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# OUTLINES OF A THEORY OF CULTURE BASED ON THE ORIGINS OF SETTLEMENT

Lecture prepared for the  
IRSSI

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# INTRODUCTION

This lecture gives some outlines of a theory of culture based on ethno-(pre-)historical reconstructions of the origins of human settlement.

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Settlement is defined in the wider anthropological framework (including subhuman types) as a temporary or permanent topological location of a social group and its constructive and perceptive behavioural (and psychological) interaction with the natural and artificial environment.

\*

On the collecting and hunting level semi-nomadic life (night camps and habitual places for temporary settlement) is assumed which shows increasing tendency of fibroconstructive demarcation.

\*

On the agrarian level a stable core of high continuity (and highest value, representing local ontology) is assumed, which is expressed in a cyclically renewed fibroconstructive material culture, a territorio-semantic system which is behaviourally and ritually preserved. It documents the foundation of the settlement. This is the (pre-historical) constitution of the settlement. Its social and political structure is defined by this complex.

\*

The essential cultural evolution is produced in a triangular dialogue between man - fibroconstructive semantic system and structural analogies in the surrounding environment.

Note: disciplinary phenomena like art, religion, social structure, etc. are derived from the fibroconstructive semantic complex of the defined settlement.

THIS LECTURE OUTLINES AN ENTIRELY NEW APPROACH TO CULTURAL RESEARCH. IT REJECTS THE EUROCENTRAL DISCIPLINARILY FACETTED VIEW, PROPOSES THE EVOLUTIONARY CONTINUITY OF SETTLEMENT AND RECONSTRUCTS CULTURE OUT OF THIS COMPLEX NUCLEUS OF HUMANE EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENA.

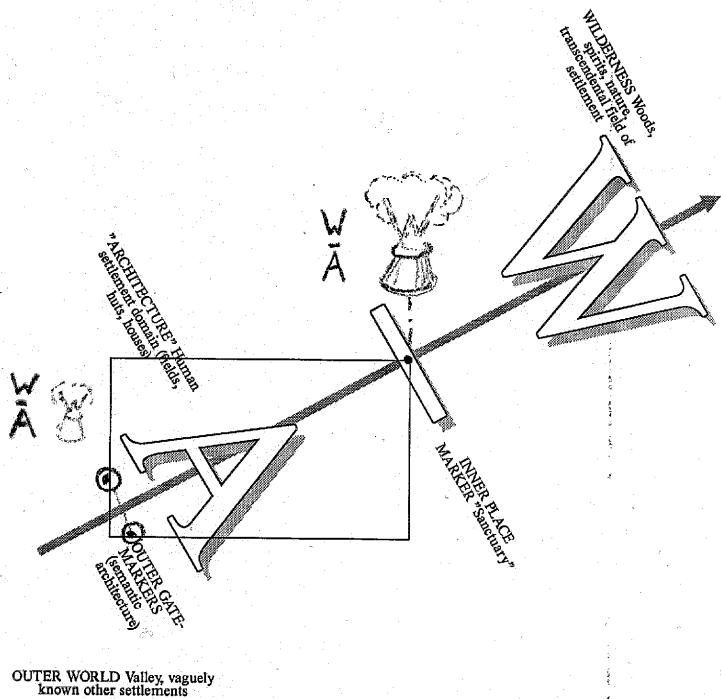
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THE COMPLEX CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEMANTIC AND SYMBOLIC SYSTEM IN THE ONTOLOGICAL CENTRE OF THE SOCIAL GROUP ENTERS ARTLIKE INTO DIALOGUE WITH THE HUMAN PERCEPTION AND INTEGRATES GRADUALLY THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE OWN HUMAN EXISTENCE INTO THIS DIALOGUE.

\*

THE CLARIFICATION OF THE OBJECTIVE, SPATIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTENTS OF THIS DIALOGUE MIGHT BECOME A NEW HISTORY OF THE HUMAN PAST.

## BASIC FORMULA



THIS SCHEME REPRESENTS A NON-WRITTEN CONSTITUTION OF A TRADITIONAL SETTLEMENT WITH ITS SPATIAL, TEMPORAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

# **PRESENT VIEW OF MAN'S CULTURAL PAST: A DISASTER**

Darwin's hypothesis, together with the scarcity of sources in paleoanthropology (skulls, teeth and bones) and prehistory regarding early man had devastating effects on the image of culture: the illegitimate intrusion of biological reasoning into cultural theory (Lorenz, Eibl-Eibesfeld etc.).

