

# Design of applied and decorative art elements based on the example of Nanai shaman's culture

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## Abstract

*This article describes the history of the culture of Nanai shamanism. The object of my work is the development of applied and decorative art handiworks through the culture of Far-Eastern indigenous people, for example of Nanai shamans. When learning the culture of Far-Eastern indigenous people, we have managed to bring in elements of Nanai culture into the design of modern things, such as the dreamcatcher.*

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*Keywords:* Nanai culture; Shaman; Spirit; Talisman artistic handiwork; Tree of life; Dreamcatcher

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## Introduction

The Nanai People, Nani (self-designation – “natives”, “local people), or Golds (former name), are indigenous people from Russia. They live downstream of the Amur river and the right feeder of the Ussuri river in Khabarovsk and Primorsky Krai of the Russian Federation (Fig. 1). The population in Russia is 10,5 thousand people. Some of the Nanai – “Hezhe”

(2 thousand people) live in China. They speak the Nanai language, which falls within the Tungusic languages of the Altaic language family. There are some dialects and sub-dialects. The writing system is Cyrillic. The Russian language is also expanded among the Nanai People [1].

## General information

The predominant religious faith of the majority of Far-Eastern indigenous people is shamanism – faith in spirits. Shamanism is a faith in the interaction between a human and spirit with the help of a shaman who gets in touch with spiritual powers. This religion is prevalent in the area of the Far East and Far North. Shamanism has always been regarded as an occult

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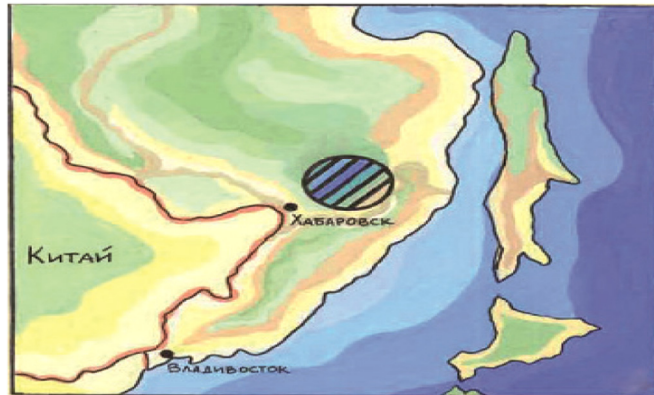


Fig. 1. Scheme of the settlement of the Nanai people.

phenomenon penetrated by mysticism, age-old traditions and unresolved contradictions [2].

The shaman is an intermediary between people and the spirit world, having guardian spirits and helper-spirits. Helper-spirits often assume the similitude of wild animals (tiger, bear), birds (eagle, owl), and

fishes. Guardian spirits are usually spirits of dead ancestors of a shaman (Fig. 2).

Shamans have various social functions that penetrate all spheres of material culture. A shaman is an essential part of significant events in the life of a human, including weddings, birth, illness, death, field



Fig. 2. Nanai shaman.

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