

## Altai Tradition in the Pohai-Korean Art

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**Abstract:** In 2004 Amur-Primorskii archaeological expedition discovered a pottery kiln with grey-clay ceramics. The site was called settlement Sinegorye 1. The ceramics being the kiln the following forms: large earthenware pots with collar rim being widely spread in the Mediaeval epoch on Pohai monuments of North East China, the Russian Primorye and North East part of Korea; vase-formed articles and also typical Pohai pots of Koguryo origin. The basic decoration on the pottery were horizontal furrows being located in two ornamental zones: along the rim and hangers. Besides, in collection there were articles with stamped types of design, represented by geometrical figures that were put down in the belts – rhombuses and triangles, *and also horizontal belt with dancing people holding each other by hands*. Figures are outlined schematically, details of faces are not drawn, but there are head-dresses or hair-do. The height of figures – 1,7 sm. The length of arms – 0,7 sm. The height of the head up to the middle of the body – 0,5 sm. Dancing people were dressed in one and the same form of the dress. It is widening downward from the waist (bosom) to the hem and represented a triangle. The length of such a skirt – 0,6 sm. The width along the hem – 0,8 sm. The width around the breast – 0,3 sm.

The most ancient parallel to such “the round dance” is analogous ornament that is made on a flat surface of the handle of a bronze knife being kept on Ordosky State Museum of China. The bronze knife is related to Hunnu culture. The ornamentation is stamped. The character of the ornamentation on the bronze handle of a Hunnu knife and ornamentation of the belt on Pohai pottery from the kiln of Sinegorye 1 settlement are identical in all details.

One more analogy to “dancing people”, that the author pointed out, was discovered in the ethnographic collection of the Museum of Minorities of China (Beiping) where such a scene was cut out on wooden panel and was an article of the exposition among ritual attributes of ethnic communities of North East

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China. The composition of ornamental motif of “dancing people” is completely analogous both to Hunnu and Pohai motifs.

Exposed parallels of ornamental motif “Dancing people, holding each other by hands” show that it took place on the territory of the Central Asia and the Far East at the end of the first thousand B.C. (Hunnu epoch), at the end of the first thousand A.D. (Pohai time), during ethnographic time it was connected with ethnic communities of Altai language circle, who communities this territory from the ancient time.

The round-dance on the vessel let us suppose that this is a round-dance Kangansunvolle that was used to be danced by women in national costume hanbok at the time of the Harvest holiday.

The Mediaeval “Korean trace” is also determined with the fact that this ornamentation was discovered the kiln of Koguryo type, it is distinctly stratified and marked on the vessel of Pohai forms. Thus, if the supposed version of decoding the ornamental motif, that was analyzed above, is true, there seen a certain connection of Hunnu, Pohai and Korean traditions in applied arts of these ethnic communities.

**Keywords:** Altay, Primorie, Bohai, Koguryo, Hunnu, round-dancing pictures Koksharovka settlement, Sinegor

**Özet:** 2004 yılında gerçekleştirilen Amur-Primorskii arkeoloji keşifleri sırasında bir çanak çömlek fırını ve gri kilden yapılmış bir takım seramikler bulunmuştur. Bu fırının bulunduğu bölge Sinegorye 1 olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Fırında bulunan seramikler şunlardır: kuzeydoğu Çin, Rusya Primorye ve kuzeydoğu Kore'deki Pohai abidelerinde de geçen Orta Çağda yaygın olarak kullanılan kenarlıklı büyük toprak kaplar; vazo şeklindeki eşyalar ve ayrıca Koguryo dönemine özgü Pohai kapları. Kapların üstündeki temel süsleme, kenar ve askı boyunca görülen enine çizgilerdir. Bunun dışında, koleksiyonlarda basılarak yapılmış geometrik şekilli süslemelerin görüldüğü eşyalar da bulunmaktadır. Bu süslemelerde eşkenar dörtgenler ve üçgenler ile birbirlerinin elini tutarak dans eden insan figürleri yer almaktadır. Figürler şema hâlinde olup figürlerin yüz ayrıntıları resmedilmemiştir ancak süslemelerde başlıklar ve saç modelleri görülmektedir. Figürlerin yükseklikleri 1,7 cm; kollarının uzunluğu ise 0,7 cm; başı ile üst vücudu arasındaki yükseklik 0,5 cm'dir. Dans eden insan figürlerinin elbise-leri tek tiptir ve belden eteğe genişleyen bir üçgen ile gösterilmektedir. Elbisenin uzunluğu 0,6 cm; genişliği etekte 0,8, göğüste ise 0,3 cm'dir.