We urgently need an anthropological **IGNORANTOLOGY** (The science of what we do not know)

**Palaeanthropology** reconstructs human past on very poor sources. Finds are dramatized. Scientific outlook blocks conscience of factual scarcity (Heberer).

**Archaeology** reconstructs human past based on "remains". This might be 1 percent of the factual - non durable - culture. Thus the archaeological method becomes a tremendous speculation. Further, most remains are rubbish: the human past becomes rubbish (the toolmaker: legitimization of progress).

The overestimation of written history is widely still a medieval fixation. What is written is only a small part of what actually "happened" (German: Geschichte). In addition, in particular in early history the contents of words have changed over time. Ancient texts become misleading if translated with modern contents (Myth!)

Western humanities underestimate the continuity of human tradition because of specific dynamism of European cultural history (Christian conversion)

\*

Western scientific reconstruction of the human past is highly questionable.

\*

Its **THEORY OF ART** is a postmedieval - **SOCIALLY ELITARIAN** construction and produces contradictions of inefficiency on the intercultural level (s. Cornelia Rothfuchs, ethnology).

\*

Similarly the so called **SCIENCE OF RELIGIONS** and **WESTERN THEOLOGY** are fixed on scholastic constructions. Its intercultural outlook produces either highly questionable dominance or/and absurd primitivisms.

The West's recent imposition of an **ECONOMIC VALUE SYSTEM** is in fact a strong indicator of a vehemently ongoing cultural degeneration in the West.

## SETTLEMENT THEORY OF CULTURE

The basic outlook of a theory of culture based on the origins of settlement is totally different from conventional interdisciplinary theory (cultural anthropology):

WE DO NOT BUILD UP A  
SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATIONS  
AMONG VARIOUS CULTURES,

BUT LOOK FOR THE  
SAME IN ALL  
CULTURES.

# BASIC CONCEPT OF SETTLEMENT RESEARCH AND CULTURAL THEORY

Settlement research is based on a fundamental complex of three interacting elements of a settlement:

- (1) Fibroconstructive nucleus (sign, symbol, primary art-form (semantic architecture), cognitive model, nucleus of harmonious life-philosophy, socio-territorial archive), value centre (ontology, religion, philosophy, etc.)
- (2) man or group (active constructive behaviour, memorizing capacity, territorial conditions, perception and environmental organisation)
- (3) natural environment (material, spatial, formal and climatic conditions)

\*

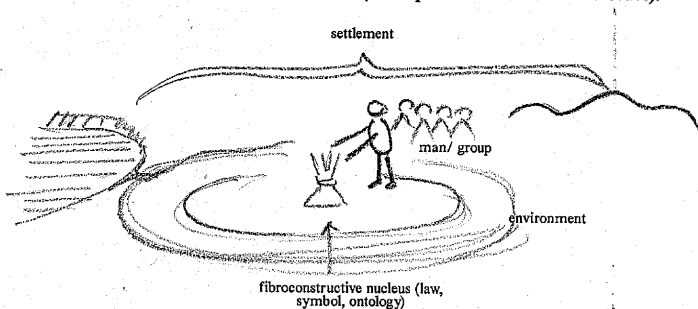
This method allows inductive approach. All three domains are meticulously described and interpreted as an interacting complex in the synchronical and diachronical context.

\*

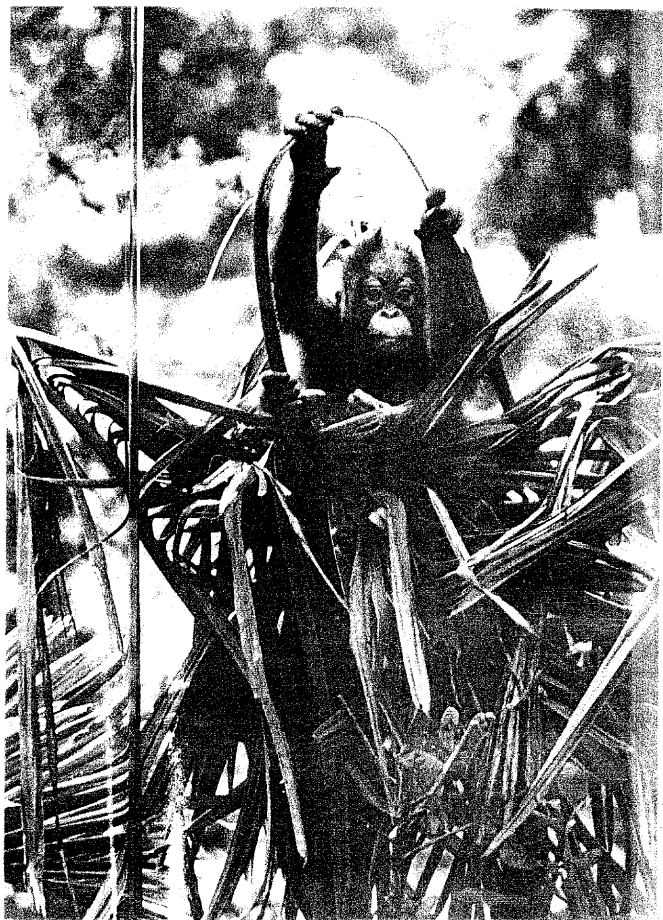
From such cellular surveys described inductively, higher levels are gained by generalisations which can be checked in reality.

