

8 INDIGENOUS ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN ACTIVITIES IN SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KAMCHATKA

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On the current state of national enterprises and *obshchinas*¹
of the Itelmen association "Tkhsanom"²

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The area inhabited by the Itelmen people stretches for over 300 kilometers, lying between 58° and 55°40' N latitude, adjacent to the Sea of Okhotsk. The proximity of the cold and turbulent Sea of Okhotsk makes the climate in this region harsh. The first frosts begin as early as August. By November, the rivers freeze over, and winter – with an average temperature of minus 20°C – lasts until May. The severity of winter is somewhat mitigated by the nearby sea. Trees begin to leaf out only in June. The growing season lasts only three months, but vegetation develops remarkably rapidly: in just 1.5 to 2 months, grasses can reach human height or taller.

The area inhabited by Itelmen can be classified as forest tundra. The forests consist mainly of stone birch, willow, young poplar, and, occasionally, rowan. Low-growing Siberian dwarf pine (*Pinus pumila*) thickets, sometimes continuous, cover large parts of the region. Along river valleys, the vegetation is richer and more diverse. Willow and alder forests are more widespread. Moss tundra occupies the spaces between river valleys and stretches all the way to the sea. The Itelmen settlements are located along the fish-rich rivers of the Kamchatka coast and typically bear the same names as the rivers themselves.

On February 4–5, 1989, a conference of Itelmen from nearby villages was held in the village of Kovran, where it was decided to establish an association named the Council for the Revival of Itelmen Culture (*Tkhsanom*). As it later turned out, the Itelmen were the first among the Indigenous northern peoples to form their own public organization with the primary goal of fighting for their rights. The initial period was very difficult: party and Soviet authorities consistently obstructed the association's efforts. Over time, the Council for the Revival began to carry out awareness and advocacy work. In Kovran, the main enterprise, *Kamkrabvest* (formerly the *kolkhoz*

1 An – often Indigenous – community or organization based on kinship ties and practicing collective ownership of land and resources, which can vary in forms or functions according to the given regional context (see footnote 6 on p. 134).

2 First published in Kasten and Dul'chenko (eds.) 1996:15–21 (in Russian).

"Red October"), gradually began to develop. The next step was the establishment of Indigenous ("national") enterprises.

The first Indigenous enterprise was the Itelmen cooperative, which took its name from the last economic structure in the village of Sopochnoe, which was closed in the late 1950s. The founder of this enterprise was the Kovran Village Council, where the author of this section of this article was chairman at the time. It was a rather bold move at the time, as the law did not allow for such. But it was a revolutionary time. Vladimir Zaporotskii, my brother, was elected head of the cooperative. The cooperative's first steps were quite successful. The cooperative was well known not only in the village, but also in the district and the surrounding area. Periodically, assistance was provided: a boat was purchased, food was bought, and cargo was delivered to Sopochnoe free of charge. At that time, the district administration, represented by V. T. Bronevich and then S. G. Leushkin, did a lot to revive the Indigenous villages. A Novosibirsk institute, using district funds, prepared a package of project documents for the revival of the Indigenous villages of Rekinniki, Kultushnoe, and Sopochnoe. But the subsequent economic reality of 1990s made our plans unrealistic, so the first task became to preserve what we had.

By this time, the first problems of the first Indigenous enterprise had become apparent. And in our remote north-eastern region, the first shoots of a market economy were beginning to emerge. State funding was becoming increasingly scarce, and the activities of the Itelmen cooperative began to decline.

