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ONCE AGAIN ON AINU *kaco* AND NIVX *q^cas/-xas**

According to John Batchelor (1975: xx), the Ainu word *kaco* ‘shaman’s drum’ is a borrowing from Nivx *q^cas/-xas* ‘id.’. This view has been accepted *de facto* for a long time and nobody suggested different options. For example, Janhunen in his important paper on Siberian shamanistic terminology came to the same conclusion as Batchelor in the Ainu section on Ainu shamanism (1986: 111). At this time, Vovin’s book on the reconstruction of the Proto-Ainu language (1993) was not yet available. Had Janhunen been able to use Vovin’s work, he would certainly have treated this Ainu shamanistic term differently. The main goal of this brief paper is therefore to demonstrate that a detailed analysis of the material will show that this conclusion is not precise, since *kaco* is of Ainu origin in the new light of evidence offered by Vovin’s book.

First, it is necessary to point out that Ainu *kaco* LH (Hattori 1964: 177) contains the affricate /c/, which according to Vovin does not belong to the Proto-Ainu phonological system. This fact is very important because Janhunen concluded in his paper that the borrowing from Nivx had taken place a long time ago. Presuming that Janhunen meant that this borrowing had taken place at Proto-Nivx and Proto-Ainu stages,¹ it is obviously necessary to deal with Proto-Nivx **k^hac^hV* and Proto-Ainu **katyo* LH rather than with the forms from the modern languages. The latter has **ty*, as in modern Ainu /c/ is derived from:

a) **t* before **i*, e.g. **tis* L ‘to cry’ > Nayoro, Asahigawa, Yakumo *cis* L, Hokkaidō *cysy*,

b) consonant cluster **py-*, e.g. **pyAA* LL ‘mouth’ > Asahigawa *paroho* LHL, Nayoro *caro* LH, Hokkaidō *car*,

and

c) consonant cluster **ty* before **a*, **o* and **u*, e.g. **tyuk* L ‘to fall’ > Nayoro, Asahigawa, Yakumo *cuk* H, Saru *cuk* H, *cuk-ita* L-HL, Hokkaidō

*) I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Alexander Vovin (University of Hawai’i at Manoa) for having read and discussed with me some earlier drafts of the present paper. All errors are my responsibility.

¹ Vovin’s Proto-Ainu reconstruction goes back to the first millennium AD (1993: 155-156).

chuk-an, PA **tyOrtya* HL ‘to shoot (a bow), to hit (the mark)’ > Nayoro, Asahigawa, Yakumo *cotca* HL, Raichiska *cohca*.²

According to the traditional point of view proposed by Batchelor, there is no doubt about the direction of the borrowing: it should be from Nivx to Ainu, because even from the religious point of view, Ainu has undergone a great influence of the Nivx culture.³ It is therefore necessary to assume a correspondence between Proto-Nivx **c^h* and Proto-Ainu **ty*. The natural phonological change seen in this correspondence implies the direction of the borrowing from Ainu to Nivx, since it is easier for a consonant cluster **t + *y* to be borrowed as an affricate **c^h*, rather than for an affricate to be borrowed as a consonant cluster. Such a *reductio ad absurdum* should be avoided in historical linguistics.

At any rate, those authors who think that the direction was really Nivx → Ainu would have to explain the geographical distribution of the Modern Ainu forms: Horobetsu and Nayoro, both located on the Japanese island of Hokkaidō (Horobetsu is near to Sapporo, and Nayoro is to the north of Asahikawa) and Raichiska, on Sakhalin Island. The first two forms certainly cannot be loans from Nivx for simple geographical reasons, but the last one could be the result of such a process. This distribution of *kaco* in the Ainu dialects leads to the conclusion that it is more natural to consider Nivx *q^cas/-xas* as a borrowing from Ainu (Horobetsu and Nayoro dialects), and not vice versa.⁴

With regard to the etymology of **katyo* LH > *kaco*, there is a verb *kācō* ‘exclamation or clap produced by women dancing behind men’ (Tamura 1996: 268),⁵ which however does not solve the problem related to the original meaning of the root although it should, despite its onomatopoeic character, be connected with **katyo* LH. In addition, the way in which both forms are related is still to be explained, because although it is possible to speculate about an onomatopoeic or expressive origin of the vowel lengthening (which the Raichiska variant does not support), Ainu does not provide any kind of evidence for a process like Spanish *mu* ‘moo’, onomatopoeic sound made by a cow, giving a verbal form *mugir* ‘to moo’, since it would imply firstly that *kaco* is the onomatopoeic

² Vovin (1993: 12-16, 34-35, 39-40 respectively). As for **py*, Vovin originally reconstructed **pr*, but Sidwell (1996: 182) has showed that **py*- is a much better reconstruction, using as paradigmatic example the opposition between **tr*, where **r* is not palatalizing, and **ty*, where **y* is working in the same way as **r* in Vovin’s **pr*. For a partial Proto-Nivx reconstruction, cf. Austerlitz (1982, 1986).

³ “The shamanism of the Ainu is normally assumed to have evolved under the influence of their northern neighbours, notably the Nivkh” (Janhunen 1986: 111).

⁴ There is a lot of Ainu loanwords in Nivx, e.g. Proto-Ainu **asir* LH ‘new’ → Proto-Nivx **c^hir* ‘id.’ > Amur Nivx *c^uz-*, East Sakhalin Nivx *cⁱir-*, or Proto-Ainu **agi* LL ‘arrow’ → Proto-Nivx **kⁱ* ‘crossbow’ > Amur Nivx and East Sakhalin Nivx *kⁱ* (Vovin 1993: 158-162).

⁵ Alexander Vovin (p.c.).

sound produced by the shaman's drum – quite hard to demonstrate – and secondly that vowel lengthening works as a derivational means, something for which there is no evidence at all.

In sum, the Ainu word **katyo* LH > *kaco* LH 'shaman's drum' belongs to the most archaic part of the Ainu lexicon and might be a loanword in Nivx. On the other hand, the relation of this term to *kācō* 'exclamation or clap produced by women dancing behind men' remains obscure.

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