

The adaptation of artistic heritage and technology of the Nanai people to modern conditions

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Abstract

The article describes the history of the Nanai people. My work describes the manufacturing technology of this population's artistic handiwork. Having investigated the culture and way of life of the Nanai people, we identified three basic trends: fresco, fancy-work and fish skin currying. The sacred national ornaments range widely in terms of subject, thereby adapting to modern conditions.

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Introduction

Within the framework of a class project, each student in my group studied one of the indigenous groups of the Russian Far-East. I would like to draw your attention to the unique Nanai people. The artistic aspects of these people are well able to compete with modern prints, both in everyday things and in exclusive things.

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General information

The name “Nanai” translates to “people of the land”, while “Golds” is the outdated name. In China, they are known as hechzhe or Hezhen. Since the mid-17th century during Khabarov's campaign, pathfinders referred to the Nanai people as “achany” and “Natci” (Fig 1).

The Nanai village is located on the banks of the Amur River; Beijing's Treaty in 1860 divided the area of habitation between Russia and China. The majority of the Russian Nanai live in Khabarovsk Krai (Fig 2). Once, a significant number of Chinese and Koreans lived in this area but underwent resettlement in the late 1930s. The Nanai villages are located from Khabarovsk to Komsomolsk-on-Amur and in the Pozharsky district of Primorsky Krai, which is a region in the Far

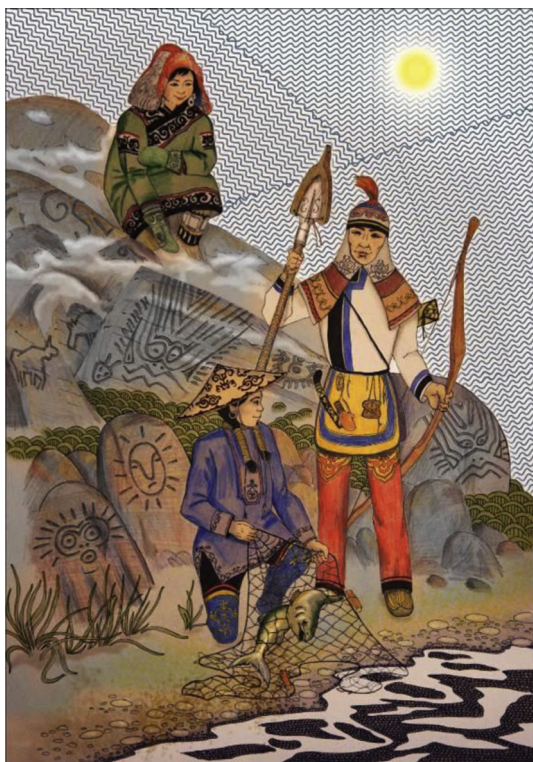


Fig. 1. Nanai.

East of Russia. A small subset of the Nanais, the hechzhe, live in China.

The hechzhe are semi-nomadic people and lived in seasonal settlements. These people built dugouts, semi-dugouts and ground-framed homes. They also built Russian log huts or «izbas» — large log houses with wooden frames (Fig 3(a, b, c)) and gable roofs. Later, they chopped huts in the forest and made tents out of various fishing materials.

Their main traditional occupations are fishing and hunting. In winter, they created fur (sable, squirrel, columns, moose, musk deer, bear, red deer or maral). They caught fish using seines, nets and harpoons (great Siberian sturgeon, Siberian salmon and pink salmon). The spawning of salmon was the main event in the life of the Nanai people. These people gathered berries, nuts, and ginseng (man-plant), and they maintained sledge dogs. The Nanai moved by boat (plank, hollowed, birch), skis, and sledge.

Constant contact with China had a strong influence on the Nanai culture. In exchange for furs and fish, they obtained tobacco, millet, vodka, and various fabrics (e.g., silk and linen). Nanai smithing had developed under the influence of these contacts. In the 17th century, Nanai armour, helmets and chain armour were highly appreciated in China and Manchuria.

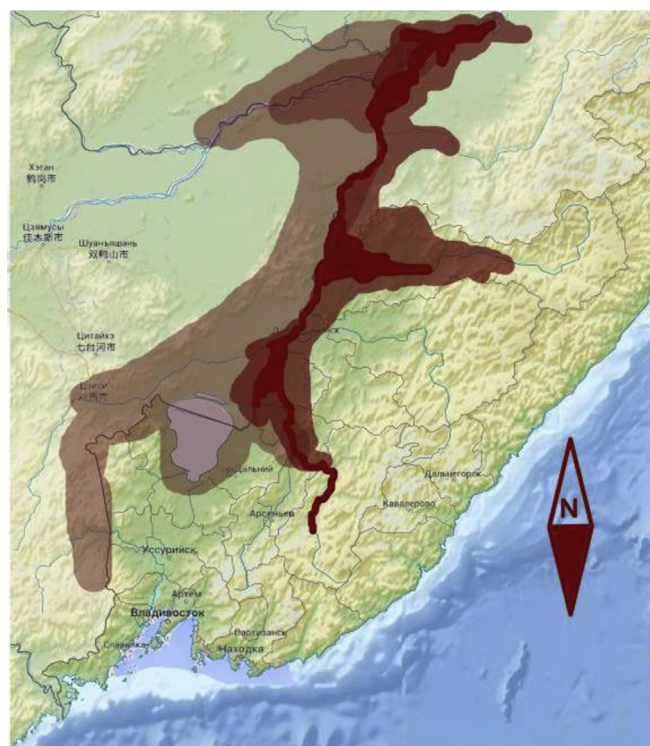


Fig. 2. Scheme of a settlement of Nanai people.

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