But this did not stop the Indigenous people, and enterprises began to register more and more actively. The following limited liability companies appeared: *Iianin Kutkh* (headed by I. T. Bronevich), *Kavral* (O. N. Zaporotskii), *Utkholok* (V. I. Lastochkin), *Anava* (L. T. Diakonova), *Chaechnoe* (B. Ya. Kile), *Biliukai* (L. E. Pravdoshina), *Plekhen* (N. A. Bocharov), *Suzvai* (P. G. Khaloimov), *Ushkh* (Yu. L. Zaporotskii), and the *Zaev* peasant farm (I. K. Zaev). Compare these with the former names of the Itelmen settlements: Eskhlin, Okel, Kavral, Plekhen, Anava, Suzvai. By that time, the *Kamkrabvest* company had finally lost its leading position in Kovran, as its financial problems became increasingly complex. Indigenous enterprises and *obshchinas* were faced with the issue of natural resources. Today [1996], four *obshchinas* (*Kavral*, *Plekhen*, *Suzvai*, *Biliukai*) own a certain part of the hunting grounds. There are also small hunting grounds owned by private entrepreneurs (G. D. Zaporotskii and Y. L. Zaporotskii). The total area of the Itelmen homelands allocated to the Indigenous people is about 1 million hectares. The scheme for allocating hunting grounds is as follows: a series of agreements is made with various services at the district level, including the association. Then the collection of agreements is signed by the head of the district administration. The final allocation of land takes place after the publication of the district governor's decree. However, in this scheme, the Indigenous peoples' organization does not have the right to veto decisions that do not suit it.

Over the past 20 years, the existing state farms have gradually led to the majority of hunting grounds now being allocated to people who have been hunting there in recent years. At the district level, there is currently no mechanism (laws, regulations) that would lead to a positive resolution of the situation that has recently gradually developed.

The main fur animal for which the hunt is limited is the sable. Then come the fox, otter, ermine, mink, and muskrat. Hares are widespread. For food, people seasonally hunt capercaillies, partridges, geese, waders, and ducks. Bears and marine animals, such as sea lions and various species of seals, are still used as food. The main income for hunters came from hunting sable. This was confirmed in 1992–1993. But then the market began to dictate its own terms. Most sales were made through the Leningrad fur auction. In 1995, the price of sable on the world market fell sharply, which was also reflected in the auction. On average, prices fell by half or more. Consequently, this traditional industry can no longer support the Indigenous people who engage in this trade. The long distances to hunting grounds exacerbate the already difficult situation of hunters. For example, in 1996, in December many hunters had not yet headed out to hunt. Indigenous enterprises also hunt bears seasonally. This is not only a tribute to tradition, but also a necessity. Many families have great difficulty feeding themselves. Many Indigenous people do not even have permits to carry weapons. Today, this is a problem for them.

In 1996, the Head of the Administration of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug issued a decree “On the suspension of licensed hunting of brown bears, moose, and snow sheep with the participation of foreign citizens on the territory of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug,” which gave preference to the Indigenous inhabitants of *obshchina* enterprises.

The basis of the traditional trades of all national enterprises has been and will continue to be the harvesting of salmon species. Distribution of salmon quotas is carried out according to the following scheme: applications are accepted from legal entities, which are summarized in the district administrations, then submitted to the coordinating fisheries council and, with the signature of the head of the district administration, become legally binding. However, there is not a single public association of the Indigenous peoples of the North represented in this Fisheries Council. Accordingly, there is no way to influence any decision in any way. It should be added that recently, without the goodwill of local administrations, issues concerning *obshchinas* may not be resolved or may be resolved in a limited way.

The district has (or should have) a decree from the head of the administration on the distribution of salmon quotas. It clearly states that the needs of the Indigenous peoples of the North come first, followed by those of the Indigenous *obshchinas*. Only then quotas for industrial enterprises come into play. The District Duma issued a Decree on June 28, 1995, “On Amendments and Changes to the Procedure for Catching Salmon by Residents of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug,” which states: “The

amount of fish per capita for indigenous peoples of the North and their family members, regardless of nationality, is set at up to 200 kg." But in reality, things turn out quite differently.

Most of the *obshchinas* receive quotas of 3–5 tons of salmon. Today, salted products have lost their significance, and the only option left is the fish canning factory. And there, since then the purchase price has remained the same for the third year in a row: 800 rubles per 1 kg. At the same time, prices in Russia have increased by several orders of magnitude. Overall, it has been calculated that the enterprise can generate some income with a quota of 100 tons. On the western coast of Kamchatka, it is virtually impossible to obtain such a quantity of fish. Therefore, the Indigenous *obshchinas* act as suppliers of raw materials and solve the fish processing plants' supply problems only for the summer period.

The registration of the Indigenous enterprise *Iianin Kutkh* in 1991 was mentioned above. In its first year, this limited liability partnership was not much different from its counterparts. But Ivan Mikhnov took the helm of this enterprise, and within five years, the company became a leader in the fishing industry of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug. But this is an exception to the rule rather than a pattern. Today, the closed joint-stock company *Iianin Kutkh* can serve as a base for the development of traditional industries, because only a large enterprise can cope with the losses that arise in the course of development or getting a business on track.