\*

In this way the term culture can be approached from an evolutionary nucleus, from there on reaching to an understanding in new ways many formations of a culture as unfold from this nucleus (see Japanese Art and architecture).



SETTLEMENT RESEARCH IS BASED ON A SEEMINGLY SIMPLE, IN FACT  
HIGHLY COMPLEX MODEL (like in physics)

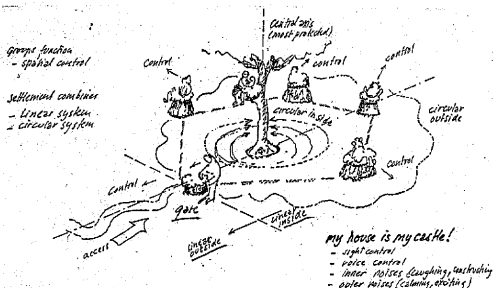
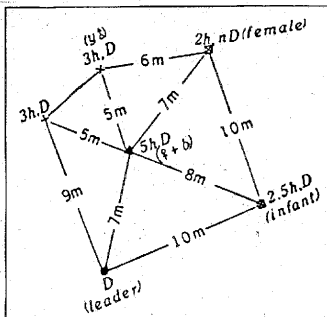


# SUB-HUMAN SETTLEMENT (INTRA-GROUP)

## (Primateology of settlement)

Fig. 1 shows a plan of a night-camp with six nests of a group of chimpanzees measured and drawn by Kawai/ Mizuhara 1959.

Fig. 2 shows the spatial interpretation (hypothetical) of this night-camp by the author as an access-placé scheme.



The night-camps of higher apes are full-fledged temporary settlements with distinctive characteristics. The qualities of nests (ground-, treenests) and the relative spatial position of the nests indicates social and psychological relations (mother and baby on treenest in centre, dominant male on groundnest at "gate" of arrangement)

THE STRUCTURALLY DEMARKED SETTLEMENT IN ITS NARROWER SENSE AS A INTRA-GROUP-PHENOMENON IS SOCIALLY SPATIALLY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY CLEARLY STRUCTURED ON THE SUBHUMAN LEVEL. THE SPATIAL POSITION OF THE NESTS AND ITS OCCUPANTS DEFINES A SPATIAL UNIT UNDER CONTROL IMPLANTED INTO A NON-CONTROLLED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.



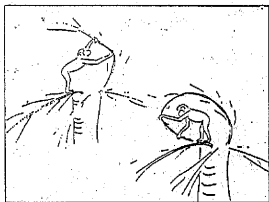
## SUB-HUMAN SETTLEMENT (INTRA-GROUP) (Primatology of settlement)



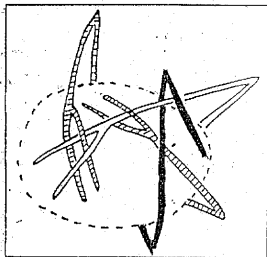
Fig. 1 shows the view of the same nightcamp drawn by the author

Higer apes construct themselves peacefully night-nestcamps for nightly rest. If one piles virtually all nests myde by one individual during a lifespan of about 30 to 40 years one on top of each other one obtains a tower 11 times the hight of the eiffel tower: the highest building of the world ever built. Cultural anthropology has not discovered this yet: anthropologists are fixed on the hand - tool - work relationship of »man the toolmaker«. Nestbuilding implies: the hand is the first tool for this type of fibroconstructive work.