Bu “çember dansı” ile kıyas edilebilir en eski örnek, Ordosky Çin Müzesinde muhafaza edilen bir bronz bıçağın yüzüne resmedilmiş bir süslemede görülmektedir. Bronz bıçak Hunnu kültürü ile bağlantılıdır. Bıçağın üstünde

görülen süsleme bıçağa basılmıştır. Bronz Hunnu bıçağının üstündeki süsleme ile Sinegorye 1'den çıkarılmış Pohai çömleğinin kemerinde yer alan süsleme bütün ayrıntılarıyla örtüşmektedir.

“El ele tutuşarak dans eden insanlar” motifinin yer aldığı diğer örnekler, bunun milattan önce birinci binyılın sonu (Hunnu dönemi) ile milattan sonra birinci binyılın sonunda (Pohai dönemi), bu bölgede eski dönemlerden beri yaşamakta olan Altay dilli etnik topluluklarla bağlantılı bir dönemde meydana getirildiğini göstermektedir.

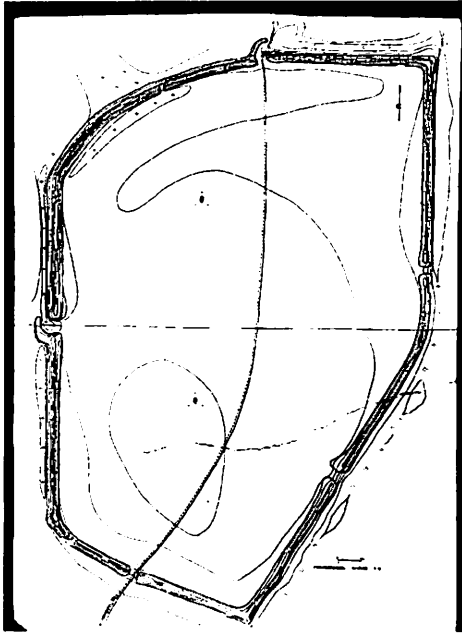
Kaplar üzerinde yer alan çember dansı, hasat mevsiminde Koreli kadınların geleneksel giysi “hanbok” içerisinde yaptıkları Kangansunvolle dansını anımsatmaktadır. Süslemenin Koguryo'ya özgü bir kil çeşidinin üzerinde yer alması ve Pohai tarzı bir kap üstünde görülmesi, bu süslemede Orta Çağ'dan kalma “Kore izleri”nin var olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, eğer yukarıda ele alınan süsleme gerçekse, Hunnu, Pohai ve Kore halklarının uygulamalı sanat gelenekleri arasında bir bağlantı olduğu söylenebilir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Arkeoloji, çömlekçilik, Kore sanatı, Pohai, Hunnu

### **A history of research**

In 1993 V. I. Dyakov during the exploratory observation of Koksharovskoye-1 site in Chuguevka region Primorski krai discovered a fragment of a circular grey-clay ceramics with stamped ornamentation. It was a kind of horizontal belt of “dancing people”, with the other belt of stamped decoration beneath it being a kind of drawn angles. The researcher related this find to the Mediaeval epoch to Pohai or post-Pohai time. Kokshatavskoye-1 site is of valley-type, a trapezium form, large in size, the perimeter of walls is 1650 m, the square reaches 16 hectares. It was built in the basin of the Ussuri river (the right tributary of the Amur river) in the middle stream of the Pavlovka river (the right tributary of the Ussuri river) (pic. 1). The material was not published<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Diakov V. I. Archaeological works in 1993 (Primorskii krai, Amurskaya oblast). /Archive of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East. FEB RAS, Vladivostok. P. 1, N 18197.

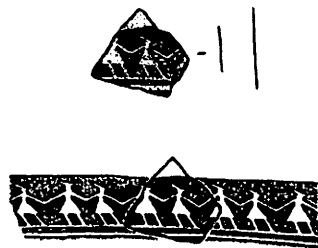


Pic. 1

In 2004 Amur-Primorskii archaeological expedition of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East FEB RAS led by the author of the article exercised exploratory works in the valley of the Zerkalnaya river when there was discovered a pottery kiln with grey-clay ceramics. The kiln was ruining by the river. The site was called settlement Sinegorye-1. In 2005 there were realized rescue works<sup>2</sup>. As a result of the excavations it was ascertained that the arrangement of the kiln corresponds to the arrangement of the kilns of Koguryo type.

