

Border shifting and people in Russo-Japanese Borderlands:
Sakhalin/Karafuto and Kuril/Chishima

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This paper examines border shifting in modern and contemporary Sakhalin/Karafuto and Kuril/Chishima and points out that border shifting caused not only earlier inhabitants to be removed and new inhabitants to arrive but also the earlier inhabitants to remain in site. This indicates that repatriation and remaining were not phenomena specific to the Japan-Soviet war but were universal phenomena in modern and contemporary Sakhalin/Karafuto and Kuril/Chishima. This paper discusses these phenomena not from the view of war but from the view of border shifting. It examines the influence of border shifting on borderland people.

This paper compares remaining Japanese in Sakhalin with Japanese repatriates from Karafuto and remaining Koreans in Sakhalin; (1) repatriates did not claim their own right to return to Sakhalin but claimed the restoration of Karafuto, on the other hand, the permanent return of Japanese and Koreans in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras did not necessarily mean re-integration of dispersed families nor return to their ancestral land. They postponed life in their “homeland” to life in geographical “hometown” and both people lost “hometown” as a part of “homeland” through border shifting. (2) Remaining was generated by imperfect removal in re-bordering and continued by low permeability in trans-bordering with isolation from the previous spheres of livelihood. (3) Micro-level factors such as individual anxiety for life and intentions of dispersed families or present household members as well as macro-level factors such as low permeability resulting from international relationships were very important causes of the continuation of remaining.