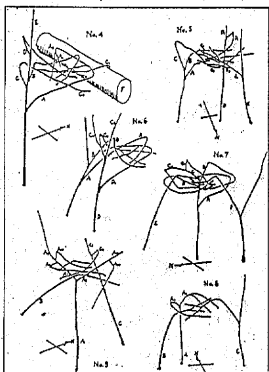
**WE OBTAIN A QUITE DIFFERENT MODEL OF  
PRE-HUMAN SETTLEMENT CONDITIONS  
THAN THOSE RECONSTRUCTED BY THE  
CONCEPT »MAN THE TOOLMAKER«  
MAINTAINED BY ARCHAEOLOGY AND  
PREHISTORY FOR EARLY MAN.**



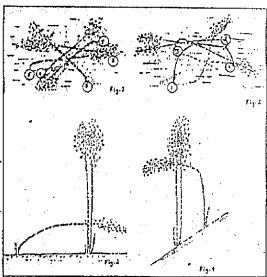
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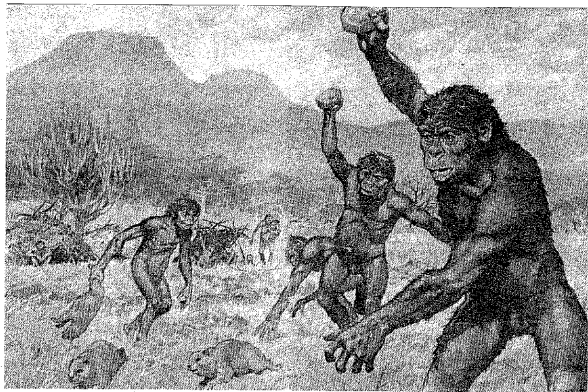


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## SUB-HUMAN SETTLEMENT (INTRA-GROUP) (Primatology of settlement)



Man the toolmaker according to a painting in a French schoolbook (Louis René Nougier (text) and Pierre Joubert (illustrations: *Les temps préhistoriques*, Hachette 1979, Paris.) The first ›homo habilis‹ are using pebble stones to kill small rodents. "A windshelter and a hut made of branches protect already the family"!

**CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AS IT IS DONE TODAY RECONSTRUCTS AN  
AGGRESSIVE HUMAN PAST OF HUNTERS, KILLERBANDS AND BUTCHERS. THIS  
LEGITIMATES PROGRESS AND SOCIAL DARWINISM: SURVIVAL OF THE  
FITTEST!**

# SUB-HUMAN SETTLEMENT (INTER -GROUP)

## (Primateology of settlement)

Fig. 1 shows distribution of orang utan nests in an aerea of about 6 km<sup>2</sup> (Mackinnon 74)

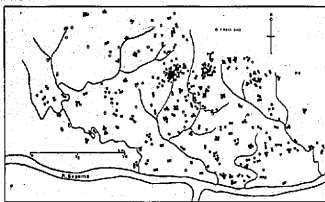
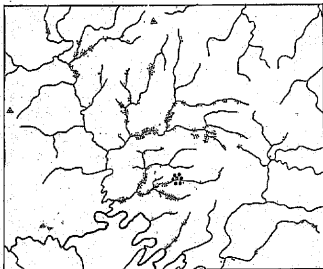


Fig. 2 shows distribution of chimpanzee nests in the area surveyed by Izawa/Itani (66). The "clusters" are preferably found in wood-trees of 18-25 m hight covering the steep slopes of river valleys.



The two types of dispersed and closely clustered settlements remind of human types of settlements.

IN THE SHOWN EXAMPLES ORANG UTANS SETTLE DISPERSED IN HILLY REGION WHEREAS CHIMPANZEES SETTLE CLOSE TO RIVER IN STEEP VALLEYS.

# SUB-HUMAN SETTLEMENT (INTER-GROUPS) (Primatology of settlement)

Fig. 1 shows nomadic movements of a large group of about 50 to 80 chimpanzees during a period of 20 days (Nishida 68)

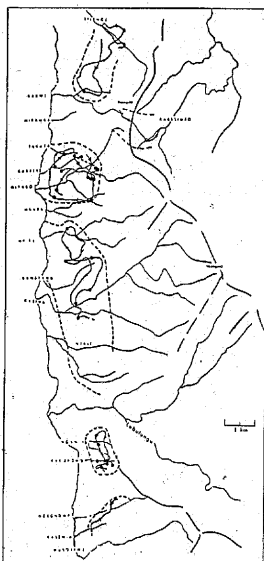
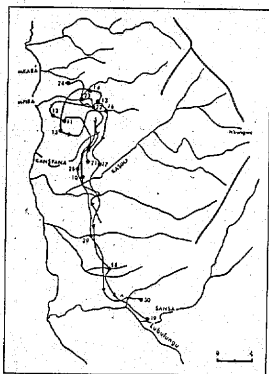


