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## The Energy of Ornament of Indigenous Peoples of the North

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**Abstract.** The relationship of energy and energy is a complex process of interaction of substances, forces and phenomena, changing their qualities. At the same time energy is a special mechanism regulating economic, mental human activity aimed at extraction, transformation and use of energy resources for realization of vital activity of society. The essence of the energy of ornament lies in the qualities of materials used to create the external appearance of the pattern, in the archetypes and codes of its internal, symbolic, worldview content. The material is associated with the life energy of wild, domestic animals, and birds. The peculiarity of ornamental art of indigenous peoples of the North is the use of fish skin, skins of sea animals. Thus, when creating ornaments, parts of bodies and components of energy substance of living beings living in all layers of the surrounding world: heavenly, earthly, aquatic and underwater, which are interpreted in accordance with ethno-cultural features of cosmogenesis and the world picture, life cycle rituals, with cults of sacred animals and ancestors.

**Keywords:** indigenous peoples of the North, decorative art, ornament, symbolism, semantics, energy

Research area: ethnography; history.

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## Энергетика орнамента коренных народов Севера

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**Аннотация.** Соотношение энергии и энергетики заключается в сложном процессе взаимодействия веществ, сил и явлений, изменяющих свои качества. При этом энергетика представляет собой особый механизм, регулирующий хозяйственную, ментальную деятельность человека, направленную на добычу, преобразование и использование энергетических ресурсов для осуществления жизнедеятельности общества. Сущность энергетики орнамента заключается в качествах материалов, используемых для создания внешнего вида узора, в архетипах и кодах его внутреннего, символического, мировоззренческого содержания. Материал связан с жизненной энергией диких и домашних животных, птиц. Особенностью орнаментального искусства коренных народов Севера является использование рыбьей кожи, шкур морских животных. Таким образом, при создании орнамента применяются части тел и компоненты энергической субстанции живых существ, обитающих во всех слоях окружающего мира: небесном, земном, водном и подводном, которые осмысливаются в соответствии с этнокультурными особенностями космогенеза и картины мира, ритуалов жизненного цикла, с культами священных животных и предков.

**Ключевые слова:** коренные народы Севера, декоративное искусство, орнамент, символика, семантика, энергетика.

Научная специальность: 5,6,4. – этнология, антропология и этнография.

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### Introduction

The term “energy” comes from the Greek concept meaning the principle of action. In the process of creative activity, different kinds of energy and matter interact. Man is realizing in the codes of his culture, art, in the symbols of ornament. The ornamental culture of the ethnoses of a single historical and ethnographic area is characterized by a certain canon, which is subject to transformation as a result of global changes, the introduction of new materials, technologies of mastering the surrounding space, energy sources necessary for life.

Theoretical approaches to the study of the essence of geometric, zoomorphic, ornithomorphic, ichthyomorphic, cloud-like, spiral-tape, etc. ornament, the creativity of indigenous peoples of the North, can be classified into several directions. In particular, the structural architectonics of ornament; semantics as a system of signs as communication between man and magico-mythological meanings; syntax as a principle of pattern space organization; historical and cause-effect relations, uniting semantic and motivational space, rite-magic, practical, cognitive and sign functions; ethno-cultural

features of energy of ornament (Kagan, 1961: 15, 20, 24 etc.; Lotman, 1964: 57–58; Danilova, 2006: 135–146).

### Theoretical framework

Studies of the essence, structure and functions of ornament in the culture of the indigenous peoples of the North constitute an extensive historiography. One group of works is devoted to the study of ornament as a historical source when solving problems of ethnic history (Ivanov, 1931: 121–125; 1954: 252–253; 1958: 3–23; 1961: 369–373; 1963; Kaplan, 1980; Bortnik, 2017: 51–53). The other – is the problem of semiotics and semantics of decorative art. Using a semiotic approach, ornament is seen as a system of symbols and texts, as a cultural and semiotic construct that generates representations of the surrounding universe (Kagan, 1961; Lotman, 1964: 57–58; Gerchuk, 1979: 30–33; 2013; Baiburin, 1989: 63–86; Zhukova, 1991: 104–110; Ryndina, 1992: 61–71; Fedorova, 1995: 14–16; Gilevich, 2012; Privalova, 2013a: 526–533; 2013b: 270–275; Ivanov, 2015: 14–25; Lazutina, 2016: 85–87; Rudenko, 2017: 467–484; Sem T., 2015; 2018: 37–56; 2019: 144–163; 2020: 41–50).

