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## IN THIS ISSUE

### Artiom Mesheznikov

Seven New Fragments of the Sanskrit Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra  
(manuscript SI 6781) in the Serindia Collection (IOM, RAS) **3**

### Kristina Korosteleva, Alla Sizova

Tibetan Birchbark Manuscripts in the Serindian Collection  
of the IOM, RAS: Restoration and Identification **29**

### Tatiana A. Pang, Giovanni Stary

The Content and Concordance of the Chapters from  
the Manchu-Chinese Manuscript *Emu Tanggū Orin Sakda-i*  
*Gisun Sarkiyan* 百二老人語錄 Kept in the IOM, RAS **62**

### Anastasiia Smirnova

Kashmir Under the Influence of Nadir Shah's Indian Campaign  
(1738–39) (According to the Persian-Language Manuscript  
of the 18th c.) **80**

### Kamilla A. Alieva

Some Comments on Usage of Analytical form *-p bar-*  
in the Old Uyghur Language **87**

### Vasilii V. Shchepkin

The Northern Studies Collection of the Hokkaido University Library  
as the Largest Repository of Japanese Language Sources  
on the History of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands in the 17th-19th cc. **96**

### Hartmut Walravens

From the Kalmuck Steppes to Heinrich Heine **109**

### Alexey Lushchenko, Tatiana Ermakova

Handwritten Materials in Japanese from O.O. Rosenberg's  
Personal Archive Kept at the IOM, RAS **123**

### ON THE COVER:

Pl. 5. Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences.  
The Serindian collection of the IOM, RAS. Birchbark manuscript SI 6558 after restoration  
(recto).

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Vasilii V. Shchepkin

## **The Northern Studies Collection of the Hokkaido University Library as the Major Repository of Sources on the History of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands<sup>1</sup>**

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*Abstract:* The article traces the formation and development of the Northern Studies Collection at the Hokkaido University Library, the largest collection of Japanese written sources on the history of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands in the 17th–19th cc. in Japan and beyond. This region was involved in trade relations with Japanese merchants under the control of the Matsumae clan, and later was partly administered by the Tokugawa shogunate. The Northern Studies Collection of the Hokkaido University Library is based on written sources that were collected and copied nationwide for the compilation of an official history of Hokkaido under the auspices of the island's governorship in the 1910s–1930s. During the preparation of the catalog in the 1970s and 1980s, the collection was also enriched with copies of many sources from other collections in Japan. Thus, the Northern Studies Collection can be used to reconstruct a map of all the centers for storing sources on the history of the region in Japan. As this extensive collection is closely related to the history of the Northern Studies Collection Department and its predecessor, the Northern Cultures Research Department of the Hokkaido University, the history of these two branches is also traced in the article.

*Key words:* Sakhalin, Kuril Islands, Ainu, written sources, manuscripts, collections, archives

### **Introduction**

Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, today under jurisdiction of the Russian Federation as the Sakhalin Oblast, have followed a unique historical trajectory due to their geographical location. Since ancient times, the islands, being bridges between Primorye, Kamchatka and the Japanese archipelago, have served as a contact zone for numerous peoples of the region, with trade

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and fishing routes passing through them and complex ethnic and cultural processes taking place there. At the same time, the region around the Sea of Okhotsk was, until modern times, on the periphery of major states — China, Japan, and, from the 17th c., Russia — and as a consequence the number of written sources on its history, as well as attention paid to it by “state” historians, was very limited. The main indigenous population of the islands, the Ainu and Nivkhs, had neither statehood nor written language, and therefore left behind no narrative or documentary sources on the history of their native lands. In the 19th and 20th cc., Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands became the object of territorial demarcation between Japan and Russia, which affected the fate of the indigenous population of the islands and created lacunas in the historiography of the region in modern times. All this makes the contemporary Sakhalin Oblast a unique region with a specific situation in the field of historiography: depending on the period under study, scholars have to rely on sources of very different origin — Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Manchu, European, as well as on data from related sciences — anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, folkloristics and genetics. This constitutes a serious problem for research.