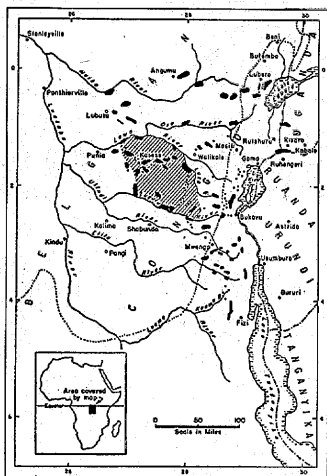
Fig. 2: Map with 6 different chimpanzee home ranges and partially recorded movements (Nishida 68)

Subhuman spatial behaviour shows similar duality or polarity between fixed settlement during the night and extended movements during the day like human nomadic societies

OF COURSE THE POLARITY BETWEEN MOVEMENT AND REST, SPATIAL MOBILITY AND SLEEP IN A PARTICULAR (TEMPORARY) FIXED PLACE IS A GENERAL TRAIT OF THE ANIMAL WORLD. BUT, IN THE CASE OF APES AND MEN, THAT THIS IS RELATED TO CONSTRUCTIVE ALTERATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, IS A PARTICULAR COMMON TRAIT AMONG THE HIGHEST PRIMATES.

## SUB-HUMAN SETTLEMENT (INTER-GROUPS) (Primateology of settlement)

Fig. 1 shows the cartographical distribution of about 60 Gorilla-populations in the northern environments of lake Tanganyika in Central Africa. The territories vary in size between 10 to 100 square-miles. Points indicate individual animals living outside of territories. The shaded district is relatively thinly, but permanently inhabited. The punctuated line gives the limits between the large equatorial forests in the Northwest and the Savannahs stretching towards south and east and containing units of open mountainwoods. (Map drawn 1959 according to surveys of Emlen/Schaller (1960))



Further research into nesting behaviour and spatial mobility of higher apes could contribute considerably to our understanding of primate settlement conditions as a constructive prerequisite to a constructive human past.

AN OBSERVER IN THE FIELD REPORTS THAT MOUNTAIN GORILLAS WERE QUITE DIFFERENT IN REGARD TO BODY AND SPATIAL BEHAVIOUR. THIS MAP SHOWS DISTINCT FOCUS POINTS WHICH RESEMBLE TO RELATIVELY ISOLATED HUMAN VILLAGES. SOME PERIPHERAL OVERLAPPING SEEMS TO EXIST, WHERE CONTACTS ARE FACILITATED.

## SUB-HUMAN SETTLEMENT (INTER-GROUPS)

(Primateology of settlement)

Thus, higher apes are basically nomads. They move up to 10 kilometres every day, spending the day mainly with collecting food (fruits, vegetables, nuts, insects, other small animals).

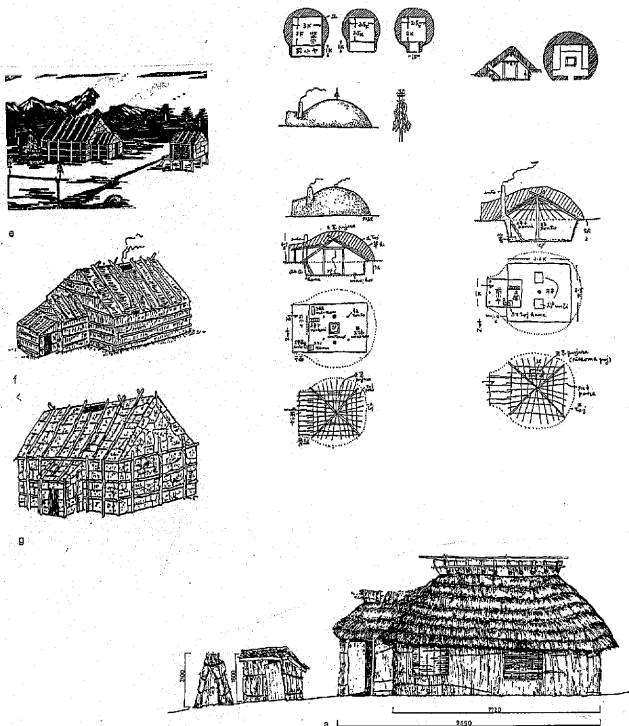
At night, when there is no visibility, they become stable, fixed to a place.

Their nightly rest is related to a constructive alteration of the natural environment: they build - each individual for himself - nests. They spend the whole night in their nests and leave it the next morning.

The nests of a group show a clear spatial structure.

Consequently one can speak of an elementary type of subhuman settlement, which - also psychologically (feeling to be protected) - has some common traits with human settlements.

