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Aboriginal Dogs*

From the Publisher...

Dear members of PADS and readers of our Journal,

We resume our work after a prolonged interruption caused by the illness of our translator and member of the editorial board , Vladimir Beregovoy.

We open the publication of our Journal in 2017 with two articles about Laikas. The first article is by Rimma Dyomina, who familiarizes us with her experience of using the East Siberian Laika and the Yakutian Laika in the sport of dog sledding, which provides an excellent opportunity for actually using these aboriginal breeds in the real environment of life today.

The second article, by Oleg and Boris Shiroky, is dedicated to the Nenets and Even Laikas of Kamchatka. The authors also provide a detailed description of the Lamut horse. As many fanciers of aboriginal dogs are also lovers of horses, we decided the inclusion of this material in our Journal would be appropriate and interesting for our readers.

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**East Siberian and Yakutian Laikas in the sport of
sledding in the region of Lake Baikal. The use of
aboriginal dogs in the modern world.**

R. V. Dyomina

Russia



Aboriginal dogs are a part of the national riches of the people and the unique subject of the natural and cultural heritage of the country. Besides the fact that the dogs are closely connected with the cultural and religious traditions of the people, they also help survival in every region of the world.

It seems that in the modern world the problems of survival and development have disappeared. There are supermarkets full of food and city streets full of cars. There are preserved foods, all terrain vehicles and snowmobiles available for those who like the natural environment. The Internet has made libraries, museums and concert halls accessible by a single click of a button. It seems that all problems that need material or intellectual resources have gone. In the civilized world everyone is secure and everyone has access to education. However, the civilized world pays the price in the form of a huge number of digital people, who have locked up their life with screens of telephones or computers, and people who suffer from autism, with limited ability to communicate. These are the results of the absence of the natural environment and the loss of skills of interaction with natural forces.

Who can help humans to preserve their unique abilities to survive, to preserve their mental health and to avoid becoming a slave of technologies and how? The sport of dog sledding has become one of the answers.

Now, dog sledding is no longer a harsh necessity. It became a recreational sport and a method of finding out the limits of endurance and potential for survival for individual sportsmen and individual dogs.

In the European part of Russia, Alaskan and Siberian Huskies have become the most popular for running over long distances and mixes for sprinting. However, these dogs are not aboriginal ones. In eastern Russia, among aboriginal types of dogs, the most popular are Chukotka and Kamchatka sled dogs.

In 2008 we became engaged in the sport of dog sledding in the Lake Baikal region and chose local dogs. First, East Siberian Laikas that failed to make a hunting career ended up in our team. A little later, two Yakutian Laikas joined our team. There were not many dogs, because we were involved with skijoring. In our case one skier used two dogs.

We chose aboriginal dogs, because we were not looking for dogs only in the interests of the sport. Of course, in the conditions of European Russia, Alaskan Huskies, Siberian Huskies and sled dog mixes would be preferred, but we chose dogs that would be better suited to share our way of life in general. We wanted dogs that could not only be used for competition races and ski journeys but could also be taken for a stroll or for kayaking in the summer on Lake Baikal, taken for a hiking trip into the mountains or in the woods for mushroom picking. We wanted to talk to the dogs, because these dogs are well socialized and friendly in the family and with children. Almost all of them can live outside or inside and can live in

peace with other animals. Of course, life outside is preferable for dogs.

We did not look for show dogs. Now, two of our Yakutian Laikas are quite successful at dog shows. Aragorn became Champion of Russia and Champion of the Russian Kynological Federation. Atka became a junior Champion of Russia and the Russian Kynological Federation. However, this success at shows was not our major goal, but it came about as a result of our involvement in the sport of dog sledding. Our dogs are well developed, as all the experts noticed. Dog sledding allows for the selection and breeding of healthy and strong dogs, which also helps to preserve aboriginal breeds in their original form.

Our choice of local Laikas was also due to the continental climate of the Lake Baikal region with its sudden changes in temperature and humidity and strong winds. The dogs can encounter freezing rain conditions and endure sudden changes of altitude of up to 600 meters in one day of racing. Besides, we do not have places equipped for dogs to stay in overnight in winter time or any facilitating conditions during races. “Where they were born, there they are used” is a proverb that reflects our decision to use local dogs.

Another important reason of choosing local dogs was the fact that East Siberian and Yakutian Laikas do not see humans as their boss and do not trust them blindly: obedience is not one of their main traits in communicating with humans. In critical situations, the aboriginal dog is capable of making its own decisions based on its instinct for survival. To a Laika, a human is always his partner, with whom it works like an equal. This quality helps in the work of the whole team and forces the human to draw on his own natural abilities, returning to mother nature. A working adjustment between the human and his dogs takes place. Thus, aboriginal dogs become a factor, helping human beings to return closer to nature and to make life more harmonious.

A good sled Laika, with his independent character, is characterized by its exceptional ability to work and its personal attachment and attention to his owner. The dog strives to protect him from different dangers, such as a poor path, melting or thin ice on a river, wild predators or ill- intentioned people.

In return, it is not enough just to feed and take care of the dogs routinely every day. Dogs want from their owner his full involvement in their work, his attention and sharing in emotional interactions with them. Aboriginal dogs require from humans the same physical and psychological qualities that

have evolved during millennia of interactions between dogs and humans and have helped the survival of both of them. This is how people can return to their origins. This is how by communicating with dogs we can restore and fulfill ourselves. This is how we find our real freedom and our primeval unity of spirit. This is how by understanding the unique qualities of aboriginal dogs as displayed during their work and life in general and their interactions with us we understand our own uniqueness.

Walking trips and free running during training in the summer, bicycling trips in the fall and spring, skijoring in winter and, finally, the competition season make up the sporting life of the dog and his owner.

In the summer, working tasks are intended only for the maintenance of the dogs' activity, in the fall they are intended to prepare the dogs for winter work and in the winter they work the most. In spring dogs work less after the winter competition season.

In the summer, Laikas almost never get overheated. First, aboriginal dogs molt in the summer season, losing not only the undercoat but also most of the guard hair. Second, they have a strong self-preservation instinct; dogs regulate their physical efforts, run slower if threatened by overheating and

stay more in the shade. In the summer, dogs almost never work, but are allowed to run free.

There is a serious danger of overheating in the spring, when dogs still carry a heavy coat and are in good physical shape, allowing them to maintain a good speed, running on ice. Journeys on ice covered Lake Baikal and rivers usually take place in March. During this time the ice cover is still strong and the day becomes longer. Day temperatures are rising above freezing, the sun shines bright and as the dogs are accustomed to running fast they can easily become overheated.

In winter aboriginal dogs can run without blankets and rarely need boots, as a rule, unless injured or under conditions of prolonged periods of work. Usually, in winter it is enough to trim the hair on the feet to 3-5 mm long and to lubricate the feet between the toes with fat. In summer, on mud roads after rain, the dogs' feet remain clean, nothing sticks to them, while people's shoes collect up to 1 ½ kg of mud. Dogs may need boots in spring, when temperatures rise and the ice becomes filled with needle like structure or when the snow melts in the day time and then in the evening refreezes in hard chunks.

In spring, on the ice, another danger lurks: cracks and holes used by Baikal seals for breathing. They attract the dogs. The musher must be very attentive and quickly stop the dogs.

