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Author(s)	マイェヴィチ, アルフレト F.; 井上, 紘一//訳
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## **Why ?**

### **Unveiling a monument to B. Piłsudski in Shiraoi**

**Alfred F. Majewicz**

Civilization is product of all mankind: virtually, every individual contributes, with hardly any exceptions – even those short-living, untimely passing away, or refusing participation in any way, for it is them who shape and sharpen our most subtle feelings and most profound pieces of experience. Individual contribution depends on inborn talents and skills, abilities and potential, features of character, circumstances, etc.

There are individuals who, due to some lucky coincidence of all such factors, find themselves in the position, or are destined, to contribute more, so that the society decides or chooses to commemorate their merits by immortalizing them in their collective memory, making thus them part of its heritage. Their contributions live on, are cherished, and serve despite the physical non-being of the contributors, their names are inscribed in the annals of history, their biographies and portraits appear on respective pages of handbooks, encyclopedias, and the like. Contributions of some are perceived as monumental, deserving erecting special monuments, so that the collective memory of such contributors be constantly reinforced and alive.

To be sure, false monuments forcibly imposed can proliferate – fortunately, only to be destroyed in either peaceful or violent moments of victory of truth over false “greatness”. A solid gabbro-diorite monument to Bronisław Piłsudski by the leading Sakhalin sculptor Vladimir Chebotarev was being erected in the center of the 200-thousand-populated capital of the Sakhalin Oblast, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, precisely at the time when dozens of monuments of “the greatest among the greatest” communist idols, Lenin, Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky, etc., were being felled on the entire territories of the still existing Soviet Union and its involuntary “brotherly” allies, Moscow and Warsaw included. One should remember at this point that the very name *Piłsudski* was among the most sensitive ones in the “Soviet bloc” due to Bronisław’s younger brother Józef Piłsudski’s victory over Soviet Russia’s Red Army in the Polish-Russian war of 1920.

Why was the event possible and why the Bronisław Piłsudski monument was erected in Sakhalin?

It seems that the following developments were instrumental and crucial in the case. First, it doubtlessly was the drastic change in the USSR international and home policy harbingered by Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and *perestroika* which made the island of Sakhalin accessible. Second, again doubtlessly, it was the international research project labeled ICRAAP (acronym for *International Committee for the Restoration and Assessment of Bronisław Piłsudski’s Work*), coordinated by the Osaka National Museum of Ethnology and carried out at Hokkaido University with its prime goal to restore and retrieve the contents of the first ever made, and therefore the oldest, sound records of the Ainu language and folklore preserved on Edison-system wax cylinders produced by none else than Bronisław Piłsudski in 1902–1903 on location in Sakhalin and Hokkaido, also in Shiraoi. To secure at least some positive results of the initially extremely uncertain venture, two further goals were added to the project, namely the publication of Piłsudski’s dispersed and hardly accessible writings on, and



related to, the Ainu in the form of “collected works” in English to make them available to the global academic audience, and the organization of an international conference to share with scholars interested the achievements, failures, and conclusions emerging from it, under the assumption that even if the cylinder contents recovery attempt turn out to be a failure, we still can discuss problems met with and reasons why we failed.

The recovery results of the contents recorded by Piłsudski surpassed the 2% success anticipation and the planned conference took place on September 16–20, 1985, at Hokkaido University under the title “International Symposium on B. Piłsudski’s Phonographic Records and the Ainu Culture”. The event attracted 148 scholars and specialists from ten countries (Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, USSR, and USA) and, in fact, it was the first ever *international conference* of significant proportions on the Ainu and their culture.