There is another way. Take, for example, the Zaporotskii *rodovaia obshchina* (RO) *Kavral*, of which I am the head. At the beginning of our journey (registration took place in 1992), we worked with a fish canning factory. At that time, it was not unprofitable for us. But then our partner began to offer different terms. We started looking for another way out. We approached the company *Iianin Kutkh*. Two years have passed, and now our cooperation has reached a new level. This year, we have already worked on finished products – frozen foods. In 1997, we will work under different conditions. I am confident that they will be more profitable for us. During the winter season of 1996–1997, RO *Kavral* is not focusing on fur. If necessary, we started to harvest firewood, as this provides employment and solves social issues for Kovran. Another problem has emerged: if we want the RO to stay afloat, increasing the number of workers is not in our interests. Despite all the difficulties, RO *Kavral* wants to maintain its financial independence. But overall, the financial situation of the *obshchina* remains extremely difficult today.

The *Plekhen* RO performed satisfactorily overall in 1995–1996, but as soon as the leader left, the situation became very complicated. The *Ushkh* and *Kipshnishen* ROs are busy with their own affairs, but there is no question of any development, let alone a contribution to the social life of the village. The entire life of the *Suzvai* RO revolves around the hunting season. These ROs do not dare to take on serious volumes of salmon quotas. In recent years, the Utkholok enterprise has only operated on the Polovinka River and compared to others, is not doing badly. However, extremely

unfavorable conditions with the fish canning factory negate all their efforts. Out of desperation, they are ready to close their enterprises because they see no way out of the situation. The Indigenous people face very big problems in terms of utilizing salmon quotas. The *Okal* RO, which received 50 tons this year, was unable to even begin to utilize this quota. The reason is simple: a lack of funds for proper preparation for the fishing season. But it should also be noted that there is a lack of preparation among the Indigenous peoples of the North for leadership roles. This is a consequence of a gap that arose during the Soviet era: the lack of proper vocational guidance for the training of economic managers.

In 1995, in order to improve the economic situation of the Itelmen RO economies, the *Itelmeniia* association was created. Agreements were concluded with the joint-stock company *Iianin Kutkh*, and an appeal was made to the head of the district administration to allocate quotas for bottom fish and crab to support traditional industries. Under various pretexts, the administration, represented by Leushkin, refused our request. Given the current situation, the *Itelmeniia* association sees the only way forward as supporting traditional activities through the quota system for marine living resources. This practice has been in place for decades, and the state has encouraged national northern policy by allocating additional quotas or financial resources. One way or another, the situation of the *obshchinas* is extremely difficult today. According to statistics, people seem to be well off, but in reality, they cannot make ends meet. This is a very serious crisis, which is already leading to the extinction of a small ethnic group. Today, the *Itelmeniia* association is unable to cope with the tasks assigned to it, largely through no fault of its own. The state has thrown the Indigenous inhabitants into the abyss of the market, from which not everyone, even the most prepared, can escape. The Indigenous people are not ready to live in market conditions: that is my conclusion.

What is the way out of this situation? Is there a legal basis for creating conditions for the normal development of the traditional economy? If we look at the legislative activity of the State Duma, and earlier the Supreme Soviet of Russia, the fundamental law "Fundamentals of the Legal Status of Indigenous Small Peoples of Russia" has not yet been adopted. This law was adopted by the State Duma twice: the first time on July 21, 1991, then in a version agreed with the President of Russia on November 17, but it was rejected twice by the President of Russia. The Presidential Decree "On Urgent Measures for the Development of the Indigenous Small Peoples of the North," dated April 1992, is effectively not working due to the lack of an enforcement mechanism.

A number of federal laws contain certain provisions concerning the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples. For example, the laws "On the Continental Shelf," "On Land Payments," and "On the Fundamentals of State Regulation of the Socio-Economic Development of the North of the Russian Federation" include such provisions. But this does not solve the problem.