A big heavy backpack, which does not allow for a quick maneuver, can put one in jeopardy.

Sometimes, in the forest, Laikas become detracted by “hunting objects”. This happens most often at the beginning of the season, when training intensity is not high. The dog pulls strong and runs low over the ground. This is favorable, if the direction of the running dog coincides with that needed by the musher. In such case, one should be prepared to brake.

Yakutian Laikas usually run evenly, spend their energy rationally, are very attentive to commands of the musher and work hard.

The good qualities of East Siberian Laikas are the ability to find right way even under deep snow cover and to find the way home, if the musher loses his way, their constant readiness to protect the musher and the entire team and their ability to work hard, despite fatigue and bad mood.

The intensity of training for races over medium length distances in winter time is calculated as the number of kilometers run per day multiplied by 10. If the race takes many days, an individual plan for each dog is prepared based on the individual qualities of each dog.

Yakutian and East Siberian Laikas endure low temperatures well enough. We continue training our dogs in

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temperatures as low as -38° C. If the temperature falls even lower, people do not feel comfortable enough to continue. However, the dogs do not mind running, when the temperature drops below -40° C. Aboriginal Laikas have a body structure and an ability to work, which helped them to survive in the conditions of north Siberia and this helps them to run over long distances without hurting themselves.

East Siberian and Yakutian Laikas are undemanding during rest periods. Usually, it is enough to protect them from the wind. They like to lie on hay, but, if necessary, they do well without hay, sleeping in pile of snow.

In the summer and winter, following advice given by Blake Freking at a sledding seminar, we feed our dogs with raw meat or fish every day. By winter time, the amount food fed to the dogs is increased. In winter time, when the intensity of work is high and temperatures drop low, the fat content in food is increased. Food is necessarily fortified with vegetables and vitamins. In general, aboriginal dogs are not demanding for food and prefer natural food over kibble.

As a rule, East Siberian Laikas and Yakutian Laikas have one estrus per year, in the fall, which is very convenient, because dogs perform the heaviest work in the snowy season in winter. However, young females can have two heat periods per

year, especially if they have extra feeding with large amounts of vitamins prior to competitions.

Our teams participate in extreme skjoring races (“Baikal Races”).

In March, 2014 and 2015, Ilya Dyomin (my son) with his Yakutian Laika Aragorn and East Siberian Laika Birma-Busa won skjoring races over 90 km distance. Pavel Dyomin (his father) with is East Siberian Laikas called Pamir and Indiana took second place in these races.

Since 2015, the Baikal Race starts in the evening and continues all night. The period of necessary rest in 90 km races is four hours. In 2015, during the first three hours of racing, the temperature dropped more then 20 degrees. For about 50km the track ran on the Irkutsk water reservoir plain, then it went uphill, down the slope, over two mountain passes of over 450 m each and, finally, finished at about 6 AM in Listvyanka, Lake Baikal.

In 2014, the last 15 km on Lake Baikal, prior to the finish at Listvyanka, racing took place on barren ice. That day an earthquake occurred. Both mushers and the dogs had to overcome hard conditions.



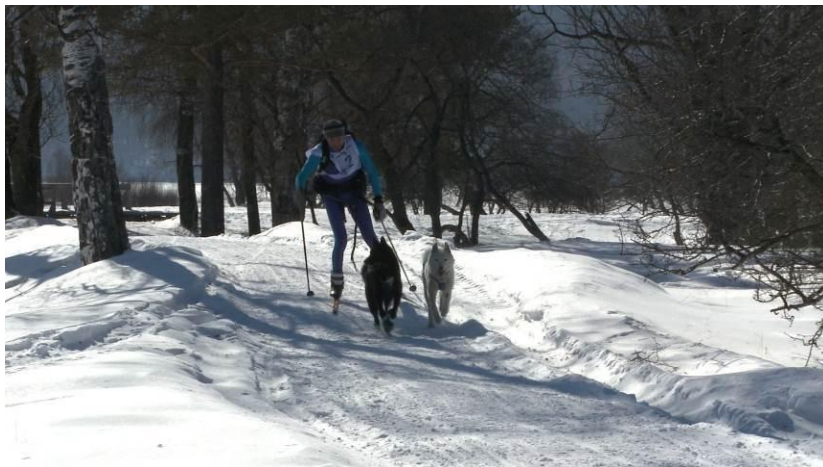
'Baikal Race 2014' Ilya Dyomin with Aragorn and Birma.



'Baikal Race 2014' Ilya Dyomin with Aragorn and Birma.



**'Baikal Race 2014' Ilya Dyomin with Aragorn and Birma at the finish
of the race**



'Baikal Race 2014' Pavel Dyomin with Indiana and Pamir.



'Baikal Race 2014' Ilya Dyomin with Aragorn and Birma. Start of the race

In 2016, Ilya Dyomin with his Yakutian Laika Aragorn and East Siberian Laika Birma-Busa took part in skijoring races over 155 km, finishing in Irkutsk. The conditions included four hours of necessary rest time. The race started in the evening, the track was marked by a single run in a snowmobile: a complete ski track did not exist. During the race, dogs could not be taken into a heated facility; resting and feeding were allowed only outside. Care of the dogs, except by the musher, could be done only by one designated assistant. The total racing time, including resting time, was 23 hours. The track was covered by a blowing wind, a blizzard, blowing in the face while running over 70 km and the snow crust turned into a real

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trial for dogs and mushers. In skjoring, most of the participants in 155 km races did not reach the finish. Iliya Dyomin with his dogs, Aragorn and Birma-Busa, was the only team winning the Baikal Race in the three racing seasons of 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The Yakutian Laika Aragorn and East Siberian Laika Birma-Bursa are uniquely outstanding aboriginal dogs, distinguished by their faithfulness and working ability.

In 2016, Pavel Dyomin, with his East Siberian Laika called Pamir and Yakutian Laika called Atka won 56 km races.

Besides the races, hiking is a part of our life with dogs. These hikes vary from trips of one day to many days over Lake Baikal. This enriches our life, making it unique and full of initiative.

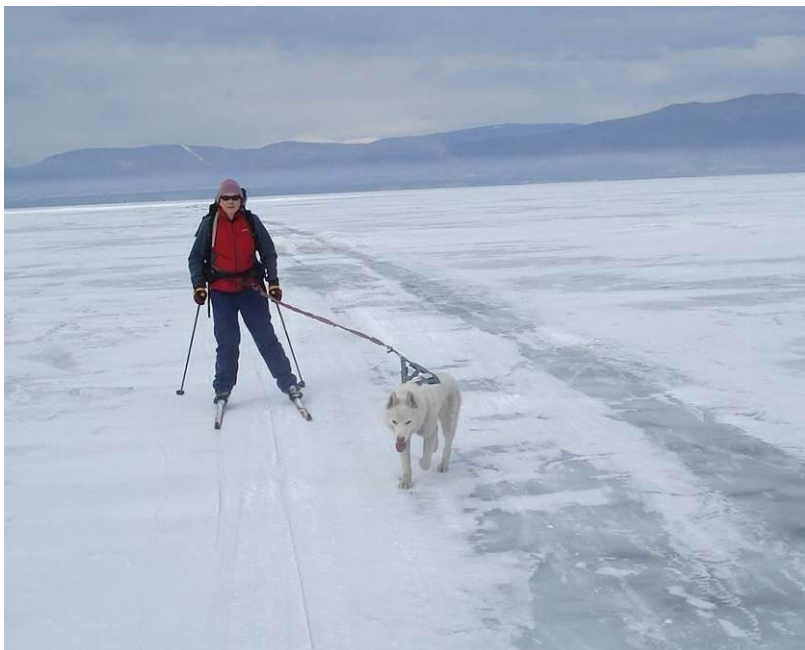
This is how the miracle of our simple, daily life with our dogs happens, our return to nature and the primeval unity of spirit.