The third – studies ornament and its connection with the ethnic picture of the world (Sternberg, 1931: 103–121; Okladnikov, 1971; Geometric Ornament, 2009; Diakonova, 2016: 299–302; Bortnik, 2017: 51–53).

The fourth – explores ornament as a mechanism for the preservation of cultural values (Schneider, 1930: 90–100; Kocheshkov, 1989; Andreeva, 1990; Afonkin 1998; Butkevich, 2000; Ivanova-Uvarova, 2005; Koptseva, 2011: 426–465; 2022: 4–8).

No less important methodological approach is the study of the energetic content of ornament, the correlation of the creative idea with the energetic filling of the life system (Privalova, 2013b: 270–271).

The most relevant for the disclosure of the context of the relationship between ornament and energy are the theoretical developments of the poet A. Belyi (B.N. Bugayev). Analyzing the essence of creativity, Belyi noted that aesthetics and symbolism emerge from the energy of human activity, which fills up people

with creative power. The intermediate link of the energy-will imperative is the category of causality, the form of cognition, the boundary between the unconscious creative principle and the visible world (Belyi, 2010a: 40; Privalova, 2015: 3). Creativity includes the postulates of the law of conservation of energy and material resistance.

Art strives for harmony, in the process of creation there is a collision of the energy of the artist and the material. Man, creating a system of worldview of archaic, magical, cosmogonic and cosmological, mythological, religious, and then aesthetic creativity uses the mechanism of mutual transformation of energy types corresponding to these mentalities (Belyi, 2010b: 76, 102–103). In creativity, the artist projects and idealizes the reality surrounding him on the plane. The embodied image in the colorful form, in the game of light and shadow, transmits the internal, subtle energy of the universe (Belyi, 2010c: 129–130). In this process one should also take into account the volume and quality of the material (color scheme, nature of patterns, ornamentation), the complication of which can become an obstacle to the ideal embodiment of creative energy. The energetic power lies precisely in the simplicity of the artist's idea. This is a necessary condition of the metaphysical genesis of beauty, the energy model of an artistic work (Belyi, 2010g: 147). The mental essence of the ornament of the indigenous peoples of the North, the technologies of its creation, in many respects correspond to these theoretical discourses.

### Statement of the problem

Theories of origin of ornament interpret it as an information coding system, carrying signs and archetypes, cosmogonic symbols, as a variant of writing, as a type of art performing a protective, magical function. Ethnic ornament is a bright indicator of mentality, mythology, creative inspiration of its creators and keepers; it encodes the history of the people, traditions and self-consciousness. This article highlights the less developed hypothesis of the energy saturation of the ornament. Ornamental motifs, which are used by for decorative and aesthetic purposes, as a symbolic and mytho-

logical connotation, play the role of a protective field, using the energy of images. There is an air of energy, warmth, strength, beauty and reliability from the ornament. However, the energy of the ornament is ambivalent: in most cases, it is positive, but it can also remind of the negative consequences, in particular the solar signs. The article is the first attempt to analyze the ornaments of the indigenous peoples of the North as an energy substance.

### Methods

To solve the stated hypothesis practical and theoretical methods of ethnographic science and historical ethnology are used. As practical methods were methods of collecting and primary analysis of ethnographic material during expeditions, during work in museums and archives. The main theoretical methods are comparative-historical, which allows identifying ethno-cultural features of the Tungus-Manchzhurians and Paleo-Asians ornaments, aspects of traditional and modern ornamentation, the degree of preservation of energy of ornament as a result of the influence of foreign ethnic cultures. Anthropological hermeneutics helps to investigate the essence of ornament, its structure, archetypes and cultural codes. The functional analysis used to reveal the energy saturation of various forms of domestic, architectural, protective, shamanic ornamentation. The relevance of using these methods is due to the need to introduce new materials and hypotheses into the scientific turnover, to comprehend the specificity of art, to develop new methodological principles for analyzing the energy component of ornament, to identify techniques for the preservation of ornamental art samples of indigenous peoples of the North as a cultural heritage.

### Discussion

The ornament of indigenous peoples of the North contains elements of wildlife, images of the Sun, stars, earth, northern lights, mountains, animals, plants and their fragments. All these plots are associated with the comprehension of the essence and functioning of different forms of energy, depending on the specificity of economic and cultural type, stages of devel-

opment of society, the impact of neighboring and migrant peoples, world religions.

