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## Preface

Tomomi SATO  
Hokkaido University

The present work is one of the results of the research project "A Study of the Classification of the Ainu Dialects", supported by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Project No. 1203902, directed by Tomomi Sato, Graduate School of Letters, Hokkaido University). This project is in its turn a part of the project of "Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim" (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research on Priority Areas (A), directed by Professor Osahito Miyaoka, Faculty of Informatics, Osaka Gakuin University). Anna Bugaeva took part in our project as assistant researcher and was engaged in documenting the Chitose dialect of Ainu. For further details of the results of our project, see Sato (2002).

Anna Bugaeva majored in Japanese at the University of St. Petersburg and came to Japan as a student supported by the Japanese Ministry of Education. She studied Japanese at Osaka University of Foreign Studies and then came to Graduate School of Hokkaido University to study Ainu. This is her Ph.D. dissertation submitted at Graduate School of Hokkaido University in 2003-2004.

I wish to stress that this publication of Ainu (Chitose) grammar and folktales was made possible only by Anna becoming friends with her informant, Mrs. Ito Oda and her family, and establishing a perfect working relationship with her. The meaning of this will be quite quickly realized by whoever has any knowledge or experience of the fieldwork on a minority language such as Ainu. As is often the case, the problem of discrimination of a minority and various other serious social problems around the community naturally make the people guard severely against their unwelcomed visitors, typically, anthropological or linguistic researchers, or journalists, who come only to satisfy their interests, whatever they may be. It is clear that under such circumstances, not every person can enter the community easily and win the confidence of the informants and their families. Furthermore, Anna Bugaeva's considerable success in her fieldwork is all the more surprising because she is a foreigner and therefore must have had various disadvantages raised by cultural differences and linguistic communication gaps. In

this respect this work no doubt demonstrates Anna's superior ability to establish contact and do linguistic research. The reader will immediately see her special expertise in the analysis of the Ainu language in the present volume. At the same time, it should also be noted that the efforts made by Mrs. Oda must have been extraordinarily great because she was very old (over 90) and sickly, spending her last years mostly in hospital, when Anna began to do fieldwork with her. It is true that the results of Anna's research are highly important, but the reader should bear all of these factors in mind when using this volume as a source of linguistic or folkloristic data. Mrs. Oda's contribution to our store of Ainu folklore is truly precious.

Finally, a few words about the late Mrs. Oda. While she had a vast amount of knowledge about the Ainu culture, in particular, about religious beliefs, she was a very modest person and was never proud of it before others (for her deep knowledge in these areas, see Matsui 1993). She was a very kind, amiable old lady, and at the same time seemed to have some mysterious power that made everyone around her feel peaceful and happy. I will never forget it that when Mrs. Nabe Shirasawa, my informant of the Chitose dialect, died in 1993, Mrs. Oda, herself deeply sorrow-stricken, nevertheless heartily encouraged me to continue the study of Ainu and told me that Mrs. Shirasawa had been really pleased at teaching me her mother tongue.

I believe that Mrs. Oda would be pleased with the publication of this volume. I also believe that this volume will be of great help to the researchers in the future study of Ainu and, used together with the data of Mrs. Nabe Shirasawa (Nakagawa 1995, etc.), it will enable us to see the whole picture of the Chitose dialect of Ainu.

#### REFERENCES

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