Nevertheless, the period from the 17th to the beginning of the 20th c. was marked by a sharp increase in the number of written sources on the history of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, which is associated with the incorporation of the Pacific coast of Northeast Eurasia into the Russian Empire and the process of territorial demarcation with Japan that began after that. The interest of the Japanese military government under the leadership of the Tokugawa shoguns, as well as of individual Japanese scholars, in the northern boundaries of the Japanese archipelago in the second half of the 18th c. was stimulated by the information about the advance of Russian pioneers southward along the ridge of the Kuril Islands. Moreover, because of this process, the number of written sources in Japanese, especially for the period from the late 18th to the early 20th cc., has become much greater than in other languages, including Russian. This gives rise to an important scientific and organizational task: to study and introduce into the Russian scientific circulation the corpus of sources in Japanese on the history of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands of the 17th to early 20th cc. The project supported by the Russian Science Foundation to create an annotated catalog of these sources is aimed at solving this problem.

The annotated catalog of Japanese manuscript and woodblock sources on Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands from the collection of the

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Hokkaido University Library<sup>2</sup> will be used as the basis for the future catalog. This collection is based on written sources that were collected and copied nationwide for the compilation of an official history of Hokkaido under the auspices of the island's governorship in the 1910s–1930s. During the catalog preparation phase, the collection was also enriched with copies of many sources from other collections in Japan. Thus, the collection of the Hokkaido University Library can be used to locate all the centers for storing sources on the history of the region in Japan. This article examines this largest collection of materials on this research topic in Japan and beyond, traces the history of its formation, and gives a brief description of other collections in Japan. In my opinion, this will also serve as a justification for choosing the above-mentioned catalog as the basis for the planned catalog in Russian.

### **The Northern Studies Collection of Hokkaido University Library and its Development**

Japanese manuscript and woodblock sources on the history of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands are kept in a special structural unit of the Hokkaido University Library — the Northern Studies Collection Department (jpn. *hoppo: shiryō:shitsu* 北方資料室). The Department's collection currently contains about 4.500 manuscripts and woodblocks in Japanese.<sup>3</sup> It is this part of the collection, containing primary sources of the 17th — early 20th cc., that presents the greatest interest. In addition, the Northern Studies Collection includes: over 4.500 manuscript archival documents (850 stitched books and 3.700 individual sheets); 30.351 Japanese-language printed books (from the late 19th c. onward); about 12.000 Japanese-language pamphlet-type printed materials; 8.462 books in European languages; a collection of about 5.000 letters from the Hokkaido Development Bureau related to foreign experts (active between 1869–1882); 5.000 maps and drawings; about 5.000 photographs and 750 photographic plates; 400 items of audio materials (180 gramophone records and 220 audio cassettes, mostly recordings of Ainu folklore); and personal collections of rare materials assembled by a number of famous researchers of this region, such as Takakura Shin'ichiro (572 items), Kono Tsunekichi (162 items), and others.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Nihon hokuhen kankei kyū:ki mokuroku* 1990.

<sup>3</sup> *Hokkaido: daigaku toshokan gaiyō*: 2006: 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

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This extensive and representative collection was assembled over several decades and is closely related to the history of the Northern Studies Collection Department and its predecessor, the Northern Cultures Research Department (jpn. Hoppo: bunka kenkyu:shitsu 北方文化研究室) at Hokkaido University, which existed from 1937 to 1967. I consider it necessary to outline briefly the history of these departments, as well as to trace the establishment and development of the study of northern Japan as a separate research area at Hokkaido University, with special attention to the manuscript and book collections.