'Baikal Race 2016' Pavel Dyomin with Atka and Pamir.



**Pavel Dyomin with Indiana near the thermal through crack.
Severobaikalsk, March 2012.**



Crossing through Baikal. Rimma Dyomina and Pamir. March 2012.

Immigrants of Aboriginal Origin in Kamchatka: Evenkian and Nenets Laika and Lamut Horse

B. Shiroky and O. Shiroky

Ukraine

There is an obvious controversy in the title of this article: “aboriginal” and at the same time “immigrants”? People of Kamchatka call the Nenets Laika and the Lamut Horse aboriginal breeds. Local Lamut Even people (Lamuts before the 1930s) are considered aboriginals.

The term “aboriginal” has an advantage, because in the mind of the reader it carries necessary stereotypes. At the same time, it has become morally outdated. This is because it came into use at a time when people were divided into “civilized Europeans” and all the rest, who were called “aboriginal”. This term was applied to “savages”, creatures superior to animals, but below really “civilized” people. At least stereotypical images of these are common to this day.

Initially, it was accepted that savages met by white European discoverers lived in those lands since primeval times, as well as the wild and domesticated animals associated with them, including dogs and horses. Now, it is known that “savage people” do not exist. They all, without exceptions, are migrant fragments of civilizations that have lived through their

dynamic state and turned into communities, living in “balance” with nature.

The history of the Nenets people is a good example of this. The Nenets represent an “aboriginal” population of the European and Trans-Uralian tundra, including the Taimyr Peninsula. They have retained their own Laika in its particular type until present time.

The ancestors of the modern Nenets, Entsy and Nganasan – Samodia tribes (Samoyeds) migrated to the north in 1-2 millennia AD from the Sayan Mountains (Shiroky and Shiroky, 2004). No land is entirely without people and the Samoyeds (called Nenets starting from the 1930s) had to displace the Sikhirtya aboriginals. Old men of the Nenets tundra retail the myth that the Sikhirtya went underground to get away from the Samoyeds, where they herd mammoth. They corroborate their story with would-be sightings of Sikhirtya people somewhere in the hills.

In the picture given to us by Matvey Chuprov, an expert on the tundras of Naryan-Mar you can see a Nenets Laika, looking at the hill, where, according to the old men, Sikhirtya People were sighted.



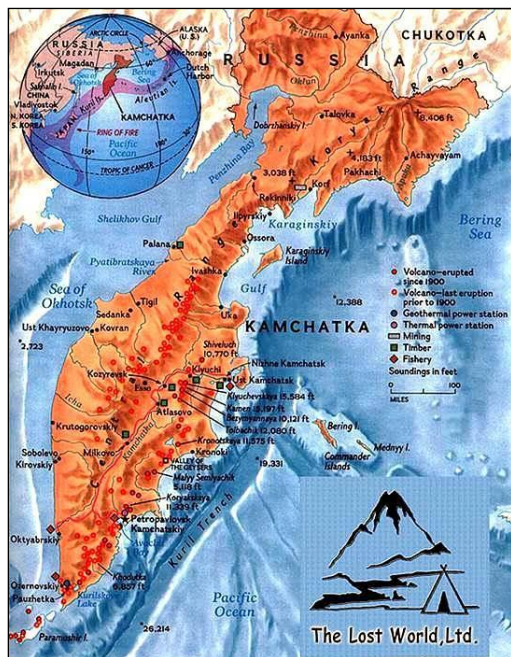
*The Vangurey River. Dedovskaya Hill. Here was a summer camp of a hermit, who saw Sikhirtya there. This is a holy place of the Nenets people.
9 April, 2014. Photo and caption by Matvey Chuprov.*

Perhaps, it is hard to find pure aborigines anywhere on earth. All of them came at one time or another from somewhere else. Therefore, we will not follow the people of Kamchatka and we will not call the local Laikas and Lamut Horses aboriginal but rather primitive, because both possess complex of characters, indicating their affinity with wild ancestors. We will also try to show a brief history of their arrival in Kamchatka.

Now, we will discuss the definition of “Kamchatka” as a country.

Now, it is commonly accepted to apply the name Kamchatka not only to the Kamchatka Peninsula, but also to the adjacent territories from the north formerly populated by Koryaks (Koryak Mountains, the Penzhin River basin and the Parapol area). Since 2007 these lands are called the Kamchatka Territory or Kamchatka.

Among the three immigrant species we discuss in this article, the Lamut horse and the Even (Lamut) Laika were early



arrivals, together with their owners the Even people.

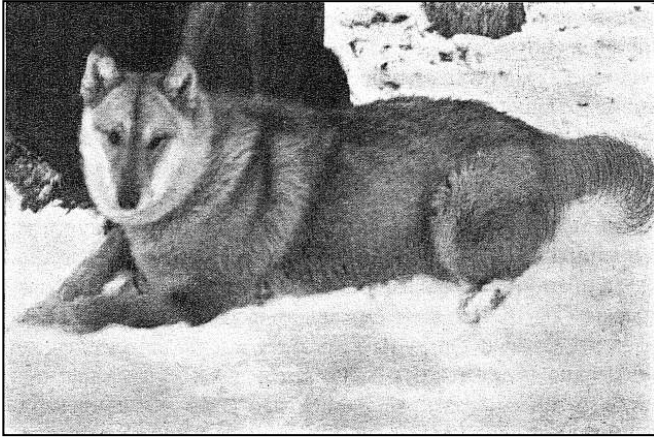
Evens of this territory do not belong to its indigenous population. Being hunters of wild reindeer, Evens lived in the northeast of Siberia, where they gradually became nomadic reindeer breeders. Most likely they began populating the Kamchatka Peninsula in the 1840s (Kirillova, 2012, in Russian). “On March 2, 1852, (Kuzakov, 1968) some remarkable visitors came to Petropavlovsk. They were first Lamuts, probably driven by overpopulation in their home country, some with their whole families, they traveled across the Penzhin territory, which was already populated by Koryaks, and settled in vast parts of Kamchatka that were free of people. Many other Lamuts followed them” (Ditmar, 2009).

During the migration from Siberia to Kamchatka, Evens came into contact with different peoples whose lands they were crossing. This made a certain impact on their way of life and original culture. Still in the XIX century, migrant Evens developed their own cultural traditions, which included elements of Yakut, Koryak and Itelmen cultures. Evens got horses from the Yakut. However, they were interested in horses as a mean of transportation. Yakut use horses mainly as merchandise. In the late XIXth century almost every Even's household had horses. K. G. Kuzakov (1968) was one of the

first who distinguished migrant Evens as a separate ethnic group. Today, two names are used: “Evens of Bystrina” and “Bystrin’s Evens”. At present time, this is a significant ethnic group with its own peculiarities of material and spiritual culture. About 1,234 of 2000 in the whole of Kamchatka live in the central parts of the peninsula, in Esso and Anavgai of Bystrinsky District – Bystrinsky national District. One distinctive peculiarity of traditional husbandry of Bystrinsky Evens is their horses, which will be discussed later. However, the **Even (Lamut) Laika** also had a chance to become recognized.