What laws were passed by the district Duma during this period? Given the constant struggle between the executive and legislative branches, not a single law has been passed here in Kamchatka either. Mostly temporary provisions have been adopted. On June 11, 1992, the Small Council of the District Council of People's Deputies adopted a decision "On the Temporary Status of the *obshchina*," and on April 30, 1993, it approved the temporary Provision "On the Legal Status of the *obshchina* of the Small Peoples of the North of the Koryak Autonomous District." The *obshchina* was recognized as a form of natural resource use and economic management. The form of ownership was collective. This document became the basis for registering a new form of economic management for Indigenous peoples. However, this form was not adopted in the new Civil Code of Russia, which caused many different problems.

In addition, the Small Council adopted resolutions "On the approximate list of activities, goods, and services of traditional folk crafts of the small Indigenous peoples of the North of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug" and "On the temporary status of national enterprises" dated August 11, 1992.

It must be acknowledged that the legal framework for the development of traditional industries in the Koryak District does not meet today's requirements. The recent elections to the District Duma will help us to adopt the missing laws and legal acts on these issues.

What should we do? We should resolve property issues primarily in favor of the Indigenous population. However, there is a problem. We are currently unable to



Fig. 1 During a seminar at the Free University of Berlin. From left: Tsyelma Darieva, Stephan Dudeck, Oleg Zaporotskii and Erich Kasten, 1996. Photo: personal archive, E.K.

manage our resources at the level required today. By the time we learn how to do so, there will be nothing left to divide. Therefore, we must secure land plots, fishing rivers, etc., and if we cannot develop them today, we must lease them for use under certain conditions. Ownership must be collective. Perhaps this will not comply with Russian standards, but it is a necessary measure and the only correct one.

We need to resolve the issue of representation of associations in the coordinating fisheries council and other resource-distributing bodies of the Federation. We need to resolve issues of quota allocation and bottom species. And it is not necessary for the Indigenous people to have their own fleet, as this can be done by professionals, and the profits can be shared on terms that are favorable to us. And again, this is a temporary measure.

The issue of lending to traditional industries has not yet been resolved. This issue needs to be worked out. We need to look for ways to process fish products and find profitable options for small technologies. We need to address the issue of wild plants. We are talking about small quantities, which is of interest to *obshchinas*. I think that there are possibilities for cooperation with the Indigenous peoples of other northern countries within the framework of international projects. But all our efforts will be in vain if the state does not take appropriate measures to improve the situation among the Indigenous peoples of the North.

Studying the traditional knowledge of the Indigenous and local populations of Kamchatka³

Elena Dul'chenko

Erich Kasten worked from 1993 to 1997 at the Institute of Ethnology at the Free University of Berlin as a lecturer specializing in the economics and culture of the peoples of the North and Far East, and led international research projects in Kamchatka. That's when we met. Erich advised us to apply to INTAS (International Association for the promotion of cooperation with scientists from the independent states of the former Soviet Union) for a grant entitled "Natural Resources of the Western Coast of Kamchatka: Study of Environmental Resources and Potential for Local Economic Development in Territories Traditionally Inhabited by the Itelmen" as part of his international DFG-project: "Ethnic Processes among the Peoples of Northern Russia." A group of scientists from the Kamchatka Institute of Ecology and Nature Management (KIEP) – now Kamchatka branch of the Pacific Institute of Geography of the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (KF TIG FEB RAS) wrote the applications, we combined them, drew up a project and sent it via Germany to the INTAS head office. With the assistance of Erich Kasten, we received this grant.

3 First published in Kasten 2010: 125–133 (in Russian).

The Itelmen are the most ancient of the so-called small-numbered Indigenous peoples inhabiting the Kamchatka Peninsula. Today, the territory of compact settlement of the Itelmen people is located on the western coast of Kamchatka between the Kvachina River in the north and the Sopochna River in the south. Administratively, this area belongs to the south of the Tigil'skii District (Tigil'skii raion) of the Kamchatka Region (Kamchatskii krai). The villages of Ust'-Khairiuzovo, Kovran, and Khairiuzovo are located here.

