

Soviet program features Nanai language

by Vladimir Tarabashchuk

Tikhookeanskaya Zvezda

KHABAROVSK — The TV studio of Komsomolsk on Amur, the Soviet Far East, has launched the "Mangbo Naani" (Amur People), a permanent television program broadcast in Nanai, the language of the indigenous population.

Ethnographer Yevdokiya Gaer, member of the Soviet Nationalities' Commission for Ethnic Policy and Interethnic Relations, is the program's consultant.

Nanai by nationality, Gaer has a profound knowledge of the history, customs and problems of the Nanais, Udegeh, Ulchi and other ethnic minorities of the Amur Region.

She is also a spokesman for her people. She recently addressed the first Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and spoke of the need to solve the problems of the northern and Far East Natives immediately.

The population of Soviet Nanais is nearing 10,000. Hunting and fishing have been their main occupations from time immemorial.

The first Nanai writer, Grigory Khodzher, whose books are known all over the country and who was awarded the State Prize of the USSR, gave a fascinating description of the Nanais' life in the past and present.

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The Nanais are accomplished singers and dancers. Nanai women are famous for making fur clothes, shoes and carpets.

The new television program will reach Nanai villages about 150 miles away from the broadcasting station and will be dubbed into Russian. It will discuss the ecological problems of the Amur, the people's main artery; the preservation of the local crafts and customs; and obligatory rather than optional teaching of the Nanai language at the local schools.

The viewers will see the performances of Nanai folk groups and listen to Nanai intellectuals.

The programs are prepared by members of the consultative council which includes experts on the history, culture, crafts and languages of the indigenous population of the Amur Region.

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