

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

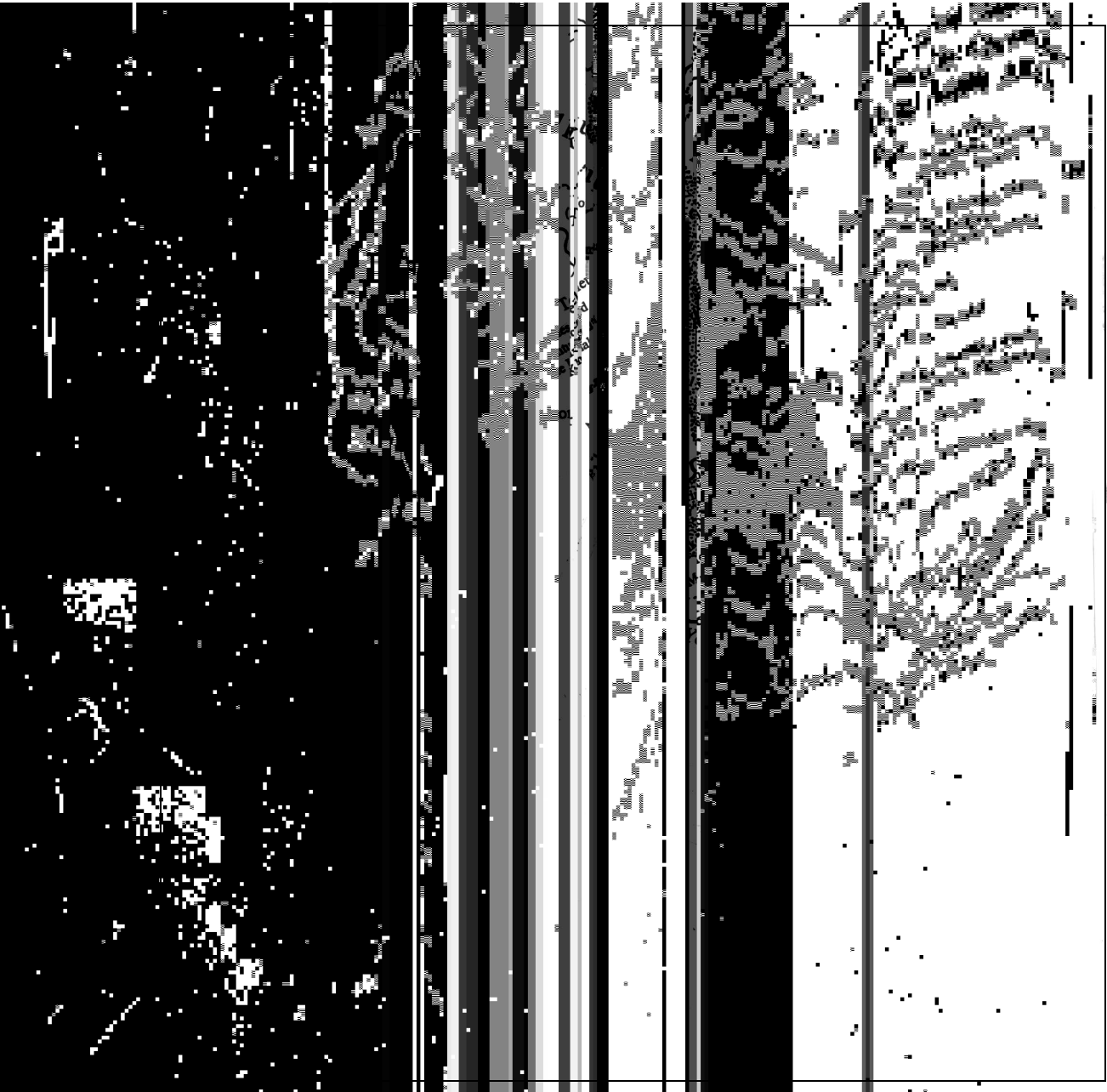


Figure 1. Native ethnic groups of central

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)Tj0T0Td(ur)Tj0T0Td(he)Tj0T0

holai

dosn

holai

holai

holai

dosn

Holai

dosn

Allel

Traditionally, Ket society was divided into two moieties that exchanged marriage partners. One was called _____, or 'People of the Fire', the other _____, 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 19th 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 _____ near the Yelogui and the _____ group of the Mountain Tunguska originated from the _____ moiety, while the _____ and _____ downriver along the Yenisei derived from the former _____ (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 _____

peoples were 'people' in a broader sense but not in the narrow sense of . 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