The entire project draw also attraction of mass media in Japan and gradually outside it. *Hokkaido Shimbun* reported on its progress on a regular base and recorded its every breaking point and moment and later released a popular book on the project (Sakikawa 1987), NHK produced two documentaries, one for its prestigious prime time *Special program* [特集] series entitled “The *yukars* that were silent for eighty years – a secret history of wax cylinder recordings of the Sakhalin Ainu folklore” [ユーカラ 沈黙の 80 年～樺太アイヌ蠟管秘話], and one for its Educational channel entitled “Sakhalin Ainu voice of nostalgia” [樺太アイヌ望郷の声], both created by Takashi Yamagishi [山岸嵩] who also drove the subject into Japanese schools – a seventeen-page reading passage on Piłsudski’s cylinders and attempts at recovering their contents appeared in the “language and culture” section of a Japanese high-school handbook of the “national” (i.e. Japanese) language (Yamagishi 1990, 196–212). Today, the number of documentary films devoted to Bronisław Piłsudski reached 13, while the total number of publications related to him and his materials surpassed one thousand, many of them having roots in the ICRAP research project.

A number of catalogs of Piłsudski’s impressive ethnographical collections were published, and a number of exhibitions of these collections, or rather their fragments (the collections themselves are said to be in their majority too big to be exhibited completely), took place (actually, one entitled “Ainu culture as seen from Russia” is currently on display in Otaru City Museum [小樽市総合博物館]), and the tunes of Ainu songs emerging from the technological noise of the miraculously surviving phonographic cylinders inspired even a musical for children composed by Mariko Hosokawa and staged in Sapporo, a song from which, praising splendid stories “heard coming out from the wax cylinders of uncle Piłsudski” (for words and musical notation see CWBP 3, 789–90), was at one time sung by school children all over Hokkaido.

The echoes of the project reached also Sakhalin – the *project* but not the *person*: as a scholar and leading explorer of the island Bronisław Piłsudski had been well-known and highly valued there, his name being even given to a mountain in southern Sakhalin and thus firmly introduced on the maps, and Sakhalin Regional Museum, actually until recently the leading cultural, educational, and scholarly institution on the entire territory of the Sakhalin Oblast, cherished his collections as the principal assets preserved there, and considered him, together with the prominent ethnologist Lev Shternberg as the founding fathers of the museum. It was in the Museum that the idea was born to convene the second international conference on Piłsudski and his heritage on its premises in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and in its branch in the urban-type settlement of Nogliki, some 600 kilometers to the north. The very idea sounded at that time like a science-fiction, for until not long before the territory was “closed”, almost completely off limits to foreigners and even ordinary Soviet citizens could go there on special permits, to the extent that there had been no hesitation to shoot down a Korean jumbo-jet airliner with 269 passengers and crew, a US congressman included, September 1, 1983, but – with the approval of the authorities – the conference named “Bronislav Osipovich Piłsudskiy as a Researcher of Sakhalin Aboriginal Peoples” (Б. О. Пилсудский – исследователь народов Сахалина) did take place on

October 30–November 2, 1991. The decisive arguments were the fact that the first such conference had taken place in Japan and the necessity to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Bronisław, “one among those who contributed mostly to Sakhalin and its development and prosperity”.

The German thinker Karl Marx wrote in his 1845 “Theses on Feuerbach” [*Thesen über Feuerbach*, These 11] that “the philosophers have so far only *interpreted* the world in various ways – the point, however, is to *change* it” [die Philosophen haben die Welt nur verschieden *interpretiert*; es kömmt darauf an, sie zu *verändern*]. The conference met that postulate of Marx and did the impossible: as the first international meeting of such proportions ever in the history of the island, it provided the first opportunity for scholars from Russia and Sakhalin in particular, Western Europe, the USA, and Japan to meet together and triggered mutual academic cooperation, exchange of persons and ideas, and numerous research projects, and thus enormously contributed to the opening of the entire Sakhalin Region to the outside world as well as to the opening of the outside world to the people of the Region.

