Russians (Dul'zon 1962). But river names are only small portion of the Ket cultural legacy across today's Siberian landscape.

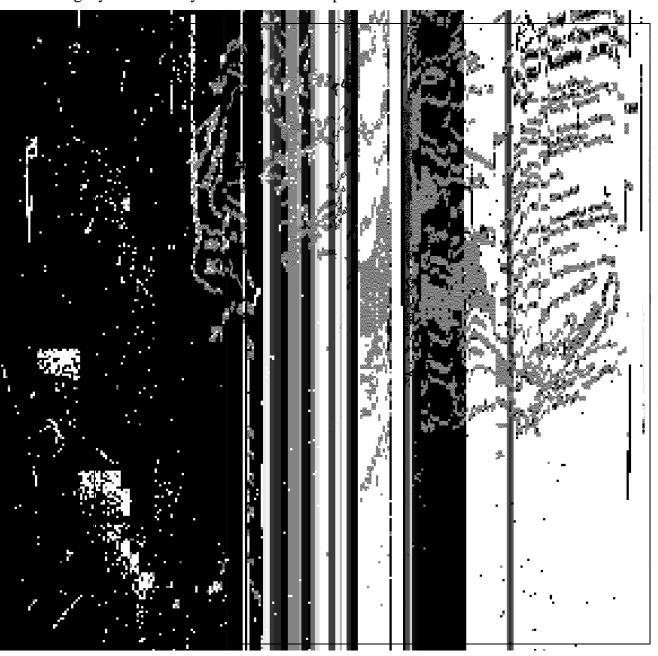


Figure 1. Native ethnic groups of central

while the forest - the setting for the group's more austere winter hunting treks - was a place of comparative danger and lack. Time itself was conceptualized as an ever-repeating cycle of birth and rebirth in which the future - unseen Td(r)Tj(X)T(Td(ur)Tj(X)Td(he)Tj(Y)Td(he)Td(he)Tj(Y)Td(he)Td(he)Tj(Y)Td(he)Td(he)Tj(Y)Td(he)Td(he)Tj(Y)Td(he)Td(he)Tj(Y)Td(he)Td(h

oth were renewed and reinvigorated through the earth in the cycle of dying and rebirth The earth was the source of both life and death for all living beings

The cosmic connection between underworld earth and sky was also conceptualized in the form of a giant tree mages of this World Tree appear on the backboard of a woman's snow sled of igure. Trees in general were regarded as powerful forces in the etilanguage tree words belong to the masculine noun class usually reserved for positive useful or powerful objects as well as for male humans and animals. Vajda. Trees were anthropomorphized to some degree and even thought to possess their own language. Trees were anthropomorphized to some degree and even thought.

n ancient larch growing on high ground near a river was typically chosen as a place for the holai or ancestor veneration site reparing this site required fashioning numerous pillars with conical anthropomorphic heads called dosn. These were regarded as children of the holai and were leaned against the living larch trunk of holai ancestor spirit itself was carved in the form of a face into the growing wood of the larch that formed the center of the site ecause its spirit was thought to inhabit the mouth of a river the *holai* site with its *dosn* normally occupied a hill nearby food were brought by successive generations to such a hill and spread before the roots of the larch Holai sites tended to be located at a distance from the summer encampments and were off limits for hunting. The holai sites of other clans were off limits entirely especially to women lest they be spirited away as brides for the dosn Similarly before some important undertaking Allel dolls were ceremonially given food and drink by the women in a family to gain their advice or protection. These objects invested with cosmic power watched over the family or clan and protected it from the ill will of alien spirits ept in a safe place away from the eyes of strangers these dolls were carefully preserved ew clothing and footwear was fashioned for them periodically and from loss or wear any damage to them was thod os Ti Td m Ti e Ti Td r Ti TdtTi TdeTi TddrTi

Tbd 6

myths existed regarding the origins of local natural features but were simply not recorded. Their ultimate origin may lie in the struggle between the et and the earlier taiga groups whom they displaced during their migrations from the south

The Yenisei and other large rivers were conceptualized as giant trees with the river mouth equated with the tree's base or roots. The river was thought to be the mother of all of its tributaries with the tributary mouth being a spot particularly endowed with spirit power. Whi

the breakup of the river's ice. The dosn or holai children of ig above were thought to swim invisibly under the ice and split it from below with their pointed heads.

