

## **1. Description**

### 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

Koryak, koryak, Chukotko-Kamchatkan (2)

### 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

Kpy

### 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

The Koryak are probably indigenous inhabitants of the northeastern shores of the Sea of Okhotsk, whence they spread eastward. (3)

### 1.4 Brief history:

the Koryak once occupied a much larger area of the Russian Far East. Their overlapping borders extended to the Nivkh areas in Khabarovsk Krai until the Evens arrived, and pushed them into their present region. A smallpox epidemic in 1769-1770 and warfare with Russian Cossacks reduced the Koryak population from 10-11,000 in 1700 to 4,800 in 1800. (1)

Under the Soviet Union, a Koryak Autonomous Okrug was formed in 1931 and named for this people. Based on the local referendum in 2005, this was merged with Kamchatka Krai effective July 1, 2007.

### 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

### 1.6 Ecology:

Koryak lands are mountains and volcanic, covered in mostly Arctic tundra. Coniferous trees lie near the southern regions along the coast of the Shelekhova Bay of the Sea of Okhotsk. The northern regions inland are much colder, where only various shrubs grow, but these are enough to sustain reindeer migration. The mean temperature in winter is  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-13^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) while short summers are  $+12^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $53^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). The area they covered before Russian colonization was  $301,500\text{ km}^2$  ( $116,410\text{ mi}^2$ ), roughly corresponding to the Koryak Okrug (1)

### 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

numbering about 7,900 in the late 20th century (3) and 8,812 (2002 Census) (1),

## **2. Economy**

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

berries and roots (1)

### 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Reindeer, Salmon and other freshwater fish (1)

### 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

### 2.4 Food storage:

They used small cupboards to store the families' food, clothing and personal items. (1)

### 2.5 Sexual division of production:

Men's tasks were traditionally reindeer herding, fishing, and hunting. Women's tasks were making clothes, housekeeping, and gathering, the latter of which was replaced by gardening in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (4)

### 2.6 Land tenure:

The concept of land ownership has always been alien to Koryaks. (4)

### 2.7 Ceramics:

### 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

Members hunted together at sea in a single boat; the catch was communal property. (4)

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

For travel along rivers, Koryaks used boats that were hollowed from the whole trunk of a tree. On the sea they used single-seat and multiseat kayaks (*matew*) that were covered with sealskin. (4)

### 3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

### 4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

None they were monogamous (3)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

The distinguishing feature of marriage was working for one's future wife in her father's home. The period of work was indefinite and could last from several weeks to several years (4)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

Koryaks did not own land. The main form of property of reindeer-nomads were reindeer herds that were inherited in the male line (4)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

Traditional marriages were endogamous (4)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

4.22 Evidence for couvades

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

Respect for elders was secured by the ancestor cult (4)

4.24 Joking relationships?

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

patrilineal kinship (3)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

not only were marriages between cousins possible, but also marriages between siblings (4)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

Yes, the wedding ceremony included the "grabbing of a bride," in which the bridegroom had to touch the bride's genitals while she and her relatives attempted in every possible way to prevent him from doing so. (4)

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

Koryaks were named mainly after the place of residence, usually by the name of a river (4)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

patrilocal marriage(3)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

### **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

The history of the Koryaks, especially those who were nomadic, is filled with conflicts with neighboring peoples— Even, Yukagir, Chukchee, and keimen. The word "war" ( *tan'nicetyijnin* ) is etymologically related to the word "stranger" ( *tan'nitan* ) (4)

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

he Koryaks were usually defeated by the Even, but they pressed the Yukagir rather mercilessly (4)

4.18 Cannibalism?

### **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

Families usually gathered into groups of six or seven, forming bands. (1)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

There was no public authority among the Koryak, or any tribal or clan organization. (3) The groups relied on consensus to make decisions, resembling common small group egalitarianism. (1)

5.4 Post marital residence:

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

The patriarchal community of reindeer herders also lived in a single dwelling. There were several families in a community. (4)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

Reindeer hide beds (1)

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

5.12 Trade:

The exchange of products between Koryaks, especially between nomadic and settled Koryaks, as well as with neighboring peoples, was rather intensive. (4)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

They had common small group egalitarianism (1)

## **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

Professional and family shamanism was practiced, “transvestites” being considered the effective shamans. (3)

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

6.4 Other rituals:

Sacrifices were made to kind as well as evil spirits, with the goal of propitiating them. Among the kind spirits were the ancestors, who were worshiped at special sites. Settled Koryaks had guardian spirits for their villages. A dog was considered the most pleasing sacrifice for the spirits, especially because it would be reborn in another world and serve the ancestors. Koryak religious ideas and sacrificial practices were preserved among nomad reindeer herders (and Kereks) and survived until the establishment of Soviet rule, and in fact into the 1950s. (4)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

The cult of the Raven (Qujgin'n'aqu or Qutqin'n'aqu in Kerek-Qukki), a demiurge and creator of life on earth, was present among Koryaks, as among other northeastern Paleoasian peoples. (4)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Koryak folklore is represented in legends, tales, songs, and dances. The State Koryak Ensemble of Folk Singing and Dancing, "Mengo," is well known not only in the former Soviet Union, but in other countries as well. (4)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

Koryaks had several methods of burial: cremation, burial in the ground or at sea, and concealment of the dead in rock clefts. Some groups of settled Koryaks differentiated the method of burial according to the nature of the death. Those who died a natural death were cremated; stillborn infants were buried in the ground; those who committed suicide were left without burial. Kereks had a custom of throwing the dead into the sea. Reindeer herders preferred cremation. All the utensils and objects that the deceased would need in the other world were placed on the funeral pyre. Accompanying reindeer were intentionally harnessed incorrectly—the Koryaks believed that in the next world all things had a form diametrically opposite to things in our world. Contemporary Koryaks bury their deceased in the Russian manner, whereas reindeer herders still cremate the dead. (4)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

Koryaks practice a form of animist belief system, especially via shamanism. Koryak mythology centers around the supernatural shaman Quikil (Big-Raven), who was the first man and protector of the Koryak. (1)

## **7. Adornment**

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

Clothing was made out of reindeer hides. The men wore baggy pants and a hide shirt, which often had a hood attached to it, boots and traditional caps made of reindeer skin. The women wore the same as the men, but with a longer shirt reaching to the calves. (1)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

## **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

## **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

### **Numbered references**

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koryaks>
2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koryak\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koryak_language)
3. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/322598/Koryak>
4. <http://www.everyculture.com/Russia-Eurasia-China/Koryaks-and-Kerek.html>
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