Even (Lamut) Laika

There are two pictures of this kind of Laika in the book by Dmitrieva-Sulima (1911): Chaika of her own breeding and Monar brought from the Kolyma River region by Pfitsenmaier, who was a member of the expedition for research on the mammoth. This gray male was close to a “wild dog” in the structure of the teeth; he was a “rare purebred” and was considered a big game hunting dog. He was shown, but he was under-judged and got only Silver Medal.



Lamut (Tungus) Laika “Chaika” of Dmitrieva-Sulima’s breeding



*Lamut Laika “Monar” imported from the Kolyma River
region by Pfitsenmeier*

North-eastern Siberia and Central Kamchatka is a territory populated by Lamuts, former nomads with their dogs and hunters of wild reindeer in the taiga and the forest-tundra zones. By modern times, they became reindeer breeders mainly for transportation. They, as well as the Evens were often called Tungus and the Lamut Laika was called the Tungus Laika.

Doctor Slyunin wrote that in this part of the country the Lamut Dog is considered the best commercial and big game hunting dog. He described its appearance: “The commercial hunting or Lamut Dog, as locals call it, is easy to distinguish by its appearance: it must have a pointed muzzle and ears, big ribs and the hind legs shorter than the front legs”. He also indicated other traits of the breed: medium body height (?), short hair, long muzzle, strong chest muscles, long and slender legs and sanguine temperament. “Chutyo” (combination of sense of smell, hearing and vision, helping to find game) is exceptionally developed. “One peculiarity of these dogs is their expressive eyes and the peculiar colored hair pattern of circles under or above the eyes, which is why they are called “double eyed”. This dog is always in a good disposition, agile, tireless when running and intelligent”.

Slyunin distinguished the Lamut Laika from the Koryak Laika and the sled pulling Laika. He described it almost like a breed in the modern understanding of the word.

There were incipient attempts at pure breeding of these Laikas. In 1913, at the 10th Jubilee Petersburg dog show of purebred dogs there were 40 Laikas. Among them, there were 15 Lamut Laikas from the kennel of Podoroga (Pupyshev, 1936).

In 1926-1927 the authorities of Kamchatka made a survey of the dogs of the Bystrinsky Lamut district. In 35 husbandries, from 6 to 28 people per husbandry, there were 332 dogs. Among them, 60.5% were sled dogs, 25.9% hunting dogs and 13.6% puppies. There were reindeer herding dogs. The dog is irreplaceable for hunting fur bearing animals, but commercial hunting was the most profitable occupation of the Lamut. The Lamut bought powder, lead, tea, tobacco, flour, sugar, fuel and cloth with money obtained from selling furs. Red fox and sable were the most important, but the sable was excluded in 1925, because of its reintroduction in the region. In one year they killed 123 mountain sheep and 9 bears. The share of fishing increased noticeably. Traveling along the upper parts of the rivers of Kamchatka, Lamuts caught mainly golets

(*Salvelinus alpinus*) – 47.6%, which was used mainly as food for the dogs (Koerkova, 2011).

In the 1930s, Lamuts were renamed as Evens, their Laikas were called Even Laikas and Soviet cynologists paid them attention.

Prior to WWII and during its first years, M. G. Volkov studied the Even Laika mainly in Kamchatka and he put together the first detailed project of the breed standard and this quite shameful picture of the breed (see addendum).



Even (Lamut) Laika. *From Vakhrushev and Volkov, 1945*

The detailed description of typical traits of the breed by M. G. Volkov is very similar to its brief description by N. V. Slyunin. Such a similar description of typical traits of the breed by researchers from different periods of time is good evidence of the real long-term existence of the Even Laika, the dog of unsurpassable hunters and fishermen.

In 1958, wildlife biologist M. G. Volkov briefly repeated a description of the breed.

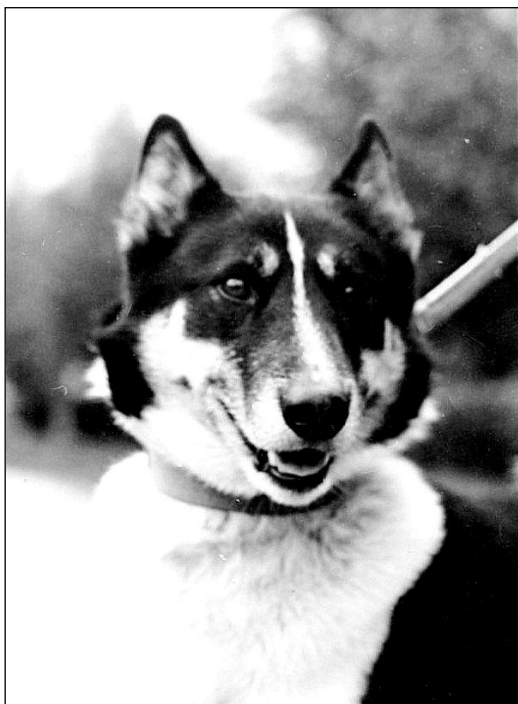
Even Laika from Kamchatka is “big, proportionally light built, tall on its legs, racy and not too heavily coated and without excessive furnishing. It is well known as the best hunting dog for sable and bear and is capable of catching foxes. My Dumnar (in the article “Dupnar” is a misprint) was 67 cm at the shoulder, but I saw Even Laika males even bigger and they were built magnificently (Dumnar had a big Gold Medal from the show).”

I. I. Shurupov (1993), a member of Cynological Soviet of Rosokhotrybolovsoyuz, wrote about the dogs of Volkov as follows.

“The immense and still not properly evaluated role in the development of the breed (West Siberian Laika, B. and O. Shiroky) was played by the Even (Lamut) male called Dumnar of M. G. Volkov, brought in 1944 from Ayanka, Penzhino

District, Kamchatka Province. It was unfairly and, possibly, deliberately forgotten. The second Even Laika male of the same owner, named Tvayan left a lesser influence on the breed through his son called Kuchukan.

We have original photographs of Kuchukan of M. G. Volkov, born on January 11, 1951, out of Tvayan and Ayanka. His rating at the show was “Excellent”.



Kuchukan, VRKOS No. 88/1

Photo by I. I. Lebedev, from archive of the authors, obtained as a gift from Ms. V. V. Volkova.

M. G. Volkov published pictures of his Kuchukan in the magazine “Okhota i okhotnichye khozyaistvo”, 1984, in Russian). In this article, through the text and captions, this dog is called “Evenkian Laika instead of “Even Laika”. This is a mistake of the editors.



Even (not “Evenkian”) big game Laika. Photo by I. I. Lebedev

Below are other Even Laikas bred by M. G. Volkov. The pictures were given to us by his widow Vera Vasilyevna Volkova. The pictures are from archive of the authors.



