

# Cultural Landscape of Nontextual Historical Material

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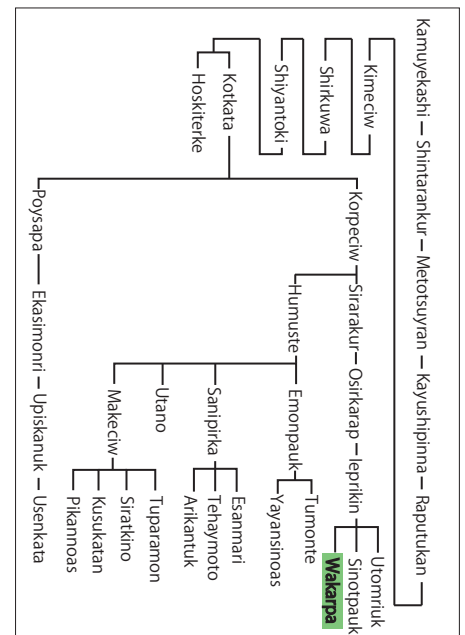
## The Significance of Nontextual Historical Material

The accumulation of information through nontextual history is key in analyzing the landscape of Ainu culture. For example, the various kinds of information passed down through *upaskuma* (folktales) are useful in reconstructing the modern history of Ainu in the region.

People still conduct interviews with locals to record Ainu culture and regional history along the Saru River. This area is said to be a relatively easy area to draw out historical information from people who have been rooted here through the ages.



**Photo 1** Portrait of Wakarpa (Kindaichi, 1943). He moved to Tokyo in 1913 and helped Kindaichi record various *yukar*. He died at the young age of 51 that same year.



**Figure 1** Wakarpa's family tree (Kindaichi, 2004). It is said that the first generation were gods, so the real names of them would be secret when tracing the family tree.

## The Tales of Wakarpa

Wakarpa (1863-1913) was a *yukara* performer from Shiunkot who is said to be "second to none from below Biratori, along the Saru River", when performing *yukara* (Kindaichi, 2004).

He was a collaborator of Kyosuke Kindaichi in writing the Written Record of Ainu Oral Literature (July,

1913), and was nicknamed by Kindaichi as the "Homer of the Ainu." He had an incredible memory and was a genius orator, "not only did he know words to song and music, but he knew all of the residents in the neighboring area, and even the family lines of a dozen prestigious house-

holds deep into the ends of the east, like reading from the back of his palm" (Kindaichi.) Because the nature of Ainu language and Ainu oral tradition is rooted deeply in the memories of ancestors from generations ago, these *upaskuma* functioned as historical records.



**Photo 2** Shiunkot city as seen from Yukktikausi (shot from the west side). In addition to Wakarpa, this land is known to have been the prestigious birthplace of many *yukar* performers (Kindaichi, 2004)

## Emonpauk: Master Craftsman

In Wakarpa's family, which he has dictated to Kindaichi (fig 1), the name "Emonpauk (the name of an early modern sculpture)" catches the eye. He is the cousin of Oshirikaratsup, who was Wakarpa's grandfather.

An *ita* (tray) created by Emonpauk is currently exhibited in the Hokkaido Museum (photo 3).

"On the back of the description of the piece at the Hokkaido Takushoku Museum, which held the piece before



**Photo 3** *Ita* created by Emonpauk. Its diameter is 97 centimeters, one of the largest of the current surviving Ainu wooden trays. It is stored in the Historical Museum of Hokkaido.

being moved to the museum, it says Emonpa from Hidaka created the piece. This Mr. Emonpa is a man named Imonpauk from Biraga of Hidaka. Imonpauk was a craftsman who was hired by developers in 1876 in order to create wooden crafts for exhibition." (The Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, Ainu Cultural Promotion and Research Edition 2006).

The 20,000 lines of *yukar* which Wakarpa performed, such as "The Song of Itadorimaru," and "The Song of Ashimaru" and 14 others, has been recorded in Kindaichi's book, "Study of the Ainu Epic Yukar" (1931), which will later spread through the world.

Wakarpa's family has spawned many masters of various crafts. Although

not as well known, the master craftsman Emonpauk's *ita* are now housed as an important treasure in Hokkaido. 100 years after his death, Wakarpa's words continue to give importance to the Ainu crafts in the Saru region.

## The Landscape of Deer Hunting

From the southern tip of Biratori-cho to Biraga in Hidaka-cho, on the right bank of Saru River, there is a narrow stretch of hill called *san tu*. At the base of this hill, there is a traditional site called *Yukku-tikausi* (Yuk kut ika us i), where hunters "dropped" deer (photo 4).

According to Elder Sadamo Hiraga, "the mountain comes to a ridge, cut and slashed. *Kut* is a rocky mountain. *Ika Usi* is the place where the yuk (deer) fall. The ridge that sticks out

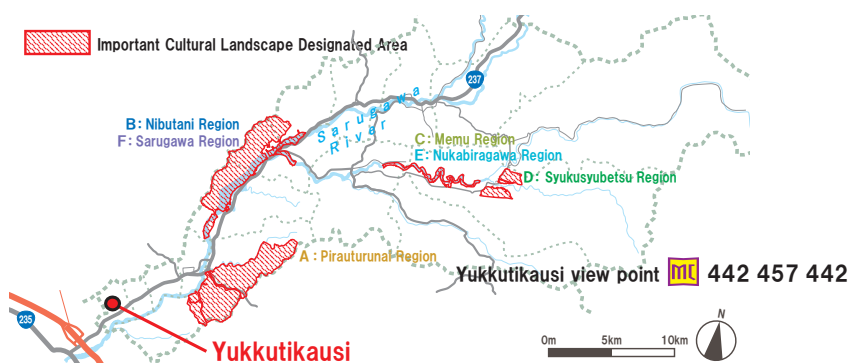
over there is easy to climb, but both sides are cliffs, and it gets cut over there into a *Kut*. It has fallen apart quite a bit now but it used to be a lot more rocky." (Yamada, 1969)

The method of capturing deer by chasing them off a steep cliff is said to have been very effective method of hunt. (Ainu Culture Preservation Council 1969). Viewing such locations with the knowledge of the elders evokes the landscape of traditional hunting techniques.

*Yukku-tikausi* has not been used ever since the decline of deer population in the first half of the Meiji era. The ridge teaches us about the lost art of deer hunting that can only be understood from these traditional sites and remaining hunting equipment.



**Photo 4** This unique rock ridge used to be connected; however, in the 1940s, it experienced severe collapse and came to look as it does today. In the center of the photo, one can see the hillock where hunters would chase the deer. The hunters below would wait for the deer that fall. (Shot from the south)



"Cultural landscapes of the Saru Valley formed by Ainu tradition and modern development"  
Designated as Important Cultural Landscape as of July 26th, 2007

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