of the Russian population. The majority of Tyvans resisted implication of legalized privatization of the land in Tyva. Myshlyavtsev (2002) did his fieldwork in southern part of Tyva, Mongun-Taiga the most remote district of Tyva where Tyvans live in relatively isolated.



In districts where population preserves lesser degree of traditional practices, they agree if some family will have the right to use the specific territories for agriculture purposes people, but they don't agree at all if this family will have exclusive rights on hunting territories and water resources in this plot of territory (Myshlyavtsev 2002).

During my fieldwork I noticed that half of my interviewees do not know about their rights very well with respect to privatization. The informants told that they do not have enough information about it. Herders who have high education or at least children with high education, or relatives having high positions have knowledge about land tenure. They formed formally their *arat* households and rent or purchase the land; those who do not have any education have little knowledge about land tenure. Boris Salchakovich told his concern about it:

“*Arat* household will not exist without the government's help. The government should teach the youth how to obtain land, how to complete documents for this. To obtain land is the most difficult task. Now a lot of young people would like to manage *arat* household, but they do not know how to do and what is a work experience. They need to be taught and taught. If a person takes a plot of the land, he does not know that he needs to pay a land tax, to fill the tax declaration, how much to pay. Only those know who have the main idea about such things, at least who finished colleges. They know that it is necessary to pay rent, the tax to give, on pension to earn.”

To understand all these complicated documentation and complete all of them is not enough to have a high school or college education. To complete all needed documentation require going through many instance and offices. It takes a lot of time to go through all this bureaucratic circumlocution.

When I asked him why he doesn't have official documentation he answered: "How I will leave a herd? It will take several days for go to all these offices. I need to go to Kyzyl, probably I have to live several days there. In addition, I need to have money and I don't have them at all."

Communities need to have the distinct knowledge about their rights to land and natural resources. Even though the *kozhuun* administration provides basic information about land tenure to herdsmen it seems not enough. It is not surprising because among officials you can find people without any high education. Moreover, administrations using their high positions get the best pastureland for themselves and their relatives. The whole property right system needs to develop unambiguous rules about what, when, and what amount of land they can use. They also need autonomy to modify the regulations as conditions change and cooperate with closely among themselves.

### **Toward to Market Relations**

Being a Republic, Tyva possesses comparatively the greatest degree of its autonomy. Tyva has its own machinery of government. The head of the government is the Chairman of the Government, who is elected for a four-year term. As a rule the head of the government is always representative of the native population. In other words, a situation should be rather favorable for raising the standard of living of the local population because Tyvans themselves participated in the republic's administrative procedure and legislature. The republic also has the Constitution of Tyva Republic.

The ambiguity and complexity in property rights system have been growing more and more. This has different origins. Presently the republic's population has a

low standard of living, mass unemployment, clannishness, a large-scale corruption of the officials, and a lot of social problems. Industrial production is practically absent. The economy of Tyva is very weak as in other remote areas in Siberia. The average wage varies within US\$ 250-300 per month. One of Tyva government's decisions in 2006 was to develop a priority national project "Development of Agrarian and Industrial Complex". The purpose of project was the development of animal breeding and stimulation of the development of small forms of households in the agriculture in the republic. For this purpose all agricultural enterprises should obtain credits in more simplified form. Also, the government of Tyva Republic made a decision about the republic's laws and programs for development of agriculture. Subsidies were allocated to subjects of the Russian Federation to begin to support of breeding animal industry, northern reindeer breeding, and horse breeding. Today, agrarian policy is directed in rising of individual households.

The federal and local governments consider that the land reforms will give a new stage for economic and social development in Tyva which will include the development of private sector and labor markets. The similar situation has been undergoing in Mongolia. Thus, Tumenbayar (2000) warns about some negative 'side-effects' of privatization. The first, the land reforms, particularly existing government policy and the economy will increase inequity in some distribution and aggregation of land into larger holdings. The second effect, increasing sedentization will be expected as a natural process "reflecting larger, global processes of merging cultures and markets" (Tumenbayar 2000:25). The third effect is that challenges of herding production, competition for the best pastures, and concentration around the settlements will cause further migration of young generation to towns. And the last one, the rise of corruption undermines in the whole economy.

The implementation of privatization has already brought their some negative side-effects to Tyva. The current economic problems in Tyva aggravated by an interclan struggles over economic and political control. The political elite of Tyva is split up into two wide political oppositions. It is necessary to say that a division of clans is relative. It somewhat reflects a geographical origin of Tyvans from various districts of the republic and this clan division influences the formation of personnel and administrative staff of the government. Economic problems have a dominating political character and prevents development of economy and market institutions. The officials and their relatives using their high positions have been purchasing the best lands in the republic. The land in vicinities of Kyzyl and other towns are already sold out two years ago. If officials behave like this what you can tell about ordinary people? Some people created a fake *arat* households on paper just to have access to make bank loans or purchase the land. At the same time some real *arat* households do not have available sufficient funds for obtaining a mortgage. It is a very a difficult task to obtain a bank loan. This process demands a lot of time and efforts, not everybody can go through all bureaucratic ‘millstones.’ In addition, the population is afraid that privatization can give access to foreigners, particularly Chinese, who have been coming for the last decade in many areas in Siberia to organize different enterprises. There are few of them in Tyva but people are really concerned that they will come take access to natural resources in Tyva. The memory of Chinese colonizers is still alive in Tyvans’ heads. Usually they come and offer to form some enterprise for extracting natural resources or mining enterprises. Before my departure to the USA a group of four Chinese men with two Russians came from Khakasia Republic to Piy-Khem interested in a big nephrite deposit there. They suggested a native guy to be a director and fill all papers to organize the future enterprise.