Among the highlights of the Sakhalin Piłsudski’s birthday anniversary conference was the unveiling of his monument in front of the Sakhalin Regional Museum [サハリン州郷土博物館] building, indisputably the most beautiful architectonic structure on the entire territory of the Sakhalin Oblast, designed by Yoshio Kaizuka [貝塚良雄(1900–1974)] and erected in 1937 by the Japanese to host the Karafuto Government Museum [樺太庁博物館] in Toyohara. Within a relatively short time Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk became the global center of studies on Bronisław Piłsudski and a Mecca for specialists from all over the world following the foundation of the Bronisław Piłsudski Heritage Institute housed by the Sakhalin Regional Museum and publishing its own impressive high-quality journal – we have here to do with a rather rare occurrence of an academic journal devoted exclusively to the study of the biography and heritage of one researcher. So far, 16 volumes of the journal appeared in print, and numerous other important works have also been released under the auspices of the Institute, several volumes of his previously unpublished materials, two volumes of his correspondence with Lev Shternberg, and an extensive biography covering the Sakhalin period of his life (Latyshev 2008) included.

At this point, it must be emphasized that the Sakhalin community erected the monument to Piłsudski not only to honor and commemorate a prominent scholar, researcher, and explorer of their homeland but – and perhaps above all – because of the outstanding features of his personal character, such as empathy ~ sympathy ~ compassion with exceptional inclination and constant readiness to selflessly assist and act for the benefit of others, unhesitatingly sacrificing himself and his all possessions, however meager, to stand up to his high ideals.

He got deeply engaged in research on the aborigines of the land that by an unfortunate twist of fate became his prison and vale of misery by far not for the sake of satisfying his interests or enlarging knowledge but in the first place because of his emotional identification with those weak, oppressed, discriminated, doomed. To quote his own words:

“The whole 18 years and more of my sojourn in the Far East was involuntary. Constantly longing to return to my native land, I strove as much as I could to get rid of the painful feeling that I was an exile, in bondage and torn from all that was dearest to me. I therefore naturally felt attracted towards the natives of Saghalien, who alone had a true affection for that country, their immemorial dwelling-place, detested by those who formed the penal colony there. When in contact with these children of nature whom the invasion of an utterly different form of civilisation had bewildered, I knew that I possessed some power and helpfulness, even though deprived of every right, and during the worst years of my existence. Besides, [...] I have always endeavoured to live and act so as not to be numbered amongst the hateful destroyers of individual and national rights. I have felt deep pleasure in conversing with men of another race in their own language [...]. I know by my own heart [...] that for the life of the soul, one’s native speech is

what the sun is for organic life: beaming upon it, giving it warmth, feeling, and disposing it to disclose its secret places, and to manifest the treasures hidden away in its depths. It has been pleasant to me to bring some joy and hope for a better future into the minds of these simple tribesmen, troubled by reason of the hardships of life, which continually increase. The hearty laughter of amused children, the tears of emotion in the eyes of kind women, a faint smile of gratitude on the face of a sick man, exclamations of approval, or a light tap on the shoulder given by a good friend as a sign that he was pleased: such was the balm with which I willingly relieved the hardships of my fate” (CWBP 2, 8–9).

“Our mutually shared misery, though differently perceived, and the same sincere and hearty love for our respective Motherlands, the cradles of our existence – all this brought us together and made us love one another” (CWBP 1, 144).

From Piłsudski’s own writings but also from numerous testimonies of many others who happened to meet and talk to him and to others who knew him, or to see him in action, it is evident that he was firmly integrated in the Ainu and Nivhgu communities, enjoyed absolute trustfulness, was regarded by them as just one of them – most probably to the extent no other outsider ever was. Finding that, deprived of their rights and access to their traditionally owned and used hunting grounds and fishing lots by both the Russian as well as the Japanese conquistadors, the aborigines could hardly secure sufficient amount of food, and that prospects for their very existence became threatened, he started introducing new, advanced and completely unknown to them previously, forms of sustainability, like growing potatoes, fish salting, and animal husbandry. He represented the interests of the Ainu in confrontation with the Russians and also the Japanese by serving as defender of, and spokesman for, the aborigines oppressed by the regulations and laws imposed by the new rulers they could neither comprehend nor approve of, writing petitions or explaining the aboriginal point of view. In special memoranda, prepared for both the Russian and Japanese authorities, he postulated competently elaborated systems of aboriginal self-government, education, health care, and social and public security. To demonstrate it working, he himself devoted much of his time to curing wounds and common diseases, and to teaching and preparing local teachers for the school he himself had founded and built with resources obtained from the Sakhalin Military Governor for conducting aboriginal population census ordered by the Tsar of Russia. He was not only personally acquainted with all the living shamans of his time on Sakhalin but most of them considered him to be their close friend, confidant, or even “elder brother” in the honorific sense. The confidence of the Ainu in Piłsudski was enormous and seemingly limitless – they considered him to be almost almighty. Let the Ainu speak themselves:

“At present it is the Japanese who administer the village, for the time being without any participation of, and consent from, the Ainu, [...] The Japanese seized and took possession of the lodges on the seashore that belonged to Bafunke and to Monitakhno and did not give them any other fishing lots as replacement. [...] Nobody is engaged in teaching the Ainu. [...] Bafunke [who] works now as a *starosta* [...] went to Tokyo to complain about such state of affairs. [...] Feel pity on us. They say that not far from Ussoro there is a very good place for the catch of herring. It would be good if you could receive it from the Tsar of Russia and hand it over to us. We would then send our people to fish there. [...] Feel pity on us. Help us to obtain that fishing lot near Ussoro. [...] As I informed you, if the Japanese administer the fishing conveniences, we, the inhabitants of our villages, will grieve. They do not allow us to fish with nets from the shore. [...] But now it is harder because of the Japanese officials who wish the Ainu to adopt the Japanese way of living, but the Ainu resist to accept at once a completely different model of life. They

prohibit us to catch much fish and to fish with nets from the shore. That is very bad. [...] Feel pity on us. Ask the Tsar of Russia to allot us up to three fishing lots in Siberia because there are no good places to catch fish in our village. There are good places on the other side of the bay but they all are in the hands of the ruling influential Japanese. [...] Feel a pity and reply immediately. [...] Please, feel pity on us and help me to obtain two good fishing lots in Siberia, for even the Japanese sympathize with us. If you speak with Russian officials in Russian and they will help us even a little, I shall be very grateful and happy; [...] If the fishing lot [...] is in Kamchatka, it will be also good” (CWBP 3, 723–27).

Bronisław entered the Ainu community by marrying an Ainu wife with whom he fathered two children. Accusations that he abandoned his Ainu family in view of the existing documentation turn out to be unfair and inaccurate: he went back to Sakhalin with the special purpose to take along his family when an opportunity occurred to regain personal freedom (it was the Ainu decision to refuse) and later made every effort to get reunited with his family (none other than one of the greatest scholars of his time Franz Boas secured money to enable him to go to Sakhalin and Hokkaido to continue the studies on the Ainu)<sup>1</sup>.

Piłsudski’s contribution to scholarship in general, and to our knowledge about the Ainu and their language and culture was recognized almost immediately after publication. His texts started being translated into Japanese by such scholars as Ryuzo Torii, Mashiho Chiri, Bunjiro and Kan Wada, continued by Hisakazu Fujimura and his group and recently by Yuzuru Tonai, were praised by such scholars as Kyosuke Kindaichi and Shichiro Murayama. Boas characterized the value of his materials in 1908 in the following words: “I am reasonably certain from what I know about it that it is exceedingly unlikely that material of this kind could ever be duplicated”<sup>2</sup>; fifty years later Pierre Naert (1958: 37) wrote about Piłsudski’s *Materials...*: “the texts in the Sakhalin Ainu language, precisely localized and well transcribed with the phonetic notation worked out in cooperation with Father Rousselot<sup>3</sup>, constitute actually [...] the best source for our knowledge of the Sakhalin dialects” [...], (which Lindquist (1960: 8) further strengthened: “as I refer to PN[aert]’s work for a detailed bibliography, I venture to mention only one: Bronisław Piłsudski *Materials* [... of] 1912”<sup>4</sup>, and seventy years later, the noted Japanologist and translator of Ainu (*yukar*), Ryukyuan (*omoro* songs) and Ancient Japanese (*Kojiki* of 712) texts into English, Donald L. Philippi (1979: 18), abode by the opinion: “it is a work of primary importance in studying the Sakhalin Ainu language and folklore”. The 1912 *Materials...* without even the slightest doubt should be ranked among the works of such standing, meaning, and importance in world scholarship: it is, and will continue to be, considered the ultimate source on the Sakhalin Ainu oral tradition and its language<sup>5</sup>.