The formation of the Northern Studies Collection at the Hokkaido University Library is closely linked to the University's history. It dates back to 1876, when the Sapporo Agricultural College was founded in the administrative center of the Hokkaido Island to train specialists in the colonization of the island under the auspices of the Hokkaido Development Commission (jpn. Kaitakushi 開拓使, in existence from 1869–1882). In 1887, the college began teaching colonial politics and the history of colonization, subjects that would eventually play an important role in the history of the region north of Japan. In 1907, the Sapporo Agricultural College became part of the newly established Tohoku University as the Faculty of Agriculture. The new university was to be located in Sendai in the northeastern part of the Honshu Island. The campus was not built immediately, and for several years the Faculty of Agriculture in Sapporo remained its only functioning unit. In 1918, however, it was decided to establish an independent Hokkaido Imperial University on the basis of this faculty. To the Faculty of Agriculture were later added the Faculty of Medicine (1919), Engineering (1924) and Natural Sciences (1930), which testifies to the practical orientation of specialist training at Hokkaido University in prewar Japan. The only department that could be conditionally classified as a social sciences and humanities department was the Department of Agricultural Economics at the oldest faculty of the university. The founders of this department, which existed since the College period, were its first graduates, Nitobe Inazo (1862–1933) and Sato Shosuke (1856–1939), who also became the first rector of the Hokkaido Imperial University (1918–1930). Both studied, among other things, social aspects of the colonization of Hokkaido and other northern regions.

At the same time, as S. Takakura writes, “with the development of Hokkaido, especially when our country took a course on external migration (meaning the colonization of Manchuria. — *V.S.*), the need to establish a

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faculty of humanities began to be realized, because without research and education in the field of culture, technical education is sinfully limited”.<sup>5</sup> With the founding of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) in 1932 and the beginning of grant support for scientists, the Hokkaido Imperial University initiated a number of studies in the humanities. For example, the Research Department of Agricultural Economics received a grant to study agricultural migration to Manchuria and the resources of North China, and the Department of Medicine received a grant to study the Ainu people in terms of medicine and physical anthropology. When the Department of Anatomy began excavating Ainu burial sites to collect bone remains, the need for an ethnographic study of the burial inventory was also realized.<sup>6</sup> After the completion of projects with grant support from the JSPS, the Hokkaido Imperial University decided to organize a unit for the study of northern cultures. The Northern Cultures Research Department, founded in 1937, became such a division.

This department was not affiliated with any faculty, but reported directly to the Rector and was under the auspices of the University Library from the beginning, with Uehara Tetsusaburo, Head of the Library, as its first head. The members were elected from each of the four faculties: Inukai Tetsuo (Faculty of Agriculture), Kodama Sakuzaemon (Faculty of Medicine), Takabeya Fukuhei (Faculty of Engineering), and Suzuki Jun (Faculty of Natural Sciences), while the librarians Shibata Sadakichi and Takakura Shin’ichiro were elected as external members. Such a variegated composition of the department may seem strange in the context of the study of “northern cultures”, but it predetermined the formation of Ainu studies as an interdisciplinary scientific direction. For example, F. Takabeya from the Faculty of Engineering studied the construction of traditional Ainu houses, S. Kodama from the Faculty of Medicine studied Ainu tattoos and hairstyles, and zoologist T. Inukai studied the interaction of the Ainu with animals and plants (an Ainu old man named Kikuchi was even invited to one of the department’s seminars and demonstrated the art of cutting bear carcasses). The department began holding seminars with presentations by staff members and lectures by visiting scholars, and publishing its own journal, “Reports on Research of Northern Cultures” (jpn. Hoppo: bunka kenkyu: ho:koku 北方文化研究報告)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> TAKAKURA 1982: 963.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> AKIZUKI 1980: 1380.

