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International Scientific Conference**THING IN THE SACRED LIFE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF
THE FAR EAST**

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Abstract

Indigenous peoples of the Russian Far East (Tungus-Manchurians and Paleo-Asians) are the bearers of a unique culture that allowed them, on the basis of life-supporting technologies, to adapt to environmental conditions, to develop an original tool complex, land and water vehicles, industrial buildings, houses and clothing, ethnic food model, utensils, ornament, cult sculpture. All these components are maximally adapted to the conditions of the mountain taiga, tundra, sea coast, rivers and lakes, and are included in the system of performing rituals for treating supernatural beings in order to receive their support and help. These aspects of culture can be studied on the basis of an interdisciplinary methodological base created by domestic and foreign scientists (Aristotle, Arutyunov S.A., Bayburin A.K., Hegel G., Gorokhov V.G., Levin G.D., Ortega-&-Gasset H. and others). As a result of intellectual activity, ethnocultural tradition, and proven technologies, indigenous peoples produced objects necessary for survival, which turned, as a result of certain practical and sacred techniques, into things that have attribute status in an ethnocultural chronotope. It is proposed to look at a thing as the first essence, object of thought, to study the role of a thing in the culture of the indigenous peoples of the Far East, to recognize not only pragmatics, but also subjectivity: a paddle as an extension of a hand, a harpoon as an independent predator, a baton for catching seals from species of progenitor tree.

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1. Introduction

Technology is transforming nature to meet human needs. As a result of the action of life-supporting technologies, new things that are still absent in life are created. These actions are based on ideas, have mental and ethnocultural features, and are necessary in order to minimize the role of chance in the human life system, simplify the process of society's adaptation to nature, and ensure the satisfaction of necessary material and spiritual needs (Ortega-and-Gasset, 1997). The ritual before the technical production of tools or vehicles is performed in order to improve the quality of these things, to obtain guarantees of the best result of their use, to ensure successful fishing or a successful trip, and trading. Beliefs and rituals were necessary components of archaic technology, the essence of which was largely sacred (Gorokhov, 1997). In the traditional culture of the indigenous peoples of the Far East of Russia, instruments, various devices and mechanisms, working equipment were understood on the basis of an animistic picture of the world. Hunters, sea hypericum, fishermen, wild-gatherer collectors believed that tools, weapons, sculptural images were receptacles of omnipotent and all-seeing spirits that help or hinder human activities. The character of the impact of these supernatural beings depended on the behavior of a man, on his moral principles, respect for the elderly, observance of tribal rules and prohibitions. The process of making and using things involves a mechanism for influencing these supernatural beings in the form of propitiation, protective and other rites and sacrifices. Otherwise, produced things will work poorly or even harm people.

2. Problem Statement

Even a brief review of the concepts of ancient Greek and modern scholars shows that a thing as a phenomenon has been and still is the subject of numerous works, which undoubtedly shows the complexity of its understanding, the necessity and relevance of further research on this phenomenon. For Plato, the basic properties of a thing were the concepts of this thing. Aristotle developed the doctrine of the thing arising from the combination of matter and form for a specific reason; Aristotelian thing has the ability to move. The form of a thing, as Aristotle understood it, should not be represented on the basis of geometry; for Aristotle, form is an image, an active energy principle (Aristotle, 1976). Hegel (1970) also wrote that a certain thing consists of matter or substance and has certain properties and qualities. The essence of a thing can be expressed through the thing-object relation: a thing is an object mediated by human labor, it is something that independently exists in space-time (Levin, 2010). According to Bayburin (1981), a thing in a pragmatic and semiotic sense, is the same text of culture as myth. In the study of discourse thing-myth, as an object scientist most often choose ritual things originally made for the sacred sphere, which significantly impoverishes the overall picture of the reconstructed culture. However, any household things possess not only practical, but aesthetic, symbolic and magical functions (Bayburin, 1981). In a similar way, one should consider the essence of things created and existing in the traditional and modern culture of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Far East. Tools, vehicles, as well as cult sculpture are important in sacred projection, as they are filled not only with technological methods for manufacturing, but also with mental structures for the functioning and specific role in society.

3. Research Questions

Research questions that arise when solving this problem can be combined into two main groups. One group will include questions of a theoretical plan, about the essence of a thing, as a philosophical and ethnocultural phenomenon, about the concept of the sacred. Another group synthesizes questions related to the consideration of the features of life-supporting technologies of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Far East.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study consist in identifying the essence and functions of a thing in the sacred projection of life-supporting technologies of the indigenous peoples of the Far East, in proving that not only objects that were originally made for ritual purposes, but also items of utensils, everyday life, household and commercial items can be sacred.

