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Author(s)	Tsumagari, Toshiro
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The Establishment and Expansion of Northern Studies: Graduate School of Letters Open Symposium Report

Toshiro TSUMAGARI

1. Inauguration of the Northern Studies Project

It has been mentioned on various occasions that “northern studies” is one of the priority subjects for Hokkaido University and the Graduate School of Letters. At the Graduate School of Letters, the “Institute for the Study of North Eurasian Cultures” played a central role, and produced excellent results including the *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of North Eurasian Cultures*. Due to staff restrictions, study centered on archaeology and cultural anthropology; occasionally, studies such as linguistics and history were added. However, when looking at the school as a whole, “northern studies” has never been, and should not be confined to, those frameworks. We believe that encapsulating diverse studies by the staff of the Graduate School with the term “northern” and having them further developed by establishing a framework of “northern studies” will lead to a new approach. This project was launched under this vision.

“The Establishment and Expansion of Northern Studies” was adopted as the 2006 Graduate School of Letters “Characteristic Educational Research Project.” Currently, there are ten members: Toshiro Tsumagari (Representative; Northern Culture Studies, Professor), Kiyohiko Kitamura (Theory and History of Arts, Professor), Takeo Kuryuzawa (Occidental History, Professor), Kimio Miyatake (History and Anthropology, Professor), Hirofumi Kato (Northern Culture Studies, Associate Professor), Yasushi Kosugi (Northern Culture Studies, Associate Professor), Toru Sasaki (Northern Culture Studies, Associate Professor), Ikuo Onishi (Western Literature, Associate Professor), Tomomi Sato (Linguistic Sciences, Associate Professor), and Toru Ikeda (Regional Sciences, Associate Professor). As one can see from this lineup, though the nucleus of this project is Northern Culture Studies, the goal is to understand “northern studies” from a much broader perspective that ranges from history, culture, language to arts, literature, and the environment.

In order to promote the establishment of our project among people both inside and outside the Graduate School, we hosted an open symposium under the theme of “Northern? The Establishment and Expansion of Northern Studies.” As part of the project, we plan to separately publish a symposium report with its details. Thus, in this paper, we report its outline. We will also discuss the supporting events that took place on the following day and future activities of this project.

2. The Hosting of the Symposium

This symposium was held on Saturday, September 30, 2006. The main venue was Room W103 of the Building for Education and Research of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hokkaido University. The program schedule was as follows:

Greetings and Explanation of the Purpose 9:30–9:40

Takeo Kuryuzawa (Graduate School of Letters, Dean)

Part 1 Northern Qualities: Presenting the Issues 9:40–12:40 (M. C.: Kiyohiko Kitamura)

- Hirofumi Kato — Born in the Tropics, Heading North: Northern Regions in the History of Man
- Akihiro Kawaguchi — Studies of Japanese History and Northern Regions
- Masato Yoshikai — Northern and Southern Regions: Ryuzo Torii, Hokkaido Imperial University and Southern China
- Toru Sasaki — Northern Regions Seen in Museums: Tradition and a New Movement in Ainu Exhibitions
- Tomomi Sato — Northern Qualities in the Ainu Language
- Hisashi Yako — Landscape Paintings of Northern Regions: Traveling Painters in Russia
- Ikuo Onishi — The Northern Image in Russian Literature
- Toru Ikeda — Issues in Environmental Studies in Northern Regions: Conservation of Natural Resources and Environmental Adaptation

Part 2 Northern Frontier: Poster Session 10:50–16:20 (Room W105)

- Yasuaki Katagiri (History and Anthropology) — The Establishment of Regional Identities and Landscape Designs
- Risa Hirota (Theory and History of Arts) — The Photographic Materials Stored at Hokkaido University: Mainly Fisheries-Related
- Yukari Nagayama (Slavic Research Center) — The Language and Culture of Kamchatkan Minorities: the Fascinating Alutor Language
- Kazuhiro Fuse (Northern Culture Studies) — The Distribution of Ceramics in Northern Boundary Areas: 12th-16th Century Hokkaido

Part 3 Review and Future Outlook of Northern Studies: Lectures 14:00–16:00 (M. C.: Kimio Miyatake)

- Toshihiko Kikuchi (Hokkaido University, Professor Emeritus) — Northern Studies by Hokkaido University: the “Research Institute for Northern Culture” and the “Institute for the Study of North Eurasian Cultures”
- Kazuyuki Tanimoto (Director, Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples; Director, Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture) — Establishing a Cultural Zone of Sounds in the Circumpolar Region

Part 4 Issues in Northern Culture Studies: Summary and General Discussion 16:20–17:40 (M. C.: Toshiro Tsumagari)
 Comments by Kazunobu Ikeya (National Museum of Ethnology, Associate Professor)
 Summary Statements by Yasushi Kosugi, Kiyohiko Kitamura, and Kimio Miyatake
 Questions and Discussion

In the following, we briefly introduce the contents of the above presentations.