We add that in 1943-1948, in the Milkovsky District of Kamchatka, V. G. Volkov organized a kennel of these dogs (Account by A. V. Geits and co-authors, 1976). According to this account, in Kamchatka, these Laikas were used for hunting bear, snow goat, sable and rarely squirrel. Catching Laikas are

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mentioned often (most likely they were Even Laikas), which were chasing, catching and killing foxes. Local foxes are the biggest.

It is important to mention that V. G. Volkov could easily tell apart the Taiga Even Laika from the coastal areas Kamchatka Laika, which he called sledding.

Big game hunting Laika. In the early 90s, when surveying Laikas of Kamchatka, we could not find Even Laikas. Probably it remains in history, but its blood is still in local Kamchatkka Laika, which are often pretty big. Its blood is present in the West Siberian Laika as well. In the first issue of the All Russian Stud Book (VRKOS) we found 40 ancestors of West Siberian Laika originated from Kamchatka. Thirteen of them belonged to V. G. Volkov and 27 were ancestors of his dogs. All their names were names of local aboriginal dogs (VRKOS, 1969).



*Very typical Kamchatka Laikas in summer. Kinkil, Koryakia, 1992.
Photo by Yuri Malkov, from the archive of the authors.*

Even a sketchy analysis of the information offered here about the Even people of Kamchatka and their Laikas, such as their racy body structure and game catching ability, allows us to believe that they obtained from Yakutia both horses and Laikas of Yakut horse riders. An indirect corroboration of such a proposition can be the words of V. L. Seroshevsky (1896): “Hunting foxes has been always very important in Yakut commercial hunting. They retain it until now and it is used only here in the form of hunting on horseback and with the assistance of dogs, which they probably brought from the remote steppes.”

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Now, we will pay attention to Lamut horses or “Lamutka”. Precisely this name is used for horses brought to Kamchatka by Even people (Lamut people in the past).

Lamut Horse

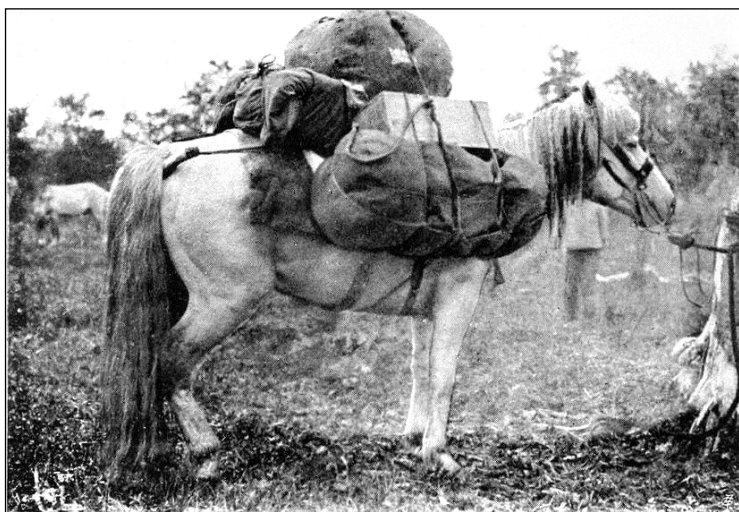
We can say from the beginning that we did not find anything about this horse in guides or special equine literature. At the same time we had a great pleasure to have personal experience of Lamut horses.

In summer, 1900, the last member of the famous Demidov family traveled to Kamchatka. Yelim Pavlovich Demidov was dissatisfied with his previous big game hunting expeditions. This travel resulted in a book by Y. P. Demidov, Prince of San Donato: “*A Shooting Trip to Kamchatka*”, 1904. In the picture is the author “on the war path at Vershina”. A specimen of this rarity with the autograph of the author is preserved in the library of the Institute of Vulcanology, in Petropavlovsk-on-Kamchatka. A worker of the Kamchatka Nature Museum, L. A. Abramyan translated the author’s preface into Russian.

The book contains first pictures of local horses (figure captions are original).



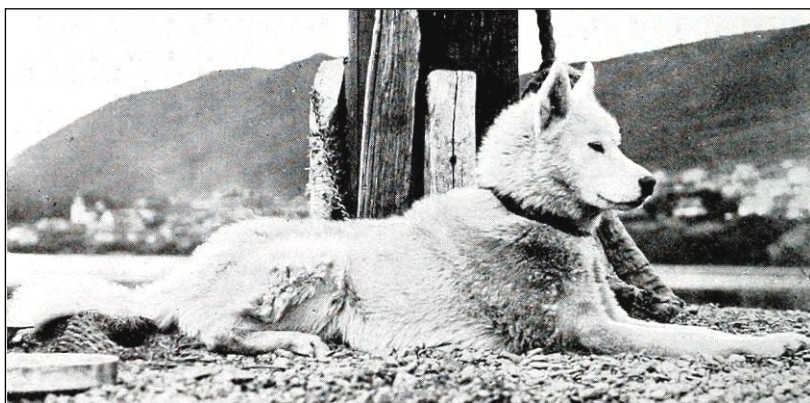
THE AUTHOR ON THE WAR-PATH AT VERSHINA



ONE OF OUR PACK-PONIES

The authors call local horses of Kamchatka “pony”. This is understandable, because western classifications describe horses of this complexion and size as ponies.

We should also mention that participants in these Kamchatka hunts could not miss the local dogs, a major domesticated animal of the peninsula, and they left six photographs of Kamchatka Laikas of their time. Although the dogs do not belong to the topic discussed in this chapter, we will show one remarkable Kamchatka Laika of Y. P. Demidov.



THE AUTHOR'S DOG, "KAM"

In 1908-1911, the Kamchatka expedition of the well known exiled ethnographer V. I. Yokhelson was his last survey in Northeast Asia. Among many of his photographs, the following one is most interesting. It shows the summer

encampment of the Lamut of Kamchatka in the early 20th century.

Contemporary Even people today, for different reasons, cannot or do not want to live in regular communities. Such encampments are called “rybalka”, because they are always located at the river bank, where both dogs and people have fish to eat and horses find rich floodplain pasture. As a rule, such rybalka serves as home of the not rich horse owning Lamut, who do not keep reindeer.

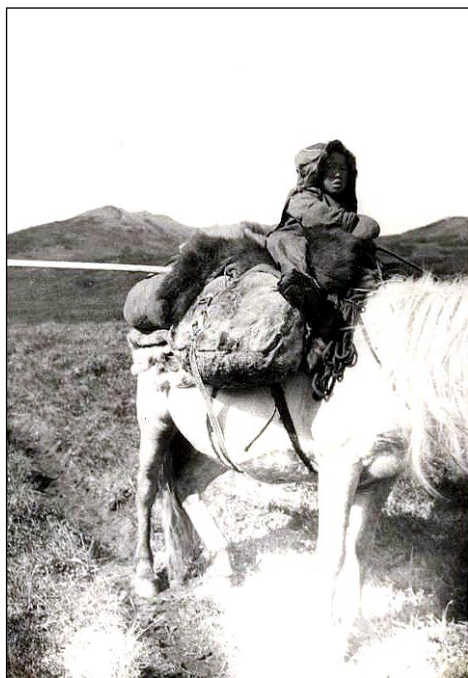
Comments by V. I. Yokhelson on the picture do not indicate the ethnicity of the people at the rybalka, but it is known that he visited Lamut. In this case, the Lamut can be recognized by his open-fronted clothing. Unlike native Kamchatka people, such as Itelmen and Koryak, who did not know horseback riding before the arrival of the Lamut, Lamut used open-fronted clothing. Such clothes gave a horse rider an advantage over a reindeer rider.