The ornament is filling with the energy of creation of the universe and its levels, fertility of human, animal and plant worlds, magical protection from the influence of supernatural beings.

The most important energetically saturated element of the ornament is the Sun. In the ornament, the sun colors are yellow, red and gold, solar circles and rays, which bring warmth, life and fertility to all life. In Evenkis ornaments, the Sun is depicted as concentric circles with a dot in the center (Bortnik, 2017: 51–53). Such protective ornaments are placed on things worn on the head and chest.

In the culture of the Udegeis, Nanais, Uchias and Orochis the Sun is personified with the images of girls creating ornaments. According to the Nanais beliefs, the morning Sun sends to the earth, on the tips of its rays, the souls of people being born in the form of birds (Ivanov, 1976: 163; Podmaskin, 2004: 99). On the back of the bride's wedding dress the clan tree with the branches and birds sitting on them depicted. The more the ornament contained birds, the more fruitful energy saturated this robe, as well as the future family life, motherhood. Similar robes with variations of materials (cotton fabric, fish leather, suede, Chinese silk, etc.), techniques of execution, types of seams, and colors are widespread among the indigenous peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region.

The Tungus-Manchurs and Paleo-Asians ornament as a system of symbols and signs expressed in lines and color combinations is fill with solar signs, stylized images of the Sun, spirals of coagulated snakes, concentric circles with radially diverging paired rays. These solar motifs are present on numerous magic averters, pendants in the form of disks, on the shamanic attributes (Ivanov, 1954; 1961: 401; Kocheshkov, 2002: 60; Gontmacher, 2004: 6; Podmaskin, 2004: 99).

The Sun usually understood as a positive energy substance, spiritualized as a good being giving warmth and light, life to people, animals and plants. However, in the folklore of the indigenous peoples of East and Northeast Asia, myths about the multiplicity of Suns (from

three to nine), about a mythical time when all living things were destroyed by the impact of excessive solar energy, have survived. Despite the real perceived fruiting energy, light, heat and other positive characteristics, the image of the Sun is also filling with negative plots. The energy of several luminaries burned all living forms on the earth (it burned), in the mountains (rocks melted like wax), in the taiga (trees and bushes burned) and even under the water, which boiled. A well-aimed archer, who killed unnecessary luminaries with his arrows, saved the earth and the people. The peoples of Eurasia preserved a complex of beliefs connected with hunting for a cosmic elk, a symbol of the Sun (Kreynovich, 1929: 81; Yanshina, 1984: 169, 172; Podmaskin, 1993: 219–226; 2004: 100; Sem T., 1997: 66–67; 2021: 8–17).

In the culture of many peoples of the world is known to use ornament, its energy-informational qualities, structure, magic, ritual signs, crosses, spirals, for therapeutic purposes. In this way, the human body is influenced fruitfully by the harmony of the ratio of the background and pattern, volume and plane. The cell structure of ornamental symbols is considered the most effective. In the ornamental art of the Amur ethnos, this rule corresponds to the ornament “fish, dragon scales”. The genesis is based on the use of fish skin for clothing and footwear. Even removed scales retain their natural ornamentation on products. The scales on brides’ robes are symbolically associated with the most powerful mythical animal – the dragon (Sem Y., 1973: 221–222; Melnikova, 2005: 176–179; Sem T., 2007b: 247–248).

Images of the dragon of the classical type known from East Asian demonology came to Amur and Sakhalin with Chinese and Manchu items: clothing, silk and satin fabrics, robes, tableware, cult iconography, etc.

However, in the Amur ornamental art there are numerous samples of dragon-like creatures, heavenly, water, earthly, genesis of which in beliefs has local roots. The scales of a dragon depicted on a wedding robe, conceptualized by its characteristics – a powerful, energy-filled creature inhabiting all strata of world space. A dragon combines the strength of a bear, the agility of a tiger, the ability to

walk the earth, fly like a bird, and swim like a fish. The characteristic of dragon-like creatures is multipolar, their influence on a person depended on behavior, on observance or not observance of patrimonial customs, laws of traditional morality, ethics and field life. Therefore, the energy of dragons could be positive and negative. Cellular symbols of various forms correspond to the rapportorial technology of execution of a repeating pattern horizontally and vertically, which form a constructive basis of an ornament, on which images of animals, birds, fish, rosettes with patterns, etc. are superimposed. Fragments of scales in the form of closing energy pulses of a certain size correspond to consistently and rhythmically arranged cells of living armor protecting the girl from the arrows of evil spirits. These symbols are drawn in accordance with the canon archetype – overlapping upper fragments, with free lower boundaries, giving safe freedom of movement, harmonious and favorable for the human body dynamics.