In Part 1, the issues were presented by eight professors of the Graduate School; this is the nucleus of this symposium. From different fields, their own involvements with northern regions, and the possibility of their expansion and directions were presented.

From an archeological and anthropological perspective, Hirofumi Kato presented the background that man, originally a tropical species born in Africa, had spread to the north; solving this northern adaptation was a major task in the history of man. Next, Akihiro Kawaguchi (Japanese History, Associate Professor) reviewed and presented a future outlook on historic studies regarding premodern Ezo land (old Hokkaido) and modern Hokkaido; he then stressed the necessity for new northern studies that go beyond *New Hokkaido History* by Shin'ichiro Takakura. Masato Yoshikai (Asian History, Associate Professor) discussed the importance of expansion to northern regions based on accumulated southern studies that were a legacy from the period of Hokkaido Imperial University, and by noting that Ryuzo Torii in prewar years had conducted northern studies in comparison to southern studies. Toru Sasaki discussed how northern cultures had been exhibited at museums by introducing examples of the Ainu cultural exhibition. Tomomi Sato's presentation outlined characteristics of the Ainu language as a northern language, and also touched upon the future issues in Ainu language studies. Hisashi Yako (Theory and History of Arts) looked at works by Far Eastern Russian and Sakhalin painters and discussed their "foreign qualities," "political nature" and "mixed qualities." Ikuo Onishi revealed northern qualities in ethnic identity formation for the Russians in terms of literature, and how the northern image is represented in Russian literary works. Lastly, from an ecological standpoint, Toru Ikeda reported the existing conditions and problems regarding the environment of northern regions and its conservation.

These eight reported cases all vary in terms of temporal axis, target area, academic foundation, and direction of interest, thus indicating the expanded research area at the Graduate School. On the other hand, the range and subjects in "northern studies" can be extremely vague and unfocused; some listeners might have felt it was disorganized. How should we summarize and expand those wide-ranging studies as a priority area for the Graduate School? This point was discussed once again in Part 4.

In parallel with the main site, Part 2 was allocated for the poster sessions by graduate students. The goal was for the attendants to observe how the northern studies tradition has been passed down to the Graduate School of Letters and how student interest has steadily grown.

Yasuaki Katagiri pursued the issue of urban landscape design in public works projects with Hokkaido as the main subject. Risa Hirota's presentation shed light on the photographic

materials stored at Hokkaido University, centering on the investigation and introduction of fisheries-related materials. Yukari Nagayama has long conducted fieldwork on the Alutor language, a minority language of Kamchatka; the significance of researching minority languages was conveyed in the presentation. Kazuhiro Fuse explained in terms of distribution and power balance the regional differences in ceramics that had been excavated in Hokkaido.

In Part 3, two lectures were conducted by guest speakers. They were both appropriate to the theme of “Review and Future Outlook.”

Toshihiko Kikuchi’s lecture consisted of recollections of northern studies at the Hokkaido University and Faculty of Letters. According to this, Hokkaido University’s northern studies made dramatic progress in 1937 by founding the “Research Institute for Northern Culture” and publishing *Studies from the Research Institute for Northern Culture* (1939–65, 20 vols in total). After the “Institute of Eurasian Cultural Studies” was founded at the Faculty of Letters in 1964, the “Institute for the Study of North Eurasian Cultures” was founded by integrating and succeeding the “Research Institute for Northern Culture” in 1966. Its periodical, the *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of North Eurasian Cultures* (initially published in 1965 as the *Bulletin of the Institute of Eurasian Cultural Studies*; volume 2 was published in 1967 by merging with *Studies from the Research Institute for Northern Culture*) was terminated (22 vols in total) as the “Institute for the Study of North Eurasian Cultures” was closed in 1995. This lecture was significant in that these facts were unfamiliar to the present generation.

Next, Kazuyuki Tanimoto established three factors that characterize the circumpolar region from his long-term fieldwork of ethnic music. Those factors were “single-sided drums”, “purring play” and “animal onomatopoeia”. This contained fascinating information. The specific examples presented helped characterize cultural succession and dissemination in the northern regional expansion.

Part 4 featured comments, a summary, and a general discussion.

Kazunobu Ikeya, a guest commentator, formerly belonged to the “Institute for the Study of North Eurasian Cultures” (1990–95), and vigorously conducts extensive cultural anthropological research. Ikeya, while making individual references to the above eight reports and two lectures, made a proposal for the direction of northern studies for Hokkaido University. In short, in terms of methodology, we should focus on historical, comparative, and interdisciplinary approaches. In addition, the following four research axes are essential: 1) diversity of the natural environment, 2) historical transitions, 3) change in regime, and 4) cultural representation and its political nature. As demonstrated in those presentations, the important thing is to be aware of the issues on the part of individual researchers and there is no need to deliberately establish a common temporal or spatial axis. Thus, after supporting the purpose of this symposium, Ikeya urged that we succeed and expand the legacy of Hokkaido University in order to transmit northern studies in Japan to the world.