And the main side effect is that privatization negatively affects people's use of their land. The herders need huge territories for herding. Privatization and rent of land put limitations of the sizes of their pasturelands. Many herders instead of four traditional seasonal migrations make two seasonal migrations in year. The change in number migrations responded to the 'new economic development.' We already saw that the effect of the change in number of seasonal migrations is overgrazing in some pastures. Almost all land in Tyva is owned by the government, and land reforms in the republic are oriented more on Western countries. Tyvans should follow legislative and statutory acts of the modern legal institute based on the Constitution of Tyva (which must not contradict to the Constitution of the Russian Federation) at the same time being the Russian citizens they must follow the Russian Constitution. The constitution of Tyva Republic corresponds to the Constitutions of Russia, in other words it is a copy of the Russian Constitution with small differences. The problem is that the modern Russian federal legislation does not correspond to customary practices of the native Siberian populations, and it is a more rigid, formal system. For the last several years state policy of the Russian Federation made many mistakes with respect to the indigenous peoples. There are no positive shifts in understanding of existing problems of indigenous peoples in state policy.

A policy of pluralism is considered as one of possible variants of protection of the rights of indigenous peoples through interaction of customary practices and state legislation. Creation of new laws should reflect customary practices of resource management. Secondly, the federal laws accepted in 1999, devoted to the rights of indigenous peoples are almost focused on the small-numbering peoples of the North as which the people with number up to fifty thousand people are considered. The population of Tyvans is more 300 thousand, and that is why they drop out of a

number of these laws (except Tuvinians-Todzhintsy). This situation demands a review of the status of Tyvans and other people who are not included to the small-numbering peoples of the North. As it was marked above, anthropological expertise is best situated to document use of customary law in property systems. The participation of the expertise will help to consider customary laws, practices, and traditional ecological knowledge. Preexisting traditional public institutions were clearer and more capable of managing natural resources in Tyva. Recently enacted institutions based on market relations and poorly designed legislative system are not as well suited for sustainable resource use.

## CONCLUSION

The question of Tyvan land tenure is complicated. Significant changes occurred in Tyvan society and culture which have an impact on traditional way of life and thinking. The property rights system has been developing and transforming under new economic and land reforms. With the prevalence of formally managed land, new ways of management appeared in the republic – legalized privatization which was unfamiliar to Tyvans. In examining changes in property rights in Tyva four types of property can be classified: (1) informally inclusive managed property which is expanded in common-pool hunting territory around settlements; (2) informally exclusive managed property; (3) formally inclusive shared family/clan/community property which is with legalized privatization has been developing and expanding; (4) with formally managed exclusive property which has been transforming in new ways. After land and economic reforms formally managed inclusive property (*arat* households) increased along with exclusive property (legally privatized land) in Tyva. Under the current conditions an *arat* household can utilize resources in different ways: rent land, purchase a pasture, or just use common-pool recourses, although the later is becoming harder to do.

At present Tyvan herders still continue traditional nomadic way of life. *Arat* households are engaged in animal breeding in a new changing world, adjusting to new conditions, market relations and social institutions. The majority of the rural population follows Tyvan philosophy and traditions. The concept ‘respecting the land’ holds that maintaining true proper relationship with the land is characterized by

a strong spiritual relationship with personified deities and numerous rituals that show respect to the earth. 'Respecting land' is the metaphorical relationship between humans and the masters of natural objects; these relationships give the legitimate right to humans to use land and its resources as common-pool resources.

With introduction a private property on the land, economic problems are aggravated. This western property regime brought by outsiders threatens the existence of the people of nomadic culture who are keepers of Tyvan culture. In the conditions of conducting a traditional economy, pastureland and hunting ground is impossible to separate. New reforms need to be better designed and focus on clear property rights to support indigenous activities instead of making obstacles for the indigenous population. It is clear that in order to avoid all negative side effects for successful implementing the land reforms it is necessary that all these strategies should be better designed, to properly understand customary practices and traditional knowledge. The community needs to have the distinct knowledge of the rights to the land, cooperate closely among themselves over their land use and other resources to agree on who can use them, how long, and what size of a herd. In addition, to minimize corruption in the republic it is necessary to monitor with greater information disclosure and publicity in decision making as much as possible.



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## APPENDIX

### Figures



Figure 1. Summer *aal*.



Figure 2. Tyvan boots.



Figure 3. Tyvan shaman.



Figure 4. A tethering post in the *arat's* camp in Bai-Taiga



Figure 5. Sanctification ceremony in Bai-Taiga



Figure 6. *Arzhaan*, a mineral stream at Ush-Beldyr place in southern Tyva. Barren women tie dolls asking the owners of the stream and Ush-Beldyr place to assist to give a child to them.