Life cycle rituals are filled with rational and magical fruitful energy, protective taboos. Powerful energy component is concentrated in ornamental motifs, in magical ornaments on women’s underwear. Diamond-shaped ornaments expressed cult of fertility in Tungus. Evenks had rhombuses with ovals and triangles located on the perimeter of the cross, symbolized the feminine, the continuation of the family. Similar spiral-tape patterns of the Orochi, Nivkhs, Oroks, Udegeis, Ulchis possess active energy associated with the cult of fertility, provide conditions for the birth of new life, well-being during pregnancy, easy childbirth and health of the baby. These patterns are a powerful stimulant based on a woman’s self-hypnosis, activate the nervous system, have a beneficial effect on the body as a whole. The semantics of such an ornament is complex, difficult to decode, because it includes the ancient archetypes of consciousness associated with fertility, with the birth of the universe in the form of a fiery, solar serpent, coiled like a fetus.

The second place after the solar symbolism in the ornamentation is given by the informants to real and mythical animals-demiurs, supernatural ancestors. In accordance with the



archaic mythology, with the cosmogonic subjects, the middle world created from the primordial waters by waterfowls from silt or fluff (Kreynovich, 1929: 84–85; Sangi, 1989: 10–11; Napolski, 1990a: 5–21; 1990b: 65–74; Evzlin, 1993: 10; Meletinski, 2000: 205; Gekman, 2008: 144; Filimonova, 2020: 125–128). In the Evenki ornaments, the image of the waterfowl loon-demiurge was depicted as a cross-shaped figure and understood as a visible from above flying figure of a bird with wings wide apart (Bortnik, 2017: 51–53). In the ornamentation of the Evenks, the Evenki ritual costume was decorated on the back in the form of a flying bird, whose feathers were replaced by a fringe and ribs by multicolored stripes (Sem T., 2007a: 245–246).

The indigenous peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region often use images of bear and tiger in ornaments (on clothes, carpets, architecture, cult sculptures and utensils), filled with powerful protective energy (Ivanov, 1937: 1–45).

With reindeer herders, the basis of life is a reindeer, thanks to its energy people can engage in their usual nomadic life, eat high-calorie meat, sew clothes and cover dwellings. Therefore, in the ornament of reindeer herders the leading role is playing by the motif of horns in the most various and numerous variations.

S. V. Ivanov identified spiral-ribbon, lozenge etc. carved ornamentation on the wooden parts of winter and summer barns, cult constructions and utensils of the Nanais, Nivkhis, Negidals, Ulchis, Ainus and Evenkis (Ivanov, 1953: 234–290). He recorded images of ungulates, bears and dogs as the main subjects. The rosettes and fragments with scrolls may well mean solar symbols, but S. V. Ivanov did not write about that. A pillar ornamented in the traditional dwelling was a mediator between the worlds, a center of beneficial energy and magical protection of the household from evil forces (Ivashchenko, 2003: 67–73; 2005: 13, 19–20). The pole acts as a prototype of the world axis, the world tree, connected with totemism as well, as in the traditional culture it was made of the species of the clan tree.

The ornamental motif of trefoil – a decorative image of a perennial plant trefoil waterwort – was the most powerful from the energetic point of view with the Nihidals. Trefoil liked

to eat moose, powerful animals, the embodiment of the universe, the taiga, sexual energy. The elk's prey provided the family with meat for a long time, and craftswomen with skins for handicrafts.

The energy of the material is also manifested in the subjects of the Amur ornament. A spiral band ornament is characteristic of woodwork; images of animals are typical of birch bark, on fish skin robes, shoes, headdresses the spiral band ornament is combined with zoomorphic and vegetative patterns. Dynamism, energy of the pattern follows the nature of the melodic flow of lines in woodcarving and bone carving, in symmetry and asymmetry, in combining warm and cold shades in embroidery. The energy of movement in ornamental art is achieving by internal mobility, the traverse of spirals; the movement goes horizontally, and from the depths, directly to the viewer (Gontmacher 2004: 7).

