

## RACIAL TYPES IN NORTHEASTERN ASIA

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In a previous paper published in this series (1) the present writer summarized the preliminary reports of G. F. Debets' important post-war anthropometric field work in northeastern Siberia and reproduced the accompanying metrical tables. It was feared at the time that a final report on this work might be indefinitely delayed due to the rapid shifts in ideological currents then prevalent. The report has, however, now appeared (2), and constitutes a major contribution to the racial systematics of the northern Mongoloids, although the emphasis is naturally on the area directly studied by Debets. The sizable amount of uniform data gathered in recent years-- mostly unknown to Westerners-- enables him to draw up a broad racial picture of Siberia as a whole, though hampered by the lack of comparable data from northwestern North America. The metrical tables accompanying the monograph are, like the preliminary reports, still restricted to group averages.

Because Debets' final conclusions, based on longer study and wider comparative materials, differ in some respects from those previously published, and because his picture of the northern Mongoloids as a whole should be of interest to Americanists as well as to students of Old World races and history, it has seemed worth-while to summarize briefly the major conclusions of the Soviet Union's outstanding physical anthropologist. The reader should bear in mind, however, that Debets is proceeding on the time-honored assumption that mixed populations show intermediate characteristics, and make allowances accordingly.

Debets views the living peoples of northern Asia as initially divisible into four main groups: Arctic, Baikal, Central Asiatic, and Ural. In addition, the Ainu form a special group, and probably also the Gilyak who may be the basic substratum of the Amur area, although their status is still indefinite. The well-known "South-Siberian Type" set up by IArkho (equals Deniker's "Turanian") is a real entity, but is, in Debets' opinion, clearly compounded of Central Asiatic and various Europeoid components.

The Ural group (Deniker's "Ugrian" and "Lapp" races, and corresponding forms of other classifications) is generally agreed by Soviet anthropologists to represent an ancient mixture of Europeoid and Mongoloid forms, although the problem of the original Mongoloid component needs further study. Europeoid admixture is present in all the local types of this group, which unfortunately receives little space in Debet's monograph owing to its distance from the area of primary concern. Siberian tribes belonging here are the Ugrian and Samoyed peoples, northern Altaians, Shortsy, the Khakas and Chulyum in part, and the Ket to a considerable extent.

In the Central Asiatic group, only two local types are distinguished at present: Central Asiatic proper (needing further study) and Angara-Lena. The latter enters into the composition of the Yakut and Northern Buriat. Certain local types of Tungus who display more prominent nose and beard (e.g., Okhotsk and some Amur Tungus, Mainov's "Southern Tungus") may belong with the Central Asiatic group, which includes the southern Altaians, Tuvintsy, Mongols, and remaining Buriat in addition to the tribes mentioned.

The Baikal group is a clearly-defined entity with the following provisional local types: Baikal proper (the typical Northern Tungus, and possibly also the Lamut), Khatanga (western Tungus groups such as those on the Taz and Stony Tunguska, also the Dolgan; their brachycephaly sets them apart from the Baikal type), Amgun (Tungusic tribes of the Amur such as the Negidal and Orok; morphologically indistinguishable from Khatanga), and Gold (a distinctive type, but not because of Chinese mixture as has been suggested). The Ul'chi of the lower Amur are intermediate between the Gold and Gilyak, and in Debets' view probably represent a hybrid. The Yukagir (who show only Asiatic affinities) seem to be included also in the general Baikal group.

The Arctic group, the focus of Debets' attention and hence presented in greatest detail, consists of five local types: Greenland Eskimo, Bering Sea Eskimo (including Maritime Chukchi), Kamchatkan (Reindeer Chukchi and Koryak), Itel'men (Kamchadal and Kamchatka Koryak), and Aleut. The latter is viewed as a peculiar local variant which evolved in situ; the alleged similarities with Tungus advanced by Hrdlička are rejected as unconvincing. Pre-Aleuts are considered intermediate between Eskimo and Aleut.

As demonstrated in the preliminary report, the Eskimo proved to be intermediate between the Palaeo-Asiatics and the American Indians, and not an alien "wedge" dividing the latter. The Indians seem to have no convincing Siberian parallels or affinities, unless better American data subsequently reveal them. The Eastern Eskimo are seen as environmentally specialized, while the Western represent the older generalized form. The Asiatic Eskimo and the Maritime Chukchi are the most typical examples of the Bering Sea type, which is believed to have developed in situ among Eskimoan-speaking coastal sea hunters after the peopling of the New World had taken place. The Alaskan Eskimo, on the other hand, show evidence of Indian mixture.

The Kamchatkan type, characteristic of the Reindeer Chukchi and northern Reindeer Koryak, is an independent entity though generally close to the Bering Sea type. The differences between reindeer and coast peoples cannot be explained by mixture of the former with Tungus and Yukagir, although this has unquestionably occurred. The type was probably formed in the interior among hunters of wild reindeer who spoke languages of the Chukchi-Kamchadal stock and long antedates the introduction of reindeer breeding. Part of the group subsequently settled on the coast and linguistically assimilated the Eskimo population, which however preserved much of its physical and cultural identity.

The Koryak proved to be very heterogeneous, with many localized variants. Pacific coast groups (Oliutor, Karaga, Kerek) are still insufficiently studied, but since the Penzhina Gulf coastal Koryak are of Bering Sea type, it seems very probable to this writer that the Pacific groups to the northeast of them are also. The northern Reindeer Koryak are almost identical with the Reindeer Chukchi; those of Kamchatka show strong Lamut admixture.

Combining early descriptions with anthropometric observations on the mongrel survivors, Debets deduces that the ancient Kamchadal were darker-skinned, flatter-nosed, and in general less "Americanoid" than the Koryak and Chukchi. He concludes that they were closest primarily to the reindeer and not the coastal divisions of these peoples, i.e., to the Kamchatkan type--a reversal of his position in the preliminary report.

In general, the affinities of the Arctic group seem to lie with eastern Asia, not Siberia. In fact the sharpest differences among the major groups are between Arctic and Baikal, which fail to agree on any major criterion. A possible explanation is to be found in Cheboksarov's hypothesis that the first stage in the evolution of the Mongoloids was a split into two branches: continental and Pacific Ocean. The Baikal group would fall in the former, the Arctic seems to belong to the latter. Cheboksarov also postulates the settlement of northeastern Siberia by the Pacific coast route. While Debets' work does not solve this latter question, it does indicate that the basic ethnic links of the area point toward the Pacific rather than toward Siberia proper, a conclusion which coincides with current Russian archaeological opinion.

In a brief discussion of the "Neolithic" skeletal material from the Baikal area, it is of interest to note that Debets shies away from his 1930 pronouncement (based on very superficial data) that the ancient inhabitants were the direct ancestors of the modern population of the region. He doubts that the problem could be resolved with present knowledge, and tends to believe that the "Neolithic" people represent an ancient form not visible in the present population, a form having approximately the same relation to the whole Siberian population of today as that of the Cro-Magnon people to modern Europeans. The question of the presence of Europeoid admixture in the ancient Baikal population remains open.

ENDNOTES

- (1) "New Light on the Racial Composition of Northeastern Siberia."  
Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers, No. 5, pp. 26-47.  
Berkeley, 1951.
- (2) Debets, G. F. Antropologicheskie Issledovaniia v Kamchatskoi Oblasti (Anthropological Investigations in Kamchatka Province).  
Trudy, Institut Etnografii, Akademiia Nauk SSSR, n.s. vol. XVII.  
Moscow, 1951.