In 1989, a significant part of the Itelmen population of the western coast of Kamchatka united in the organization "Council for the Revival of the Itelmen People – *Tkhsanom*, which commissioned the study "Natural Resources of the Western Coast of Kamchatka: A Study of the Resources and Environmental Potential for the Development of the Local Economy in the Territories Traditionally Inhabited by the Itelmen People." Today, the Indigenous organization *Tkhsanom* does not have any legally secured land for itself or its members. However, since ancient times, this territory has been home to Itelmen settlements, fishing and hunting grounds. A smaller part of it is still used today as commercial hunting and fishing grounds, and less frequently as peasant vegetable and livestock farms, with the right to limited use of hunting, fishing, and other resources, but without securing land ownership or lease rights.

Members of the *Tkhsanom obshchina*, who at that time planned to take an active part in the economic development of the southern Tigil'skii District and the adjacent continental shelf, asked us to gather all the information on the current state of the resource potential of the territory of compact settlement of the Itelmen. During the work, which began in 1995, a comprehensive description of the natural environment and resource potential was completed, as well as a qualitative assessment of the mineral and biological resources of the territory. For the first time, a study of the micro-element composition of soils and natural plant and animal products widely used by the population was conducted. The report on the project was based on the results of field and laboratory studies conducted by the project participants, as well as the results of the analysis of archival and literary materials (Dulchenko et al. 1996).

At that time, Erich Kasten was conducting his ethnological work in Kamchatka (and I am grateful to him as the project coordinator). He "collected" Itelmen language and customs, watched performances by the Itelmen ensemble "Elvel," and talked to elders about Itelmen tales and cuisine. For two years, the international group led by him studied the resource potential of one of the regions of Western Kamchatka. The results of these studies were jointly discussed by scientists and local residents at a conference held in September 1996 in one of the Indigenous villages of Western Kamchatka, Kovran, during the Alkhalalai festival. We attended the festival, I with my report and Erich with the books he co-authored and wrote. For example, "Historical and Ethnographic Textbook on the Itelmen Language," authors: K. Khaloimova, M. Dürr, E. Kasten, S. Longinov (1996). I had the opportunity to observe the significant work that Erich Kasten did in preparing this book, collecting material, laying it out,

formatting it, finding places to insert Longinov's illustrations; but despite the major work he did, his name is not first on the list of authors. And then there were conferences, seminars, teaching activities, and work on conducting fieldwork.



Fig. 2 During the conference in Halle. From left: Elena Dul'chenko, Erich Kasten, Ol'ga Cherniagina and Evgenii Mamaev, 1996. Photo: personal archive Erich Kasten.

After the expeditions, with the help of Erich Kasten, our entire group was invited to Halle, Germany, for the conference "Terra Incognita Siberia." However, only three people were able to go; the rest were either in the field, at sea, or on vacation. Once again, he made sure that our abstracts were translated into German, and it was our group that produced a booklet about the nature of Kamchatka in Russian, German, and Itelmen. Our report was the main part of the collective volume "Resources of Traditional Nature Use by the Peoples of the Siberian North and the Russian Far East" (Kasten and Dul'chenko 1996). The materials in this collection address the problems of sustainable use of the resource potential of territories of traditional nature use, ways of survival for the Indigenous and local populations of the North and Far East of Russia, and opportunities for preserving their ethno-cultural identity. Particular attention is paid to new legislation on traditional natural resource use territories and the rights of Indigenous peoples guaranteed by this legislation.

The collection includes articles and reports based on research by scientists from Russia and the European Union, developed as part of the international project "Natural Resources of the Western Coast of Kamchatka" with financial support from INTAS, including other scientists, and those who work directly in *obshchinas* and Indigenous enterprises.

Erich Kasten and I worked together on field expeditions, and he was the organizer and director of exhibitions and scientific-practical projects and educational programs at the Francke Foundation (Halle) and in Kamchatka in 1998–1999.



Fig. 3 Crossing the Icha river in Central Kamchatka. From left: Erich Kasten and Elena Dul'chenko, 1997. Photo: Ulrich Kasten.