V. K. Arseniev recorded the Udeges people mythological plots containing archaic information about the struggle of people with supernatural beings in the process of cosmogenesis. It the ornament that helped people to defeat harmful forces (Arseniev, 1914–1925: 237–238, 265–266; 1995: 166–169; Bereznitsky, 2022: 11–21). In the cosmogonic myths of the peoples of the world, the mandatory components are the tools with which during cosmogenesis the parts of the universe were extracted (from under water) created (in the furnace and on the anvil): sky, earth, stars; the heroes fought against evil forces and chthonic creatures. After the monsters die, parts of their bodies are transforming into cosmic objects; there is a transformation of chaos into order, water into dry land, darkness into light, and emptiness into matter. An important characteristic of chaos is its connection with the water element, which may be in the world egg. Udegean myths tell of how people once wrestled with a swamp giant, whose life energy was stored in a green copper egg. Only by breaking this egg could the giant be killing.

The brother hunter helping by his sister, armed with an *udekhi* cutting board, on which she carved ornaments for her crafts of fish skin, rovdugs, and cloth. The sister smashed an egg with this board, and the giant died. Perhaps it

was the magic of the ornament, as a powerful amulet against harmful creatures, which helping people to defeat the monster. To prevent the giant's soul from being reborn, the hunter cut his body into pieces. He threw the head into the swamp, in which bumps resembling human heads appeared. From the teeth emerged a constellation of "human eggs"; from the red eyes of the giant emerged the star Antares in the constellation Scorpio and a star in the constellation Libra.

Shamanic art represents a separate sphere of ornament: here, everything is saturated with energy, including the negative energy. Examples of malicious energy associated with ornaments, with decorative art identified by A. V. Smolyak in the shamanism complex of the Nanai and the Ulcha. Therefore, the evil spirit buchile in its transformations often changes forms and is embedded in a chicken, a fox, an ermine, threads, needles, stencils of an ornament (Smolyak, 1991: 204–205, 268).

The energy of color plays a significant role in the ornament. In the color scheme of patterns, yellow, golden, red correspond to the energy of the sun, life, fertility. Life on earth corresponds to brown, blue and green, embodying the animal world, water and vegetation.

Sound has destructive or creative energy. Ornament can create one or another sound vibration, and under the influence of harmonious sound vibrations, a person is able to construct ideal ornamental patterns. The influence of pulsating sound waves and rhythms is recording in the ornamentation of the Chukchi (Bereznitsky, D. 2314. 2022: 247). In the tundra and in the yaranga, the Chukchis always orient themselves to nature, to the sunrise and sunset. You can sew only from morning to afternoon, because Chukchis thread is different from Russians thread, as well as the entire technology. Russians thread is mute, it has no sound, but Chukchis thread is made of sinew, so when it goes through a hole in the hide, it makes a sound, like a string in a musical instrument. When the needle pierces the hide, a click is heard, and when the thread is pulled through the hole in the hide, the sound is quite strong: the thread begins to sing and a special energetic effect is created. However, this sing-

ing attracts evil spirits, which appear in the afternoon to harm people. But this is a topic for a separate study.

### Conclusion

The masters of the North did not know the laws of conservation and transformation of energy, but the energy of their ornaments was preserved in things. The ornament not only decorated, but also energetically protected, summoned light forces and drove away malicious ones. Not only ethno-cultural information was encoded in the ornaments, but also a complicated process of development, accumulation, transformation, transfer of energy and creative resources of cultural heritage. The ornament stores the author's mental energy and subsequently gives it to new consumers, descendants, who are at a new turn in the history of the ethnos. The energy of ornamental design is supplemented by vegetable energy of used fabrics, birch bark, natural energy of animals, birds and fish, of skin of which blanks and sinewy threads are made. Ornaments made of skins and skins of animals, birds and fish not only save their energy, protect humans, but also give people the qualities of animals: speed, agility, strength, endurance, intuition, the ability to navigate in space and find prey. Primary energy resources containing natural reserves of energy are transformed with the help of field technologies, fantasies of masters, into works of decorative art filled with symbols, signs and codes. With the help of the subtle energy of these symbols, the energy matrix, the master transforms matter and space, giving them not only aesthetic but also magical qualities. The ornament contains a powerful informative energy: it is an archetypical language, the meaning of which modern people no longer understand. However, in archaic culture, it used for communication not only between people, but also between a person and the universe. Archaic ornaments are not just beautiful patterns, but complex visual ciphers, capable of creating protective energy waves. The ornament as a center of sacred symbols is able to have a profound positive impact on the human body, consciousness at the level of genetic memory. The ornament pattern has an active energy, causing a rush of power, positive energy balance.

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