Grass yurt and frames for drying fish(smelt). The Kavran River, Kamchatka, June, 1911. Photo by V. I. Yokhelson, No.2826-154, collection of the Museum of anthropology and ethnography (MAE), St Petersburg. Comment by MAE: In summer Kamchatka people built near their homes structures of logs and sticks, covered with grass, where they cleaned and cooked fish. Nearby they also built frames for drying fish.

Swedish expeditions visited Kamchatka several times and collected the most extensive data on the nature, domesticated animals and people of Kamchatka. In the USSR, many of the results of their expeditions were ignored or forgotten for well-known reasons. Now, to the credit of the members of those expeditions, the Swedes eagerly share this valuable inheritance. For example, in 1924-1927, Rene Malaise, Ester Blenda Nordstroem and Carl Sjobblom were in

the Kamchatka expedition, known as the New Swedish Kamchatka Expedition. Now, we use valuable pictures of horses and dogs of the collection 0946 of Karl Sjoblom (Ethnographic Museum, Stockholm. Figure captions are translated from Swedish.



*Lamut on
horseback. Kamchatka,
1924-1927. 0946.0157.0001,
collection of Karl Sjoblom.*

The photograph of this horserider is important, because it shows the Lamut style of harness of Lamut horses and their use of horses.

Members of the expedition often communicated with Lamuts and actively used local horses in winter and summer.

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The Swedes did not call these horses Lamut horses, only Kamchatka horses. However, they did not call them Yakut horses, with which they were well familiar. It seems they saw them as a peculiar horse breed of Kamchatka.

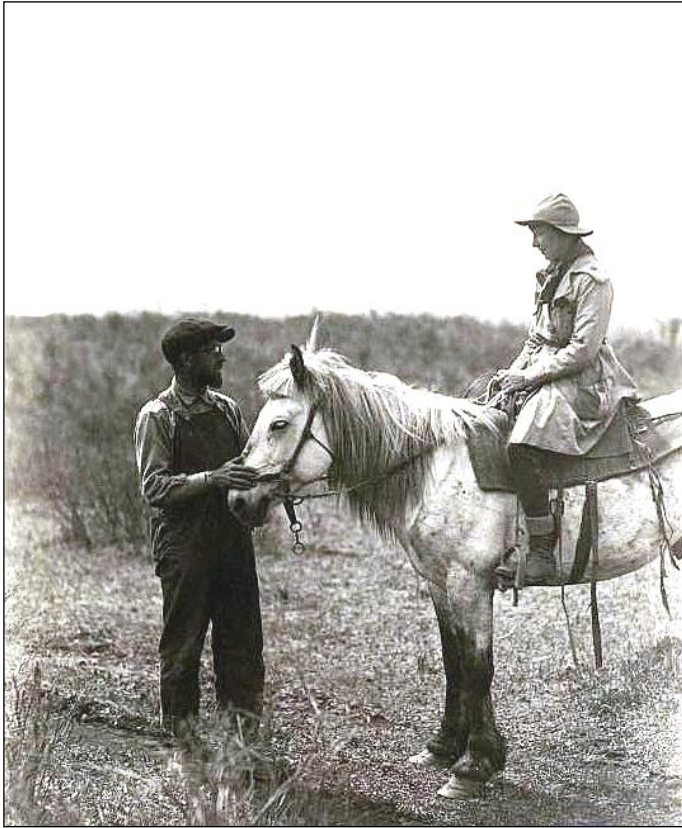


Kamchatka horse in winter, 1924-1927; 0946.0077.0001, collection of Karl Sjoblom.



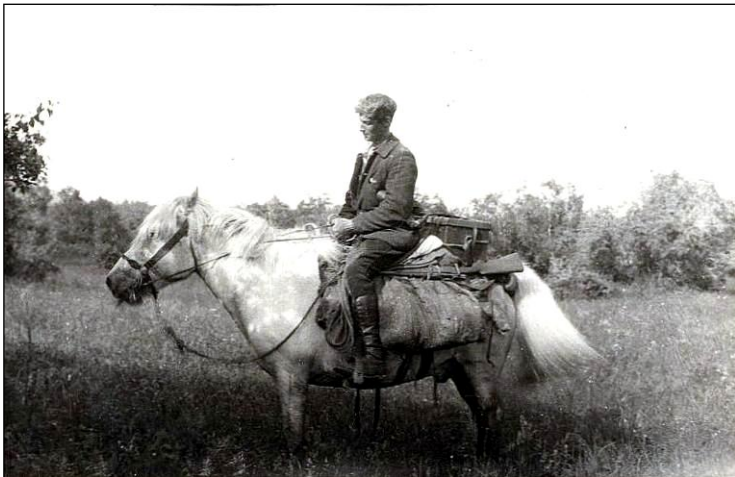
Horses in Kamchatka, 1924-1927. 0946.0323.0002, collection of Karl Sjoblom

In the following picture happy Blenda Nordstrom harnessed a friendly horse. The horse has a peculiar reticulate pattern. Such markings are characteristic of primitive horses and are often seen on horses of the Even of Kamchatka. They call such horse winged horses and they value them



*René Malaise, Blenda Nordstrom, horse, 1924-1927;
0946.0025.00 0, collection of Karl Sjoblom*

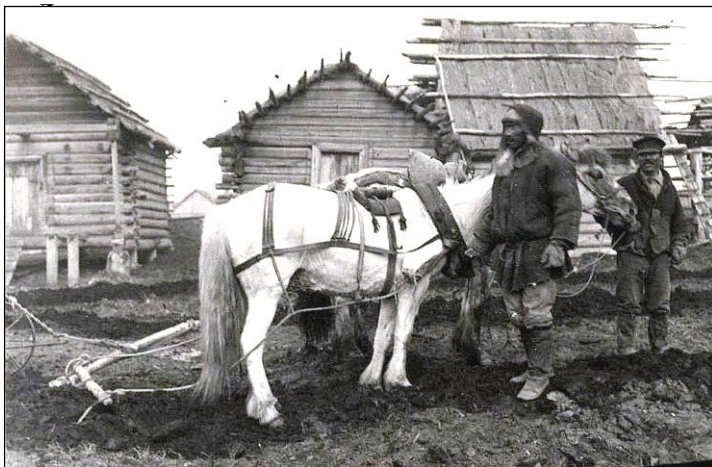
The collection of Karl Sjoblom contains many pictures of local horses of the peninsula, showing what kind of services the local people provided to the expedition. We will show some of them.