# SETTLEMENT OF A HUNTER/ COLLECTOR SOCIETY (AINU)

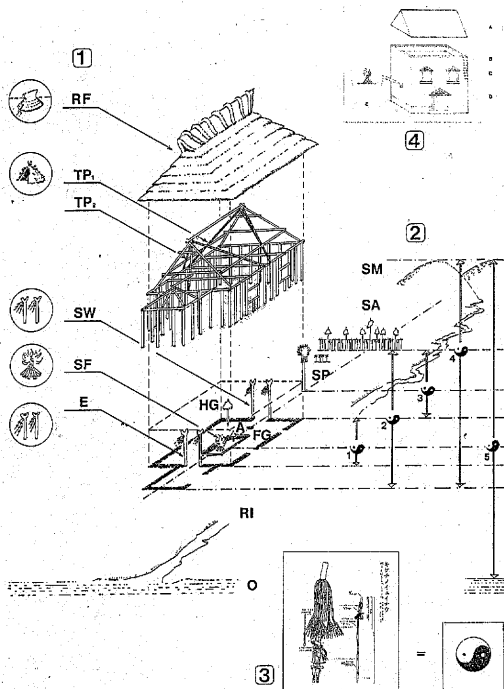


House and settlement of the Ainu remained very primitive due to geographical and cultural isolation. Primary are their simple hunting huts. Their pit dwelling survived a long time as winter-house. On Sachalin they adapted the plan to northern constructions (bark), on Hokkaido to Japanese farmhouses with reed roofs. But the plan remained more or less the same, shows great continuity



# SETTLEMENT OF A HUNTER/ COLLECTOR SOCIETY (AINU)

The house is not primitive! It is an accumulation of semantic and domestic architectural elements which all imply their spatial organisations

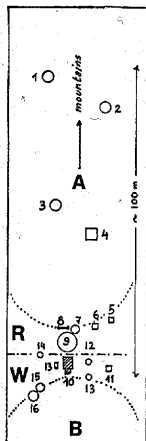
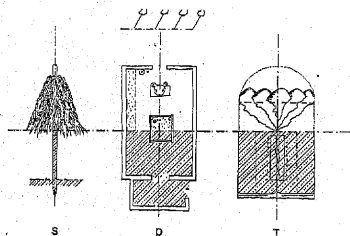
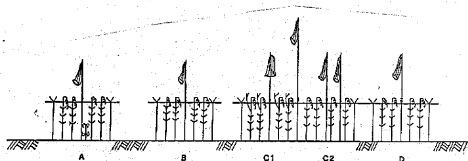


THERE IS AN INTIMATE RELATION BETWEEN THE HOUSE AS NUCLEUS OF THE LOCAL WORLD AND THE WAY THIS LOCAL ENVIRONMENT IS PERCEIVED AND CONCEIVED. THESE PATTERNS ARE AT THE BASIS OF THE AINU-HOUSE.

# SETTLEMENT OF A HUNTER/ COLLECTOR SOCIETY (AINU)

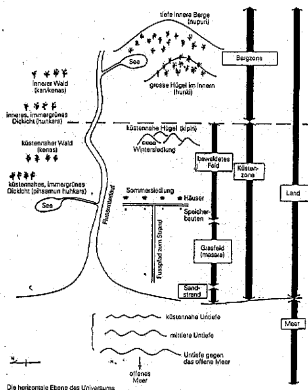
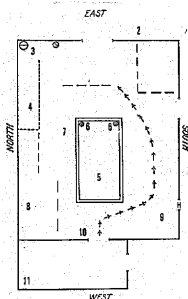
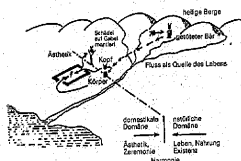
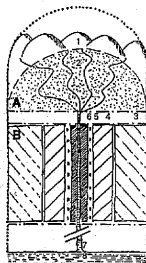
House and territory, sacred fence and the disposition of the yard, even the different levels of time are all structured according to the same principle of the "coincidence of opposites. If we assume, that the signs of the Ainu were the aesthetico-philosophical models to all this, then it would make sense that they considered theirs signs with highest respects.

Tageslauf				
Mond-Monat		erste Hälfte	zweite Hälfte	
Jahr		kalter Jahreszeit	warme Jahreszeit	
Lebensspanne des Universums	Ursprung	Gegenwärtige Welt		Ende



THE ESSENCE OF THE WHOLE: HOUSE AND ENVIRONMENT (VALLEY WITH MOUNTAINS) ARE STRUCTURED INTO UNITS OF CONTRADICTING, BUT COMPLEMENTARY DOMAINS. THE MODEL OF THIS INTENTIONALLY HARMONIOUS COMPLEX IS THE RITUALLY CONSERVED SYSTEM OF SACRED SIGNS