Next, three professors from the Graduate School of Letters made general comments.

Yasushi Kosugi drew attention to the fact that, from an archeological standpoint, the Japanese archipelago is located at a cultural intersection between northern adaptation and marine

adaptation because of topological and historical circumstances. He then suggested that this point of view was appropriate for northern studies.

Kiyohiko Kitamura, acknowledging that the extension of “northern qualities” could make their definition less clear, pointed out the importance of comparative and joint studies. He then urged a breakdown of the stereotypical “northern” image, and proposed northern studies as a “magnetic field” where diverse interests can be mixed and intersected.

The last speaker, Kimio Miyatake, also stated that a new type of northern studies could emerge by relativizing the concept of “northern qualities” during the colonial period and by reaffirming the various forms of northern studies.

The M. C. Toshiro Tsumagari also briefly introduced the tradition of northern language studies at the Hokkaido University Faculty of Letters. Three outstanding linguists contributed greatly to the study and education of northern languages: Mashiho Chiri (Ainu linguistics), followed by Jiro Ikegami (Tungusic linguistics, Professor Emeritus, Hokkaido University) and then, followed by Osahito Miyaoka (Eskimo linguistics, currently Professor at Osaka Gakuin University after assuming the posts of Professor Emeritus, Hokkaido University, and Professor, Kyoto University). Under the guidance of Ikegami and Miyaoka, a number of northern linguists have been nurtured.

Those comments were followed by a question-and-answer session. The discussion did not go deeply enough to have a consistent direction due to time constraints and the extensiveness of the theme, which nonetheless was not unexpected. If each of the participants renewed their awareness of northern studies at the Graduate School of Letters and found themselves motivated for future expansion, the purpose of this symposium will have been realized. This was a significant undertaking to highlight the directions and issues northern studies needed to take.

3. Symposium Supporting Events

On the following day, Sunday, October 1, the following lecture and workshop were held as symposium supporting events:

Lecture on Northern Culture 10:00–12:00 at Room W309

(co-hosted by the “Hokkaido Association of the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology” and the “Hokkaido Ethnological Society”)

Speaker: Kazunobu Ikeya (National Museum of Ethnology, Associate Professor) — Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers: What is Hunting to Mankind?

Workshop on Northern Languages 13:30–17:00 at Room W309

- Yoshiko Yamada (Graduate School of Letters, Hokkaido University) — A Functional Analysis of the Uilta Inversion
- Shinjiro Kazama (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Associate Professor) — Tungusic Plural Markers: Focusing on Udihe and Nanay
- Hideo Kirikae (Hokkai Gakuen University, Associate Professor) — The Geographical Recognition of the Ainu: ‘Up’ and ‘Down’

Ikeya's lecture featured the distribution and transition of the hunting culture based on his own extensive fieldworks that covered Africa to Chukotka at the northeast end of Eurasia. The detailed report by Takami Kuwayama (History and Anthropology, Professor), who performed as an M. C. on that day, will be featured in the *Hokkaido Journal of Ethnology*, vol. 3 (Hokkaido Ethnological Society, March, 2007).

Although the "Workshop on the Northern Languages" is not a fixed organization, a series of workshops of the projects by the "Grant-in-Aid for the Scientific Research" has been conducted mainly by the present and former members of Hokkaido University under the leadership of Tsumagari. The presenters on that day were also a current graduate student and former students of the Hokkaido University School of Linguistics. All presentations will be published in the form of an academic paper in *Languages of the North Pacific Rim* vol. 14 (ed. Tsumagari; Hokkaido University Graduate School of Letters; to be published as one of the reports of our project in March, 2007).

4. Future Expansion

This symposium was the starting point for new northern studies at the Graduate School of Letters. Thus it must be continued and expanded one way or another in the future. Yet, as unintentionally demonstrated in the symposium, it is not practical to prescribe "northern studies" by a certain temporal or spatial axis or methodology considering the project's necessary diversity. What the project should aim at is to establish an arena to summarize and present, under the common terms called "northern qualities," the diverse disciplines that the Graduate School contains. Specifically, it is about launching the publication of periodic journals on northern studies, promoting publications such as monographs and anthologies, offering information services to citizens through extension courses and the website*, and providing undergraduate and graduate students with lectures. It would be particularly important for young students to have their own perspectives on northern regions, which will be a key to future expansion.

We hope to gain further understanding from inside and outside the Graduate School.

*<http://www.hucc.hokudai.ac.jp/~r16749/hoppouPJ/index.html>