Karl Sjoblom on horseback, Kamchatka, 1924-1927, 0946.0184.000, collection of Karl Sjoblom



*Horseriders, Kamchatka, 1924-1927.
0946.0195.0001 collection of Karl Sjoblom*

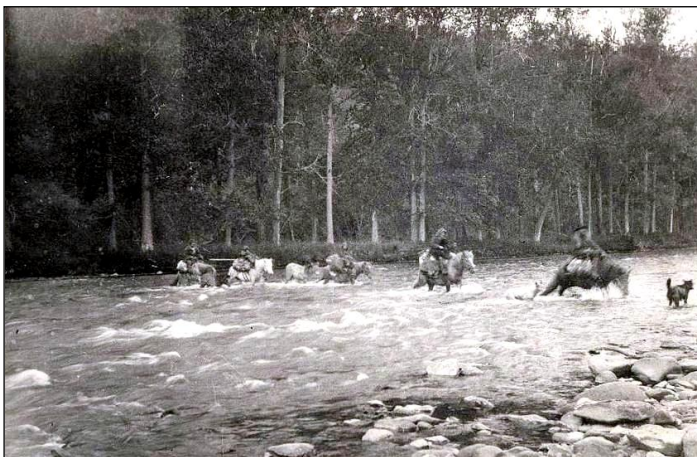


H

Horse with plough. Kamchatka, 1924-1927. 0946.0185.000; collection of Karl Sjoblom



Horses and boats called bats. A bat is a long boat made by carving out a cottonwood trunk. Kamchatka, 1924-1927; 0946.0200.0001 collection of Karl Sjoblom



*Crossing a river on horseback, Kamchatka, 1924-1927. 0946.0203.000;
collection of Karl Sjoblom*

The Swedes and local people could not do without Kamchatka Laikas in winter and summer. Therefore, we will show them again



*led dog team, Kamchatka, 1924-27. 0946.0035.0001; collection
of Karl Sjoblom*

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Gradually, Even horses became replaced with collective farm machinery. Their owners were relocated and settled in communities and provided with good houses, but not their traditional kind. Geologist organizations, which needed pack horses, obtained their own horse farms, where they kept horses of regular Russian origin. Lamut horses remained in demand only among some Evens, who remained solitary, living in their own rybalkas built the traditional way out of logs, poles and felt, catching fish for themselves and for the dogs and using horses for riding and transportation of loads.



«Rybalka of Even family from Anavgai. The home rather recalls the Yakut yurt than the conical chum of northern people. This is a Lamut innovation made in Kamchatka. On the left is a fish storage construction typical of Kamchatka, where fish is dried in the shed and storage building on the top, inaccessible to dogs and wild animals. The owner has several horses, late July, 1979. Photo by B. Shiroky.

We did not find any information about the Even horses of Kamchatka during the last decades of the USSR and asked eye witnesses of that time.

A field geologist Nikolai Treshchin reported the following.

“We did not rent horses, because the Geological Expedition had two horse farms, one at Milkovo and one at Ossor. Once I saw small, feral shaggy horses, which came up close to our team at Karymshin. There was one stallion and two mares. The stallion was very aggressive and repeatedly tried to fight our stallion and take away two or three mares. They obtain their food by digging in the snow with their hooves, like reindeer do. Those were exactly the Even (Lamut) horses. In the past, under Catherine the Second, Evens came here from East Siberia (the Lena River Basin), riding their Yakut horses, which at a later time interbred with local horses and this is how the Even horse came into existence. They inherited most of the traits of their Yakut horse ancestors.

It was long ago, almost 40 years have passed and details have been forgotten. I remember how early in the season, horse herds were driven up; there were still plenty of snow. Wild mares were similar to the one in the picture (N. Treshchin is speaking of the horse shown in the photo above: Kamchatka

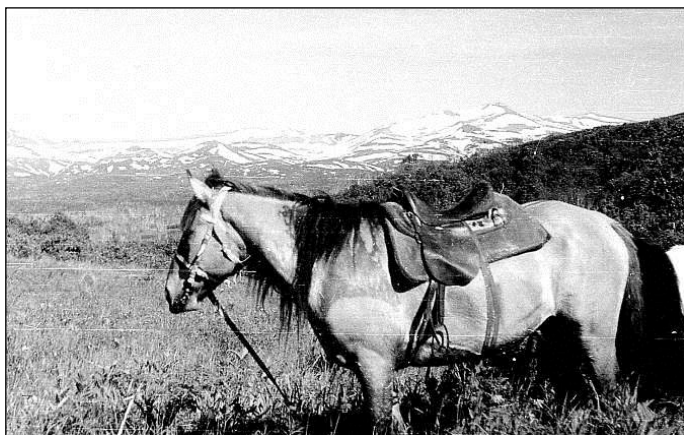
horse in winter, 1924-1927. 0946.0077.0001, collection of Karl Sjoblom, and the stallion was shaggier and with a mane and, perhaps, slightly bigger. I agree, sometimes we are not very inquisitive, and the authorities have many other problems; they say there is not enough money for research and this is unfortunate, indeed...”

Nikolai Treshchin is one of those that frequently visited uninhabited places in Kamchatka. Sedentary urbanites, visiting the Esso community, are attracted by the beautiful view of the taiga, greenhouses and a swimming pool with thermal heating, but they do not see Even horses, although they are grazing in the vicinity of the community near the river. Rarely do any of the expedition people use them, except those few who had a chance of knowing them and understood their advantages in conditions of wilderness and hunting, etc.” The authors of this article highly value Lamut horses, especially the older ones, who prefer everything natural, primeval and original....

We are well familiar with these Lamutkas, horses that are not recognized by breed. They are very primitive, smallish and predominantly light, with a drab “wild” coat color, usually with a dark stripe along the back: a zebra like pattern is not rare and they are shaggy like bears in winter. They live in the forest in small herds and dig in the snow for food. Despite their very

free way of life, they are easy to teach, very obedient and intelligent. These horses memorize roads well and one can return from hunting in the dark, trusting the horse. The horse will walk around boggy place and will not walk between close standing trees, as if it knows the size of the back pack. We were hunting already white hares on ground still without snow and riding Lamut stallions. Without dismounting, we transported killed bear: the horse does not freak out from the smell of bear.

We did not work on Lamut horses, but we saved some pictures. Their quality is not high, but they contain important information from the 60s-70s.



We always wanted to have one horse for riding. Here, one can see the characteristic reticulate pattern on the shoulders – “wings”. Evens value “winged” horses in particular. 1960s. Photo by B. Shiroky.

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The horserider shows the small size of the horse and commonly present dark stripe along the back, which is extending on the tail (a primitive trait). 1960s. Photo by B. Shiroky

Under the conditions of the expedition, we rarely had an opportunity to have a riding horse. Lamutka and other horses were usually carrying loads of up to 100 kg. With Lamut horses, unlike with other horses, there were no oats. They always had to eat natural food they found under their feet,

sometimes even on the rocky slopes of volcanoes devoid of grass.