The Sakhalinians honored Bronisław Piłsudski with his monument as a person who rendered exceptionally great service to their island country, as a scholar of long-lasting and established global recognition, and as a man of virtues and values. Why should the Japanese and Ainu people, why should the Hokkaido and Shiraoui people do the same? Or, should they do it at all?

The good reasons for are precisely the same as in the Sakhalin case. It is true that Piłsudski did not explore and contribute to the development of Hokkaido to the same degree and extent. But – was he given a chance? It was the Japanese who considered Piłsudski and Waclaw Sieroszewski, a noted expert on the Yakuts and later a prolific novelist, who came together in the summer of 1903 to study the Hokkaido Ainu, *personae non gratae* and successfully advised them to leave shortly after the beginning of their expedition. But even under such circumstances Hokkaido and Japan is far from being absent in his writings, his descendants now living in Japan stem from here, and it was Shiraoui where the two scholars started their Hokkaido fieldwork contributing to results now recognized worldwide<sup>6</sup>. Piłsudski’s heritage is also heritage of the Ainu, of Shiraoui and Biratori, and of Hokkaido and Japan. And of Russia, Lithuania, and Poland as well.

<sup>1</sup> An extensive biography of Bronisław Piłsudski (Sawada & Inoue) appeared in preprint in 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of June 6, 1908, to Arthur Curtis James patroning the American Museum of Natural History, preserved with Franz Boas's archives in the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, here quoted after Inoue 2003: 159.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Pierre Rousselot (1846–1924) was one of the founders of experimental phonetics and author of “Phonétique d’un groupe d’Ainos” (*Revue de Phonétique* 2 (Paris 1912), 5–49). Piłsudski learned how to record his Ainu texts in writing directly from Rousselot in London.

<sup>4</sup> Due to writing system differences, it is particularly evident from, and visible in, bibliographies of numerous Japanese-language publications related to the Ainu when Piłsudski 1912 is the only foreign source cited.

<sup>5</sup> Three main factors contribute to its uniqueness and superiority in the discipline:

1) the material offered by the book turned out to be the richest and most competently collected of all the field data accumulated in the times when the Sakhalin Ainu still cultivated their original way of living, their customs, rituals, their language and their traditions retained in their specific archaic tongue in memories of individuals passing them over to younger generations and hardly commonly known, and its author actively participated in all the ups and downs of that life, festivals, rituals, etc., while his command of the language was expert and flawless;

2) its author was fortunate to work under one of the best academic supervisors available at the time of the compilation of the book – Jagiellonian University professor Jan Rozwadowski (1867–1935), one of the best linguists of his time, author of the classical work *Wortbildung und Wortbedeutung* published in Leipzig in 1904, and the supervisor of the English metalanguage of the book collaborating with both Piłsudski and Rozwadowski was Michał Seweryn Dziewicki, teacher of English at Jagiellonian University and one of the pioneers of academic English studies on the Polish soil;

3) no attempt to collect data comparable in standard and in size to what the book under concern offers was made before the Sakhalin Ainu underwent the process of complete acculturation as people losing their language and culture and desperately striving to melt with and finally disappear among the surrounding omnipotent, and uncompromising Japanese.

<sup>6</sup> In 1926 Sieroszewski published a belletristic account on their 1903 expedition, republished several times, translated into English, Czech, Russian, and recently also Japanese.

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