5. Research Methods

To solve this problem, methods of field ethnography were used: observation, questioning of informants from among the indigenous peoples of the Far East, an anthropological experiment, survey, fixing ethnographic materials on paper and electronic media. As theoretical methods, a comparative historical method is used to study the characteristics of ethnic history and culture of indigenous and immigrant peoples in the Far Eastern region of Russia based on the study of stage phenomena, types of culture, processes of cultural interaction, life-supporting technologies; structural and functional analysis of ethnocultural complexes and mechanisms of adaptation to the natural and social environment; a method of interpreting the spiritual aspects of culture and mentality.

6. Findings

Prior to the beginning of the powerful foreign cultural impact on the indigenous peoples of the Russian Far East by the Chinese, Manchurians, Slavs, and Americans, there was no special need to emphasize the research interest in things related to life, economy, crafts, and objects belonging to the category of sacred projection life-supporting technology. Since in the archaic culture a priori, in accordance with the strict principle of stratifying of the society by age and gender groups, women's things were sacred for men, and men's things were respectively sacred for women. Universal hunting law required that a woman not even accidentally touch hunting equipment; a man was not supposed to invade the female world of needlework, in many attributes of maternity rituals; the regulations for processing various types of prey (sea animals, land animals, birds, fish) with specialized knives and cutting boards were observed; men's and women's clothing could not be washed together, etc. All necessities of life were satisfied with the help of life-supporting technologies based on traditional culture in all its manifestations. These technologies are required to maintain and revive the original culture of an ethnos, processes of ethnic identification, integration, ethnic self-awareness, language, ethnocultural space, crafts, life, art, an intergenerational mechanism for transmitting cultural values. The term “technology” was introduced into scientific

circulation in 1772 by the German scientist I.F. Beckmann, who meant technology as the science of processing natural objects (Beckmann, 1777). The French scientist Espinas (1925) emphasized an important stage in the development of mankind: the separation of art from technology, which was then completely religious, traditional and local, and technology - physico-theological (Espinas, 1925).

Sacred, as a worldview institution, a philosophical and ethnocultural phenomenon, has a different semantic load in different discourses. In this article, the sacred is considered as a syncretic unity of the concepts “sacred” and “forbidden” (Durkheim, 2018; Eliade, 1994; Freud, 1923; Kharitonova, 2010, 2016; Kuzmina, 2019; Lapina, 2009; Morozov, 2019; Radcliffe-Brown, 2001; Shnirelman, 2014; Syrtypova, 2008; Seleznev & Selezneva, 2019; Varlamov & Varlamova, 2019; Yusha, 2018). The handling of sacred phenomena and objects requires the observance of cults, beliefs and rituals that differ from religious and moral concepts. A similar mechanism was analyzed by Gennep (1999) while developing the concept of transition rites. He showed that changes affect a person and a community that is forced to resort to protective rituals and prohibitions to mitigate the harmful effects of mental changes. When revealing sacred projections of a thing in life-supporting technologies, the understanding of their nature, based on the ambivalence of what is permitted and forbidden in culture, is important. Since, on the one hand, society is interested in educating experienced and successful hunters and sea hunters, fishermen, and gatherers, who can provide provisions not only for themselves and their families, but also for sick and poor relatives. For that they need to possess a complex of knowledge about the habits of game animals, manufacturing techniques and the use of fishing equipment. On the other hand, a sacred attitude to the world around us, to the nourishing landscape, requires a reasonable limitation of the volumes of extraction, because for abusing the nature all-seeing spirits will strictly punish the guilty hunter and his family.

Over time, under the influence of East Asian and European cultural patterns, health care systems, education, and the introduction of national ideological principles, the process of transformation of traditional culture, forgetfulness of language, beliefs, and technologies began inevitably (Narody Sibiri..., 1999). However, the most important fishing rituals have survived at its core, they include sacrifices to spirits to get good luck in taiga hunting, to hunt a specific animal, before starting sea hunting, for success in sea and river fishing, treating sacred rocks and other objects. Some things, utensils, retain their sacred status in the memory of modern hunters and fishermen, in folklore, in archival sources.