We managed to ride horses from Esso to the Sea of Okhotsk and return to Esso in a month and a half. The following year, also in the summer, we traveled through the Bystrinskii Nature Park, again on horseback. In both cases, we recorded people, their lives, not in villages, but while fishing, hunting, and reindeer herding (Erich had a tape recorder and a video camera). We recorded Even, Itelmen, Koryak, and Russians as well. We were interested in their Indigenous traditions and knowledge of nature, how they relate to the Bystrinskii Nature Park. This was very important to me, as I was conducting geochemical testing of water, subsoil, soil, and natural



Fig. 4 Elena Dul'chenko collecting plant samples, 1995. Photo: Erich Kasten.

resources (berries, plants, fish, etc.) in the areas where the Indigenous and local populations lived. Erich studied the Even and Koryak languages, which are still partially preserved, their clothing, handicraft and artwork, narratives from the elder generation about their lives in the past, legends, and tales. Based on the collected materials, Erich published educational DVDs in the Even and Koryak languages, Even family melodies, and dances of Kamchatka Indigenous ensembles. All of this was provided free of charge to schools and libraries in Indigenous villages, and educational institutions. In the course of his work, E. Kasten also prepared and collected museum items of everyday life for museums in Germany, which greatly contributed to the popularization of Kamchatka's cultures abroad.

After that, Erich Kasten was director of exhibitions at various ethnographic museums in Germany (2002–2007), as well as the Principal Investigator (PI) of a number of international research projects in Kamchatka, among them projects commissioned by UNESCO – “Traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and their role in biodiversity conservation and natural resource use in Kamchatka.” For this, in March 2003, Erich and I traveled by snowmobile to the southwestern region of Bystrinskii Park, studying the lifestyle, customs, and traditional knowledge of the local population. It



Fig. 5 Near Manuch in Central Kamchatka. From left: Erich Kasten and Elena Dul'chenko, 2003. Photo: Elena Dul'chenko, Erich Kasten.

addressed managing biodiversity conservation and natural resource use in Kamchatka through the integration of Indigenous peoples' traditional environmental knowledge.

During the initial stage of the project, extensive information was collected on the traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples, with a strong contemporary and future focus on the ecology of wild and rare species of animals and plants. However, for our main goal of studying and strengthening the role of traditional knowledge in biodiversity conservation, it was important not only to document the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, but more urgently, to show how they actually apply it. Therefore, we focused on studying the proper transfer of traditional knowledge to future generations. Otherwise, our main idea would become useless.

To explain this concern in more detail, it is necessary to trace the historical background of the present situation in the Even communities. The current population of

the Bystrinskii Even is no more than 1,223 people. Throughout the twentieth century, the history of this people, like that of most other Indigenous peoples of the North, unfolded in a rather dramatic way. In the early 1930s, the Even of the Bystrinskii District led a nomadic way of life, engaging in transport and small-scale reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, and gathering, mainly in the central mountain range and its western foothills. At that time, the Soviet authorities made the decision to transfer nomadic peoples to a sedentary lifestyle to unite nomadic reindeer herders into reindeer herding collective farms. The Even, being obedient and trusting people, did so voluntarily. This is how the Indigenous settlements of Tvaian, Lauchan, and Ketachan appeared, which were built by the Even themselves. The collective farm system, as a way of life, suited the reindeer herders.

They learned to engage in agriculture – primarily gardening, meat and dairy cattle breeding, and horse breeding. The settlements saw the emergence of the first hospitals, schools, shops, post offices, and even an airport. The efficiency of the economy allowed them not only to provide for themselves with the products they produced, but also to sell the surplus to other regions, even to Magadan. During this period, from the early 1930s to the late 1950s, the Even felt that they were needed: they were enterprising, physically very healthy people, practically immune to alcoholism.

In the early 1960s, during Khrushchev's reform to consolidate peasant farms and collective farms, the population of national settlements was persuaded to move to new areas, mostly uninhabited, heavily forested, and unsuitable for reindeer herding and gathering – the eastern foothills of the central mountain range. People were transported by plane, livestock was driven on foot, and pets and crops were not allowed to be taken along. Despite their attachment to the settlements that had become their home over the past 30 years, the settlers managed to settle in here as well.

But 10 years later, another resettlement followed, this time to Anavgai and Esso. Once again, farms and crops were abandoned. The new place of residence was very picturesque but did not meet the conditions familiar to the Even way of life. Narrow valleys with slopes covered with dense forest were completely unsuitable for reindeer herding, and steep and rocky passes made the old pastures and berry fields difficult to access. The fish stocks proved to be insufficient to feed such a large population, the traditional hunting grounds were difficult to access, and the adjacent berry fields were not particularly rich. The population could no longer independently and sufficiently provide for themselves the most necessary things, and most of them became dependent on state cash subsidies.