### Describing the material

The ceramics being I the kiln consisted of 1400 thousand fragments of nimbi, orifices, mouth, lateral sides, bottom parts, and pottery. Restoration of pottery revealed the following forms: large earthenware pots with collar rim being widely spread in the Mediaeval epoch on Pohai monuments of North



0 ————— 5 cm

Pic. 2

<sup>2</sup> Diakova O. V. The report on the works of Amur- Primorye archaeological expedition in 2005 in Primorskii krai (Kavalerovo region) // Archive of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East. FEB RAS, Vladivstok. P. 1, N 70.

East China, the Russian Primorye and North East part of Korea; vase-formed articles and also typical Pohai pots of Koguryo origin<sup>3</sup>. The basic decoration on the pottery were horizontal furrows being located in two ornamental zones: along the rim and hangers. Besides, in collection there were articles with stamped types of design, represented by geometrical figures that were put down in the belts – rhombuses and triangles, *and also horizontal belt with dancing people holding each other by hands* (outlined by O. D) (pic. 2). Figures are outlined schematically, details of faces are not drawn, but there are head-dresses or hair-do. The height of figures – 1,7 sm. The length of arms – 0,7 sm. The height of the head up to the middle of the body – 0,5 sm. Dancing people were dressed in one and the same form of the dress. It is widening downward from the waist (bosom) to the hem and represented a triangle. The length of such a skirt – 0,6 sm. The width along the hem – 0,8 sm. The width around the breast – 0,3 sm.

Comparing the ceramics with ornamentation of “dancing people” from three sites (surface material from the Zerkalnaya river, Koksharovskoye -1 site and settlement Sinegorye-1) comes to the conclusion having a single meaning: all fragments with “dancing people” are got from one and the same place, that is from the keln of the settlement Sinegorye -1. That means that the production of this keln, probably, was delivered through the large geographical areal from the western side including the Amur basin, from the eastern one as minimum the basin of the Zerkalnaya river. All three locations – Koksharovskoye-1 site, the keln from settlement Sinegorye-1 and the River Zerkalnaya – undoubtedly existed simultaneously. They were connected not only by cultural but trade-economic activity. The latter is determined by the existence of the road transport system functioning there at the Mediaeval epoch<sup>4</sup>.

### **The road transport net**

From geopolitical point of view Koksharovskpye-1 city and settlement Sinegorye-1 are divided by the Sikhote-Alien Range and are

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<sup>3</sup> Diakova O. V. The Origin, formation and development of the Mediaeval cultures of the Far East. Vladivostok: Dalnauka, 1993. Part 1. P. 83, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Diakova O. V. The road-transport system of the Central Sikhote-Alien in Ancient and Mediaeval periods //Asiatic Pacific region: Archaeology, Ethnography, History. Vladivostok: Dalnauka, 2009. P. 15-38.

situated approximately at 100 km from each other. Kokshotovskoye-1 site is situated from the south-western side of the Range, settlement Sinegorye-1 is located from the eastern side of the Sikhote-Alien Range. At this point the Range had a passage that was under control a Veniukovskaya fortress. According to the basin of the River Zerkalnaya it was destined to be a natural road-transport highway, for a convenient pass connected it with the basin of the Amur river, and the valley of the river fluently went into the sea bay. The basin of the Zerkalnaya river could be reached from four sides: from the west from the basin of the Ussur river through Veniukov mountain passage, from the north through the Tetukhe pass, from the south through the passage in the upper reaches of the Brusilovka river, from the east from the sea through the Zerkalnaya Bay. Pottery from the keln of Sinegorye settlement could be distributed through all these roads. Let's remember that Tungus-Manhus state Pohai (698-926) had a developed land-transport system, epe penetrated through all its territory, including remote provinces. Roads were necessary not only for inner usage – gathering taxes, trade, different contacts over provinces, control over the population and defending boundaries, but for exercising foreign activity, including diplomatic, political, trade-economic and military ties with close and remote neighbors. The territory of Pohai was stretching from the north to the south and from the east to the west – for 5000 km (about 2500 km according to “the square”). Sea was on the north-east of Pohai, Silla – on the south-east, the Kitan – on the west. During the Mediaeval epoch Zerkalnaya road junction where there was the keln of Sinegorye-1 settlement included the whole net of sites, fortresses and the walls being connected with each other – Veniukovskoye, Gornorehenskoye 1-3, Sibaigou, Bogopol, Sadovyi Kliuch, Bruslovskoe, Zerkalni val, Pad' Shirokaya val.

A powerful road net led from the west and south-west from the Ussur river side and its tributaries –Bolshoi Ussurki, Pavlovki, Zhuravlyovki to the Veniukov passage. It was connected with fortifications – Koksharovskoye-1, Koksharovskoye-2, Koksharovskoye-3, Saratovskoye-1, Saratovskoye-2, Uborka-Dolinnaya, Zhuravlyvskoye, Okrainka, Plakhotniukinskoye-Dolinoe, Plakhotniukinskoye-Gornoye and

others epe belonged to the Tungus-Manchus states Pohai (698-926), Jin (1115-1234), and Eastern Sya (1217-1234).