*Transferring the geologists' encampment to a new working place.
The walk of a loaded Lamutka is synchronous with that of humans, 60s ,
photo by B. Shiroky*

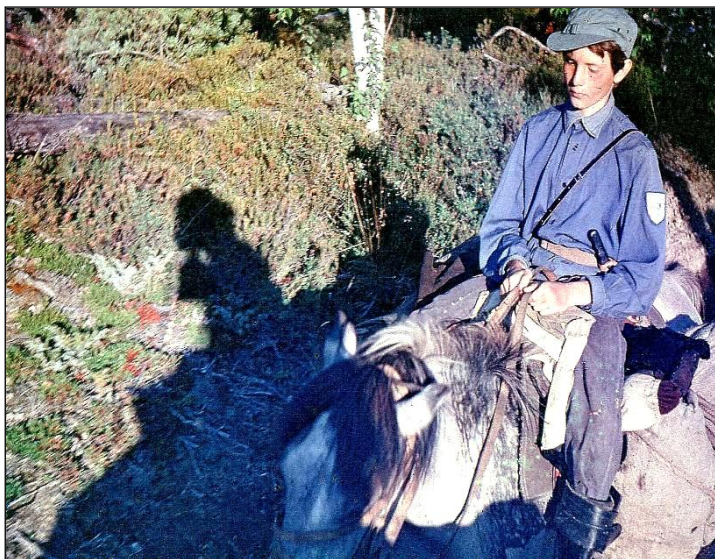
Bystrinsky Even value their horses, but they do not deny renting them to various expeditions. The pay was symbolic, as they did so because of their kindness and understanding of the importance of the work.

In the summer of 1979, a group of geologists of the Institute of Vulcanology needed horses for work on dormant volcanoes with interesting names, Alney and Chashakonja. Very soon we found a horse owner in Esso. He walked in the

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forest and brought a stallion and two mares with young horses. Using a skinning knife, he trimmed their broad hooves, which had never been shod, and asked for permission to travel to the volcanoes with us. We talked him off, loaded the horses and headed on for about 150 km. His good- bye wish sounded for a long time in our ears: “Do not lose the horses! Do not lose ...”

During the journey we took pictures on color slides, which showed up the coat color of the horses from Esso.



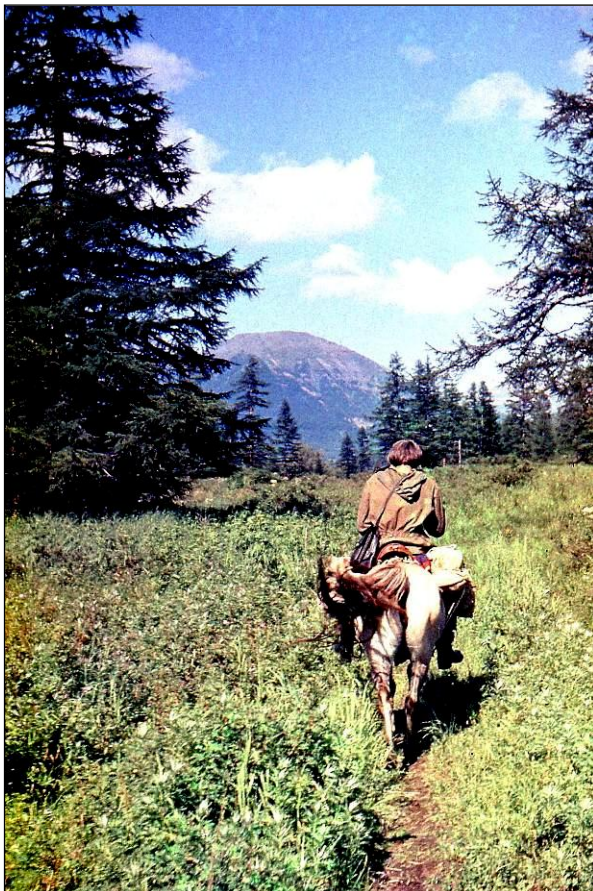
Expedition worker, Oleg Shiroky at the age of 13, riding a Lamut horse with its backpack. The coat color of the horse is mouse gray with “wings” – reticulate pattern on shoulders. Esso-Chashakonja. Late July, 1979.

Photo by B. Shiroky.

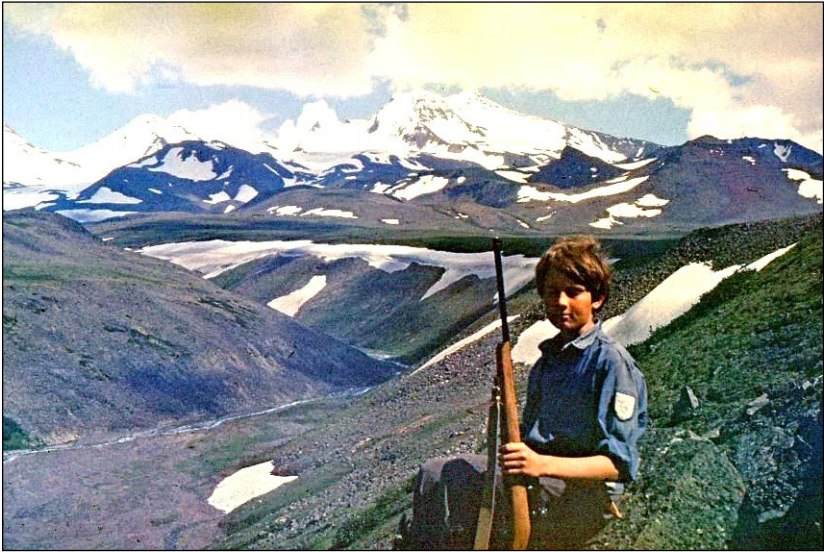


Reddish-gray Lamut mare and young horses near a creek, "Wings" are visible on their shoulders. Esso-Chashakonja. Late July, 1979. Photo by B. Shiroky.

There was not much grass on the route, but the horses of the Even did not lose weight after the trip and their hooves without horseshoes did not suffer after walking on rocky ground. Actually, horses without horseshoes are more sure footed, walking on rocky steep slopes with loose substrata.



Back packing and riding use of Lamut horses. The height of the rider allows us to estimate the size of the horse. Esso Chashakanja. Late July, 1979. Photo by B. SHiroky.



Slopes of the Chashakoja Volcano, where we worked with Lamut horses. August, 1979. Photo by B. Shiroky

We returned the horses without losing any, because the Even told us, which of the mares should be hobbled so that she would not wander away. The other horses stayed with her.

Memories of the nice experience with the Lamut horses made us dream of having them for work and recreation, which is impossible during anyone's life time.

What happens today? It is hard to find anyone even among the Kamchatka people, who can tell us something about this horse. With difficulty we found one expert and obtained

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some information from a horse specialist of Kamchatka, Natalya Yemelyanenko. Natalya has her own herd, including some Lamuts (this is how she calls horses of the Bystrinsky Evens). She is successful at organizing horse riding tourism in the exotic country of Kamchatka. She kindly shared with us her knowledge.

“Lamuts exist until now. However, the culture of keeping them never existed. At present, Lamuts have degenerated in their appearance, because of inbreeding. Because of the way they are kept, they will not last long.

Esso horses are Lamuts. They are characterized by wild type coat color patterns: gray, mouse gray, roan, and zebra like markings on the croup and legs and “wings”. What causes degeneration? Because of the inbreeding in the herd, plus the harsh conditions of keeping them (in winter herds find their food by digging in the snow), they have a poor appearance: often the croup is too sloped, often the neck sags and the back is convex. The head is also of a wild type, compare them with Przhhevsky horse. The curves are poorly pronounced and the outline is smooth. In our area this is called “utyug” (laundry iron). Because of this body structure, plus the short neck and short body, there are differences in harnessing horses. These

peculiarities did not emerge recently but very many years ago.
Reeducating local people to harness differently is impossible”.

To be continued

Primitive Aboriginal Dogs Society

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