Lack of initiative, consumerism, and alcoholism, which had not been characteristic of the Even people until then, became widespread. However, it is important to note a positive aspect. Young people who still wanted to realize their potential could now receive a decent education, including higher education, even at the best universities in the country. From the moment the first schools appeared in Indigenous settlements to the present day, the Even have had enormous respect for education and educated

people, and the elderly still remember their first teachers by their first and patronymic names. Despite psychological and material problems, by the early 1980s, two large reindeer herding farms had been established in Ezzo and Anavgai, with developed infrastructure and a complex of small processing enterprises, including wild plant processing.

But during the period of *perestroika*, the reindeer population declined more than fivefold, the infrastructure was completely destroyed, and the enterprises were ruined and closed. Unemployment among the indigenous population is approaching 100%, and alcoholism has almost reached the scale of a national disaster. All of this provoked an exodus of the Indigenous population to their traditional places of residence in the early 1990s. However, part of the ancestral lands has a second owner – the Bystrinskii Nature Park Directorate (forest fund lands), which, in a certain way, can also be seen as a positive development.

Within some of the ancestral lands (Shanuch, Balkhach, etc.) there are deposits of minerals, mainly non-ferrous metals and gold, for which licenses have already been issued for development. Mining companies are, in fact, the third formal owner of part of the ancestral lands. This would cause the true bearers of Even culture and the only speakers of the Bystrinskii Even language to lose not only their land, which, incidentally, was allocated to them for habitation and traditional use of natural resources by tsarist decree back in the 19th century (Kriazhkov 1999), but also their last chance to survive. Of course, it will be possible to organize small Indigenous enterprises for the collection and processing of traditional resources, jointly or under the control of the new owners – mining companies and new hunting and tourism firms. However, there will be no more talk of traditional hunting grounds or inexhaustible methods of harvesting, nor, for that matter, of the ecological integrity of traditional territories and, in fact, the resources found there (Aleshina 2001).

The discrepancy between what people say and what they actually do can be seen among the younger generation. Although many Indigenous and local residents continue to possess sufficient traditional knowledge about the ecology of the wild nature, young people often do not apply it, as there are no conditions for its use. This can lead to the loss of ethical norms and values. Therefore, an important condition for the preservation of traditional knowledge of nature use is the local residents of the Bystrinskii district themselves, since they are, in essence, the ones who apply this knowledge in practice and who are responsible for the successes and failures of future biodiversity conservation strategies.

Therefore, the main focus of the co-creative programs with Erich Kasten is direct work with the local and Indigenous inhabitants of Kamchatka, not only studying the traditional knowledge, language, and customs that still survive, but also to promote their direct involvement such as in exhibitions in Kamchatka and abroad, the publication of books, booklets, and albums with colorful photographs of the life and customs of the Indigenous and small-numbered peoples of Kamchatka, as well as textbooks on

their languages and dialects, children's drawings, performances by national ensembles and art groups. All this directly contributes not only to the preservation of traditional knowledge, but also to promote Kamchatka internationally – which conveys appreciation and pride in its peoples' own cultures.

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Figures

- 1 During a seminar at the Free University of Berlin. From left: Tsypelma Darieva, Stephan Dudeck, Oleg Zaporotskii and Erich Kasten, 1996. Photo: personal archive Erich Kasten.
- 2 During the conference in Halle. From left: Elena Dul'chenko, Erich Kasten, Ol'ga Cherniagina and Evgenii Mamaev, 1996. Photo: personal archive Erich Kasten.
- 3 Crossing the Icha river in Central Kamchatka. From left: Erich Kasten and Elena Dul'chenko, 1997. Photo: Ulrich Kasten.
- 4 Elena Dul'chenko collecting plant samples, 1995. Photo: Erich Kasten.
- 5 Near Manuch in Central Kamchatka. From left: Erich Kasten and Elena Dul'chenko, 2003. Photo: Elena Dul'chenko, Erich Kasten.
- 6 Map of Kamchatka (next page). Design: Erich Kasten.



Fig. 6 Map of Kamchatka. Design: Erich Kasten.