### **Ancient and modern parallels of ornamental motif of “dancing people”**

As the author of this material happened to clear up – the most ancient parallel to such “the round dance” but with evidently formed tradition is an analogous ornament that is made on a flat surface of the handle of a bronze knife being kept on Ordosky State Museum in the Inner Mongolia of People’s Republic of China. The bronze knife is related to Hunnu culture. The ornamentation is stamped. This find belongs to the circle of the world-known Oordosky bronze and is dated by Hunnu time – that is 4. B.C. – 4 c. A.D. The character of the ornamentation on the bronze handle of a Hunnu knife and ornamentation of the belt on Pohai pottery from the keln of Sinegorye-1 settlement and Koksharovskoye-1 site are identical in all details.

One more analogy to “dancing people” that the author pointed out was discovered in the ethnographic collection of the Museum of Minorities of China (Beiqing) where such a scene was cut out on wooden panel and was an article of the exposition among ritual attributes of ethnic communities of North East China. The composition of ornamental motif of “dancing people” is completely analogous both to Hunnu and Pohai motifs.

Thus it happened to expose the existence of ornamental motif “dancing people” holding each other by hands for the period more than 2 thousand years, that is from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> thousand B.C. till the present time.

### **The interpretation and discussing the materials**

Exposed parallels of ornamental motif “Dancing people, holding each other by hands” show that it took place on the territory of the Central Asia and the Far East at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> thousand B.C. (Hunnu epoch), at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> thousand A.D. (Bohai time). During ethnographic time it was connected with ethnic communities of Altai language circle, who

communities this territory from the ancient time. Using the ornamentation, being described above, in modern applied arts of China represents an example of introducing traditions of “barbarians living behind Walls” into the Han Art. This motif is not of the Han origin.

– The clothes of these people on the ornamental motif is of the form of the bell (triangle) makes an impression that they wear traditional Korean clothes such as hanbok, consisting of chogori – a short and tight blouse – and chhiling - a wide skirt, the belt of which is above the waist and expanding to the bottom from the bosom. It is considered that hanbok is very practical and adapt to the cold climate, hunting and Nomad life.

– The round-dance on the vessel let us suppose that this is a round-dance Kangansunvolle that was used to be danced by women in national costume hanbok at the time of the Harvest holiday. Kangansunvolle is a Korean round-circle dance that is accompanied with songs and is connected with worshipping the Moon as a symbol of fertility. When there is the full moon of the first and eight month of the Moon calendar many girls are gathering together for singing in chorus and doing round-dancing. In the round dance there could be more than 50 girls. For this dance it is characteristic slow light step, circular movements (at first, a round-dancers are easily moving to one side, then – to the other), taking turns with squatting and singing in honor of the Moon... Circular movements signified cleaning, defending against the evil spirits<sup>5</sup>.

– Thus, ornamental motif of “round-dance of people” could be interpreted as a stylized picture of Korean Harvest holiday dance chhusok, when women in national costume hnbok dancing Kangansunvolle.

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<sup>5</sup> Tolstych I. N. Ethnic-cultural peculiarities of the Korean choreographic art. Candidate Dissertation. /Archive of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East. FEB RAS,/P. 1, N 819. Vladivostok, 2010. P. 39.



– The Mediaeval “Korean trace” is also determined with the fact that this ornamentation was discovered in the keln of Koguryo type, it is distinctly stratified and marked on the vessel of Pohai forms. Besides, it was just the very time when in the North East of Primorye there appeared a series of stone fortresses, erected accordingly to Koguryo traditions of military art<sup>6</sup>.

– So, there are seen many serious arguments for the conclusion that decoding of ornamentation could be done according to Korean mythology but not the Evenks one. By the way, it is known from written sources that the Koguryo, but not the Evenks, were the inhabitants of Pohai State.

Thus, if the supposed version of decoding the ornamental motif, that was analyzed above, it is true, there can be seen a certain connection of Hunnu, Pohai and Korean traditions in applied arts of these ethnic communities.

**Pictures:**

1. A plan of Koksharovskoye-1 site (topographical survey by V.I. Diakov).
2. A fragment of the vessel from the keln of Sinegorye-1 settlement with ornamental motif of «round-dancing people».

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<sup>6</sup> Diakova O. V. Military art of the Sikhote-Alien. M., 2009. P. 235.