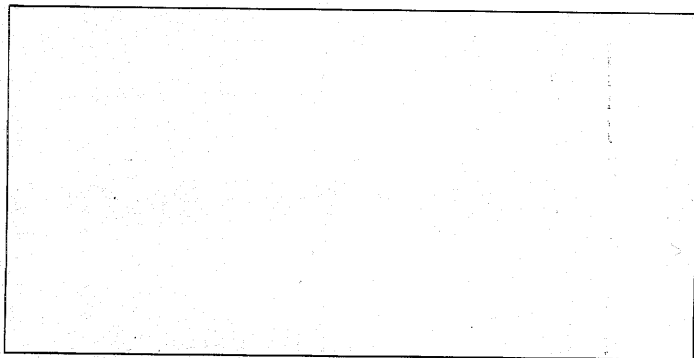
## The ontology, or world-view of the Ainu



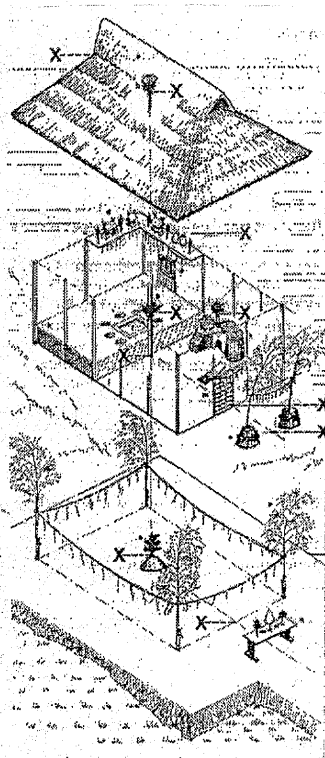
THE LIFE-PHILOSOPHY OF THE AINU IS NOT AN ABSTRACT SYSTEM PROJECTED ON THEIR ENVIRONMENT. IT IS INTRINSICALLY INTERVOWEN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT. IT INCLUDES COMPLEMENTARY VALUED SPATIAL SCHEMATA (HOUSE, VALLEY-TERRITORY, CULT-SIGNS) AND SIMILARLY STRUCTURED, THEIR TIME-SCHEMA. THE WHOLE ECONOMIC AND FESTIVAL LIFE OF THE AINU IS OUTLINED BY THESE SCHEMATA.

SETTLEMENT OF A HUNTER/ COLLECTOR  
SOCIETY (AINU)

With very elementary  
instrumental means and an  
extremely reduced material  
outfit (autonomy!) the Ainu  
reached a highly complex  
ontology based on a bipolar  
value system.



# THE AGRARIAN HOUSE AND SETTLEMENT



THE JAPANESE FARM-HOUSE IS NOT THE RESULT OF PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS,  
BUT AN ACCUMULATION OF CONDITIONS RELATED TO RITES.

# THE AGRARIAN HOUSE AND SETTLEMENT

The Japanese farm-house-landscape is formally very differentiated, but the bipolar arrangement of stamped earth (doma) and upper ceremonial floor on stilts and with tatami is common to all types.



① 大和型 奈良大和郡中興寺跡 (12) と 興福寺 (9), 平田 (16)



② 伊勢型 伊勢中川町中興寺跡 (12) と 興福寺 (上) (9) と 平田 (17)



伊勢



④ 伊勢型 奈良大和郡中興寺跡 (12) と 興福寺 (9), 平田 (16)



⑤ 伊勢型 伊勢中川町中興寺跡 (12) と 興福寺 (9), 平田 (16)



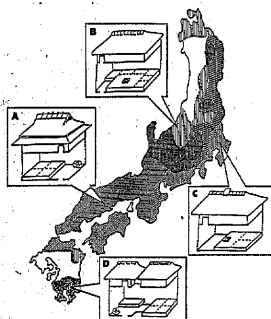
⑥ 大和型 奈良大和郡中興寺跡 (12) と 興福寺 (9), 平田 (16)



⑦ 大和型 奈良大和郡中興寺跡 (12) と 興福寺 (9), 平田 (16)