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This article focuses in particular on another important area of the department's work — the collection of written sources: books, manuscripts, maps, etc. The Northern Cultures Research Department's collection was based on manuscripts and books that were already stored in the University Library and had been accumulated since the existence of the Sapporo Agricultural College. The collection and copying of written materials on the history of Hokkaido and the neighboring islands had been carried out by the Hokkaido Development Commission (to which the college was subordinate) since its establishment in 1869. However, what made the department's collection truly unique was the transfer of written materials from the Hokkaido Government Office. In 1937, the year of the department's founding, the 7-volume "New History of Hokkaido", which had been prepared for many years since 1915 by the Special Commission for the Compilation of the History of Hokkaido (jpn. Hokkaido:shi hensan gakari 北海道史編纂掛), was completed.<sup>8</sup> Over a period of more than 20 years, a unique collection of manuscripts and archival documents on the history of Hokkaido and the neighboring islands has developed, and in order to avoid division of this collection, it was decided to transfer it in its entirety to the Hokkaido Imperial University (the Rector of the University has long served as an advisor to the Special Commission).<sup>9</sup> According to the "Catalog of books deposited from the Hokkaido Government Office", the collection included 489 printed books, 540 manuscripts, 239 photographs, 972 general overviews of towns and villages, and 824 archival documents (a total of 3,064 items).<sup>10</sup> Since then, the department's collection has become the largest in Japan in terms of the number of sources on Hokkaido history since the Meiji Restoration of 1868. In addition, the collection has been augmented by new acquisitions, partly through departmental or university library funds and partly through donors or sponsors such as the entrepreneurs Shibusawa Keizo and Kuwata Gompei. T. Akizuki, one of the former curators of the Northern Studies Collection of the Hokkaido University Library, points out that the period of the Northern Cultures Research Department (1937–1967) was the time of the most active growth of the written materials collection.<sup>11</sup>

The years of the Second World War and the post-war occupation also affected the activities of the Department: due to lack of funding, the

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<sup>8</sup> *Shinsen Hokkaido:shi* 1936–1937.

<sup>9</sup> AOYAMA 2018: 1–33.

<sup>10</sup> TAKAKURA 1982: 964.

<sup>11</sup> AKIZUKI 1990: (4).

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publication of the journal temporarily stopped in 1942 (six issues had been published since 1939), and full-fledged scientific work became impossible. The Department resumed its work only in 1952, including the continuation of the annual journal (14 more issues were published between 1952 and 1965). An important role in the postwar revitalization of the department was played by the emergence of new faculties in humanities at Hokkaido University: first the Faculty of Law (1947), then the Faculty of Education (1949) and the Faculty of Letters (separated from the Faculty of Law in 1950), the staff of which became involved in research. In 1967, in the course of restructuring, the Northern Cultures Research Department was subordinated to the Faculty of Letters and renamed as the Center for the Study of Northern Cultures, retaining only its research tasks. At the same time, the Department's collections of written materials were transferred to the University Library, where a new structural subdivision, the Northern Studies Collection Department, was organized. Thus, the research and collecting functions of the Northern Cultures Research Department were now divided between two divisions within the university.

When the Northern Studies Collection Department was finally taken over by the Hokkaido University Library in 1967 and relieved of its research tasks, more work began on the processing and cataloging of its materials. In 1981, 1983 and 1990 respectively, the Department published the "Catalog of Maps of Hokkaido and Adjacent Regions from the Collection of the Hokkaido University Library",<sup>12</sup> the "Catalog of Foreigner Related Letters of the Hokkaido Development Commission"<sup>13</sup> and the "Catalog of Old Books Related to the Northern Margins of Japan (Hokkaido, Sakhalin, Kuril Islands, Russia)",<sup>14</sup> which is planned as the basis for the future Russian catalog. In the preface to this catalog, its author and compiler T. Akizuki writes that the work he started on the catalog aroused great interest among scholars of other institutions in Japan where similar materials are kept, and therefore, in the process of preparation, the Northern Studies Collection of the Hokkaido University Library was enriched with a large number of copies of manuscript books and archival materials from these institutions.<sup>15</sup> It is for this reason that the resulting catalog claims to almost fully reflect the Japanese sources

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<sup>12</sup> *Hokkaido: kankei chizu zurui mokuroku : hoppo: chiikizu oyobi Nihon zu nado mo fukumu: Hokkaido: daigaku toshokan shozo*: 1981.

<sup>13</sup> *Kaitakushi gaikokujin kankei shokan mokuroku* 1983.

<sup>14</sup> *Nihon hokuhen kankei kyū:ki mokuroku* 1990.

<sup>15</sup> AKIZUKI 1990: (3).

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on the history of Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands known at the time of its publication.