I ekseenko fferings of cloth ribbons or coins were placed upon them to facilitate this assistance.

The forest was also the home of the evil witch otetam and her daughters sometimes zoomorphized as the great horned owl which were especially feared after dark t was also inhabited by the aigus or spirit of the uplands from ga'i mountain n some et legends the aigus is portrayed as a female forest mother n others the aigus is simply the bear - master of all forest animals ears were thought to be reincarnations of deceased humans who 'visited' the et When a hunter found a bear and killed it the et believed that it was the bear who had 'offered' to visit the world of humans o skill was attributed to the hunters bear s carcass had been procured the et performed an ancient rite called the ear eremony during which they consumed his flesh in a highly ritualized fashion 'hosting' the bear as their 'guest' by giving him assorted gifts and asking him various questions The carcass was ritually butchered by the older men with bones carefully disarticulated at the joints rather than broken Strips of fat were removed from the carcass in a specific order and all of the flesh was cooked and consumed including the head. The hunter responsible for finding the bear swallowed its two eyes raw arts of the skin including the nose and lips were attached to leather thongs and worn by participants in the feast The trachea and lungs were set aside and placed back inside the bear siden ended the bones were taken upland into the forest and placed in the hollow of a tree facing east. This ceremony was performed to invoke the creature's good will toward the winter hunt since the bear was a vital link between the riverine et and their crucial inland hunting grounds fter the ritual had been completed the et were careful to observe the etiquette of returning the bear's bones and major body parts to a special place in the forest The bones of animals killed during the hunt were left in similar fashion to regenerate on the east side of trees ish remains were likewise respectfully returned to the river to placate the Ulgus or water spirit

The water gave life both in the present real world as well as mythologically coording to et legend the past had seen many floods that cleansed the earth uring each deluge people and animals survived by clinging to bits of all Trip Ti ToT dts Tj Totd Tjgf fTotji

Traditionally, Ket society was divided into two moieties that exchanged marriage partners. One was called ogdadeng, or 'People of the Fire', the other engtandeng, or 'People of the Large Ski Pole Ring'. Tracks of the latter could be recognized in the snow by the larger imprint left by the ends of their ski poles. Both groups were patrilocal, with women from the opposing moiety inducted as marriage partners. Originally, each moiety had a distinct geographic territory, but already by the 19<sup>th</sup> century epidemics and encroachment by Russians and other groups led to their geographic mixing. Ultimately this system broke down entirely by the late 20th century, when inter-ethnic marriage came to be prevalent, a trend intensifying even more in recent decades (Krivonogov 2003). The historic ogdentsy near the Yelogui and the Zemshak group of the Mountain Tunguska originated from the ogdadeng moiety, while the nbak and lgit downriver along the Yenisei derived from the former engtandeng (Dolgikh 1960:144; Alekseenko 1970: 167). Even after clans representing the two originally separate marriage groups began to live side-by-side in villages, their social division was reflected in the strict observance of myriad local customs. One could not marry a woman from inside one's own moiety. It was also the custom to invite members of the opposite moiety to prepare the dead for burial, as one's own dead relative posed a danger to the whole clan. Shamans felt hindered from calling their spirit helpers while in the vicinity of newly dug graves for fear of unintentionally arousing the spirits of the deceased. Gravesites thus added a special dimension to the local landscape, and were located inland and away from hunting or camping areas. In general, the newly deceased posed a special danger to the members of their own family, clan, or moiety. Even when returning from visiting a sick person, a fire was lit for the visitor to step over for purification.

On the contrary, the Benysi VIII of PART THAN THAN THAN THAN THE BENYSI THAN THAN THE BENYSI THAN THAN THE BENYSI THE

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peoples were de'ng 'people' in a broader sense but not in the narrow sense of kyndeng. The Ket thus marked out a mental map of ethnic space to accommodate themselves with their diverse pastoral neighbors. The Yugh, a riverine people who spoke a language similar to Ket, were also regarded as a distinct ethnicity. They were assumed to be descendents of non-Ket who originally spoke a completely different language. A famous legend states that the first Ket shaman