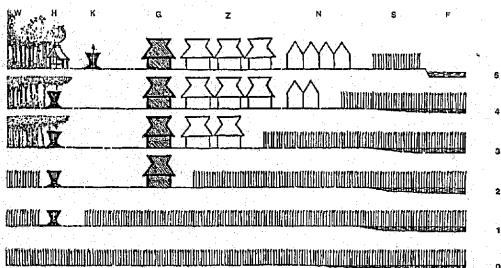
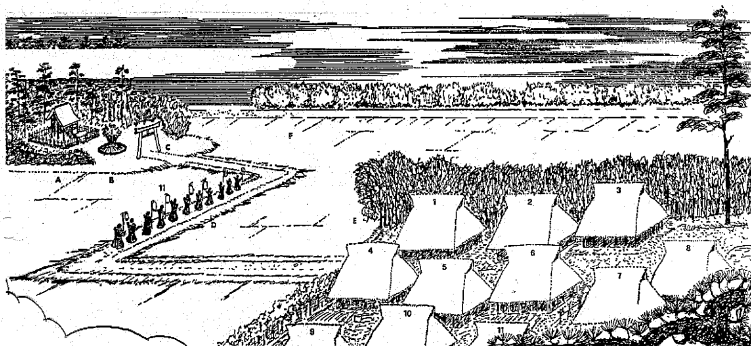


⑧ 伊勢型 伊勢中川町中興寺跡 (12) と 興福寺 (9), 平田 (16)



ANCIENT JAPANESE SHRINES SHOW STRONG COMPLEMENTARY BIPARTITIONS, NOT ONLY IN THEIR OUTER FORM, BUT IN THE INTERPRETATION OF INTERNAL SPACE. THE COMPARISON SHOWS THAT THE HOUSE IS A TEMPLE AND THE TEMPLE IS A HOUSE.

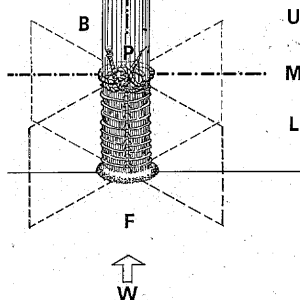
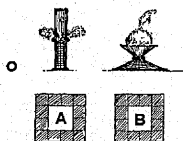
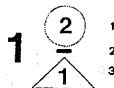
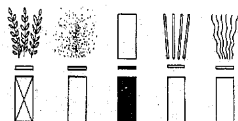
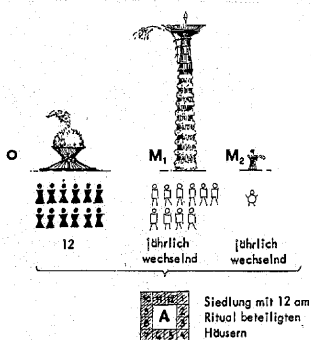
# THE AGRARIAN HOUSE AND SETTLEMENT



THE AGRARIAN SETTLEMENT IS A SPATIALLY, SOCIALLY AND RITUALLY COMPLEX PHENOMENON. IT CAN NOT BE DESCRIBED WITH THE FACETTED VIEW OF WESTERN DISCIPLINES. SETTLEMENT THEORY DESCRIBES IT FROM ITS SPATIAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS, RECORDS THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE INHABITANT AND TRIES TO RECONSTRUCT AN INDEPENDENT LOCAL UNIT (ONTOLOGICAL AUTONOMY)

# THE AGRARIAN HOUSE AND SETTLEMENT: THE AESTHETIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL ELEMENT

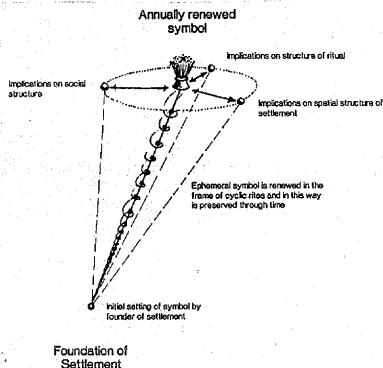
(The sign and its territorial functions and as cognitive  
model of polarity-relations)



THE SIGN IS THE TRADITIONAL MATERIAL NUCLEUS OF THE SETTLEMENTS IDEOLOGY: A HARMONIOUS LOCAL ONTOLOGY (WORLD VIEW) IN REGARD TO SPATIAL, BEHAVIOURAL AND SOCIAL CATEGORIES. THIS IS POSTULATED GLOBALLY IN RELATION TO THE EXISTENCE OF FIBROCONSTRUCTIVE SOCIO-TERRITORIAL SIGNS.



# THE AGRARIAN SETTLEMENT CONSTITUTION: (Structural Model)



The sign implies polar space (village layout), complementary social hierarchy (chief, his descendants and latecomers), aesthetic perception (pro-Portion) and harmonious philosophy.

DIACHRONICALLY THE SIGN REPRESENTS THE EXISTENCE, THE BEGINNINGS AND THE CONTINUITY OF THE SETTLEMENT UP TO THE PRESENT ON THIS PARTICULAR PLACE. THE SIGN IS PARS PRO TOTO FOR THE WHOLE SETTLEMENT IN ALL ITS ONTOLOGICAL ASPECTS.