**The main centers of storage of sources  
on the history of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands  
of the 17th-19th cc. in Japan**

By the time of the publication of the above catalog, the Northern Studies Collection Department of the Hokkaido University Library, in addition to its own collection, had received copies of manuscripts and archival materials from many other institutions in and outside of Hokkaido. Among the most important are the collections of the Hakodate City Central Library, the National Archives of Japan, the University of Tokyo Library, the Archives of Hokkaido, and the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo. The Collection of the Hokkaido University Library also received materials contributed by the National Diet Library, Kokugakuin University, Hokkaido Prefectural Library, Gifu Prefectural Archives, Otaru Commercial University, and the libraries of several prefectures (Iwate, Akita, Miyagi) and cities (Hirosaki, Niitsu, Hikone, etc.), primarily of the Northeast Japan, or Tohoku region. To understand the reasons for such a wide geographical distribution of sources on the history of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, it is necessary to briefly trace the history of Japanese relations with these lands in the 17th-19th cc. in terms of the accumulation of written sources.

Until the last quarter of the 18th c., the Ainu lands were outside the administrative system of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the military government of Japan. In the early 17th c., the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, Ieyasu, granted a monopoly right to control Japanese trade with the Ainu to the military house of Matsumae, which kept the small Japanese population on the southern tip of Hokkaido under its control. Thus, the documents reflecting Japanese relations with the Ainu in the 17th and 18th cc. were mostly deposited in Fukuyama Castle, the residence of the Matsumae lords in southern Hokkaido.<sup>16</sup> Some written sources not related to trade included reports of central government inspections, which were appointed very rarely (no more than one per shogun's reign) and records of interrogations of Japanese sailors who were shipwrecked on the southern Kuril Islands. These documents were preserved in the archives of the shogunate in Edo or in the

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<sup>16</sup> TAKAKURA 1969: 3-4.

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domains from which the sailors came.<sup>17</sup> The Ainu uprising of 1669 led by Shakushain was a separate episode that gave rise to a large number of written sources: not only Matsumae, but also the authorities of the neighboring Honshu domains of Nambu and Tsugaru took part in investigating the circumstances of the uprising (a number of documents have been preserved in archives in Aomori, Akita, and Iwate prefectures).<sup>18</sup> In the second half of the 18th c., merchant houses from central Japan, such as Hidaya Kyubee, began to play an active role in trade with the Ainu, especially in trading areas in the north and northeast of Hokkaido, the population of which was in close contact with the Ainu of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. The records of this trading house are now in the archives of Gifu Prefecture, the former province of Hida, from where the merchants originated.<sup>19</sup>

From the 1780s, the Ainu lands came under the scrutiny of central authorities: documents about the first government expedition to the Ainu lands, as well as about the Ainu uprising in Kunashir and northeastern Hokkaido in 1789, were already preserved in the archives of the shogunate.<sup>20</sup> From that time on, the Ainu lands were visited more frequently by central government officials and inspectors, who wrote not only official reports, but also essays about the Ainu and their lands in a freer form: such texts are found not only in government archives, but also in many regional and even private archives. Between 1799 and 1821, the Ainu lands (first only the eastern, and from 1807 also the western) were placed under the direct administration of the shogunate due to a possible spread of Russia's influence. The administration of the shogunate viceroys was located first in Hakodate, and from 1807 in Matsumae, where all the documents of the governing bodies were collected. At the same time, copies of some documents, as well as correspondence with the central authorities, were deposited in the archives of the shogunate in Edo and are now preserved at the National Archives of Japan and at the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo.<sup>21</sup> During this period, the troops of the domains of northeastern Honshu — Nambu, Tsugaru, Sendai, and Aizu — were actively engaged to protect Japan's borders in the north, which resulted in some

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<sup>17</sup> HIRAKAWA & TAKEHARA 2023: 96–211.

<sup>18</sup> *Nihon hokuhen kankei kyu:ki mokuroku (Hokkaido:, Karafuto, Chishima, Roshia)* 1990: 250–252.

<sup>19</sup> Yamashita Tsuneo 2003: 666–672.