Within the framework of this article, it is impossible to describe even briefly all the examples of the functioning of things in the sacred projection of life-supporting technologies of the indigenous peoples of the Far Eastern region. Therefore, the brightest samples will be considered, giving the most characteristic examples. An important factor is the preservation of a particular plot, belief, ritual, technological technique till our days. In particular, Arutyunov (2007) performed a classic ethno-culturological analysis of the archetype, essence, manufacturing technology and use of the harpoon by sea hunters, which was unsurpassed in logic and depth of thinking. Arutyunov (2007) associated the parts of the bear's body depicted on harpoons as the desire of an ancient Eskimo hunter to give the qualities of a powerful bear predator to a fishing tool, and even more, as a result of placing the harpoon in the sacred projection of fishing technologies, this harpoon itself became a “living” bear, which furiously and triumphantly pounced on prey. You can identify other similar subjects taking as an example the analysis of the technology of "revitalization" of boats. Ivanov (1935) described images of the “eyes” on boats of the indigenous peoples

of the Amur. The technology of drawing "eyes" enlivened the boat, made it a living creature, which helped people in fishing, warned of danger. Amur hunters and fishermen believed that the boat should be made only from "living" wood, so they strictly complied with the ban on the choice of material for making boats and never made them from trees brought by the river, because they knew that this floating wood already belonged to the owner water (Arsenyev, 1908-1909; Shternberg, 1933). Only a boat made from a "living" tree trunk with a preserved soul could ensure a calm sailing for a person in the fishery. Two main variations of this ritual were recorded: the Nivkhs left shavings on the stump of a freshly cut tree that returned soul and life to the plant (Taksami, 1977), and the Tungus-Manchurians stuck a freshly cut branch of this tree into the stump. Currently, the technologies for making water transport from wood or birch bark retain rituals for revitalizing boats and giving them the qualities necessary for people to use in the living world, and not in the form of gravestone attributes.

At the traditional bear festival of the Orocs, Udegeites and other peoples of the North, the old people ate the penis of the killed male to supplement their fertile energy, a bone from a bear's phallus was placed on a birch bark vessel, from which women were fed to magically cure infertility (Arsenyev, 1908-1909). The hunter believed that amulets made of animal bones and hung-over baby cradles can convey the qualities of specific animals to a child, for example, hunting skills. It was believed that when the boy grows up, he will be able to get successfully animals, the bones of which hung above his cradle. The magical power enclosed in the bones of the lynx will make his fingers tenacious, the sable bones will give him the qualities of an agile hunter, the otter bones will be an agile fisherman, the badger's bones will teach them to find their food without error. The claws of animals provided skill: for girls as embroiderers, boys as carvers for bone and wood (Arsenyev, 1908-1909).

The Nivkh sea hunters made a wooden baton for piercing the skull of a captured seal from a generic plant. The modern Sakhalin Nivkhs from the village of Katangli have a belief about their origin from birch and larch. A hole was made in the skull of the beast in order to reach the brain. After eating it, shavings of alder, bird cherry, and berries were thrust into the skull. You can't leave an empty skull, otherwise the children will have a headache. The seals' skulls were wrapped in shavings and put on a stake that stood in the water three to four meters from the shore. Over time, it fell into the water, and the soul of the seal, as an immortal substance, returned to its master spirit of the sea.

In the reindeer herding culture of the Chukchi, each area has its owner, the bright half of the day belongs to people, the dark to evil spirits, so the entrance to the yaranga is always closed at night. There is no and there cannot be anything superfluous in the economy of nomads, each thing performs many functions. For example, at the entrance to the yaranga there is a stone that presses the cover of the yaranga. Nomads carry it with them while migrating, it is also the guardian of people. At the festival of a young deer, bones are crushed on it and the brain is taken out. Wooden snow-beater is also a guard of people from evil spirits. In modern European-type houses, it is most often located on a hanger, in the hallway, to be always at hand. The Chukchanka S.R. Yakunina recalled the tales of her grandmother about how a snow-beater tricked a simple-minded evil spirit into walking around the yaranga all night, but failed to find the entrance to it (Bereznitsky, 2019).

7. Conclusion

Thus, in our days it is possible to fix subjects in the culture of the indigenous peoples of the Far East, confirming the presence of things that find its place in the sacred projections of life-supporting technologies. Despite the available modern hunting and fishing equipment, boats with powerful motors, snowmobiles, metal traps, diesel electric generators, reliable communication systems, automatic firearms, hunters and fishermen do not refuse the help of supernatural forces, from the magical protection of amulets to obtain good luck in technology manufacturing of hunting vehicles, tools for the hunting of marine and land animals. Beliefs and rituals that accompany the process of making things act as sacred components of technology. Hunters attach particular quality to manufactured samples of fishing equipment to ensure the production necessary for the survival of the ethnic group.

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