<sup>20</sup> *Ezochi ikken* 1969: 261–262.

<sup>21</sup> KLIMOV 2009: 127–141.

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documents and other written sources being also deposited in relevant archives in the former domains (now the archives and libraries of Iwate, Aomori, Miyagi, and Fukushima prefectures).<sup>22</sup>

From 1821 to 1854, when Russian activity in the Kuril Islands declined, the Ainu lands were again put under the administration of the Matsumae clan, and the documents from this period were again preserved at the Fukuyama Castle. Finally, in 1854, when negotiations with Russia on border demarcation in the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin began, the Ainu lands were again placed under the direct control of the shogunate until 1869, when the last pro-shogun forces were defeated by the imperial army at the Battle of Hakodate. During this battle, the records of the Matsumae domain were lost, both for the period of the 17th to 18th cc. and for the years 1821–1854.<sup>23</sup> Documents from the direct rule period of the shogunate (1854–1869) have largely survived,<sup>24</sup> and today are mostly stored either in the Hakodate City Central Library, which housed the governing bodies, or in the National Archives of Japan, established on the basis of the Cabinet Library (jpn. Naikaku bunko 内閣文庫), the collection of which was in turn based on the library and archives of the Tokugawa shoguns (jpn. Momijiyama bunko 紅葉山文庫)<sup>25</sup>. More or less complete preservation of written sources was ensured starting from the Meiji period (1868–1912), when the Hokkaido Development Commission was established in the city of Sapporo: it was its archive that formed the basis of the Hokkaido Library collection (see above). It should be noted that the southern Kuril Islands (Iturup, Kunashir, Shikotan) and the southern part of Sakhalin were also under the jurisdiction of the Development Commission. After 1875, when Japan renounced its claims to Sakhalin under the Treaty of St. Petersburg and received in return the entire range of Kuril Islands up to Kamchatka, Sakhalin was excluded from Japan's administrative control for 30 years, while the Kuril Islands north of Iturup, on the contrary, were placed under it. Thus, sources on the history of all the Kuril Islands from 1875 to 1945 exist mostly in Japanese. This period includes, among other things, the tragic history of the resettlement of the Ainu people of the northern Kuril Islands to Shikotan, and of many Sakhalin Ainu people to Tsuishikari in Hokkaido.

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<sup>22</sup> *Nihon hokuhen kankei kyū:ki mokuroku* (Hokkaido:, Karafuto, Chishima, Roshia) 1990: 82–87.

<sup>23</sup> AKIZUKI 1990: 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> KLIMOV 2010: 272–278.

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## Conclusion

After analyzing the composition and the history of formation of the collection of sources on the history of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands of the 17th–19th cc. in the Northern Studies Collection Department of the Hokkaido University Library, it becomes clear that, first, it is the largest collection of sources on this topic both in Japan and abroad, and, second, it allows to trace the process of accumulation of written sources in many other archival repositories in Japan.

The wide distribution of sources on the history of Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands in the 17th–19th cc. throughout Japan was caused by the complex history of the state's interaction with the Ainu and the lands inhabited by them: from the late 18th to the mid-19th cc., control over them repeatedly passed from the Matsumae clan into the hands of the Japanese central government and back again, and the intensification of politics in the Ainu lands led to a wider access of representatives of various domains and estates of Japan and, consequently, to an increase in the number and diversity of written sources.

The formation of the collection of sources on the history of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands of the 17th–19th cc. in the Hokkaido University Library is closely linked with the activities of the Northern Cultures Research Department, which existed in 1937–1967 and became the first specialized scientific unit in Japan to study the history and culture of the Ainu people and their lands. The collection of written sources became one of the most important areas of the department's work, resulting in valuable collections, both private and institutional, including the largest archive of materials created for the production of the official history of Hokkaido and the surrounding islands. Thus, the collection of written sources on the history of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands of the 17th–19th cc. at the Northern Studies Collection Department of the Hokkaido University Library, as well as its catalogs, can serve as an important basis for the creation of a similar catalog in Russian.

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