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Ancient cults and cult animals from the caves of Sakhalin.

Previous years the Tymovsk museum and the club "Aborigine" spent researches of cult sites with the bones of animals in grotto and caves of Sakhalin.

Grotto Puzi is one of such sites - is located on the right bank of the river Puzi in 0,4 kms from its mouth where it runs in the river Tym'. It is situated under a rocky canopy with several small niches and grotto, where during several centuries the natives of the Tym' valley folded bones of the animals, extracted by them.

The small excavation of the site (2 x 6 meters), carried out in 1996, has revealed following order of layers:

1. Grey yellowish sandy humus soil with bones of animals lays on the rocky basis of sand stone, or on gray sand (layer 4). In the northern part of the grid yellow gray sand (layer 1) lays on the bright yellow sand (layer 5). The maximal capacity of the layer 1 makes 55 cm. The layer 2 is sated with bones mainly of fine animals (sable). In it there are congestions of burnt bones. In the grid 2A the depth of this layer is lowered till 30-38 cm. At the same time, in the grid 2A and in the western part of the grid 1 there are separate lenses of the reddish-gray sand- the trace of the partial destruction of the layer 2.

On the basis of the layer of burnt bones the coal is received which has given radiocarbon date of the site 1540 ± 50 years (SOAN 3814). It concerns to the beginning of the formation of the layer with bones. The final stages of its formation, by finds of fragments of porcelain utensils of the factory of Kuznetsov, concern to the end of 19- beginning 20 centuries.

In the grid more than of 20 000 bones of a bear were found: the fox, pocomaxa (GULO GULO), reindeer, sable, ermine, lynx, otter, dog, chipmunk, fibers, seals, home chicken and hazel grouse. In western part of the grid near to a congestion of burnt bones the handle of a knife, the bone devise for making the cords, original scraper of a tubular bone of a deer, small iron staple and other subjects were found. There were also some flakes of red jasper and light green stone. In other parts of the grid stemmed bone arrowheads (triangular in cross section), fragments of the birch tree skin with rhombic decor were found. The majority of finds (handle of a knife, the arrowheads) are characteristic for culture of Nivkh of 19- early 20 centuries. As the natives of the Tym' valley supposes the similar rocks with grotto are dwelling " of the mountain people ", which send to Nivkh the forest animals, but only under condition of returning to the mountain people " of bones extracted and eaten animals. We suppose it to be " a *PAKH TAFF* "- " the stone house of the mountain people ", at an entrance

at which the huge amount of bones of animals is combined. It is necessary to note one more interesting detail. The entrance in the "house", probably, was a niche №2. Near the entrance there was the log- the ancient analogue of the "threshold of house" which showed the border. The bones were folded before the entrance in "house" not breaking its "border".

It is interesting that the part of bones was burnt and then it was folded together with other not burnt bones. The Hokkaido Ainu had a custom to burn bones as Hiroshi Utagawa reported. It was considered, that together with a smoke and prays of the Ainu, the bones rise to the Supreme Gods on the Sky, whence those will send to Ainu new animals as new production.

The similar ritual is connected to a cult of a dying and reviving animal. Among bones of animals there are bones of a penis of a seal. The seal personifies " the owner of the sea " "*The THOL HIZN*"- the most powerful essence of Nivkh, who, probably, also could promote reproduction of animals.

The Cave of Ostantsevaya- is one more cult site of Sakhalin/ It is located on a mountain of Vaida in the Vostochno- Sakhalinski mountains (Smirnikh District of the Sakhalin region). It differs only by the age, which is, at least, of 7 thousand of years.

The study of the mountain Vaida began from 1979, from the moment of its discovery by the geologist V.P. Derkachenko of the first six cavities in this area. The most interesting are those of them, in which the traces of stay of the primitive man- the stone toolss and bones of the animals, extracted by him are found.

One of such cavities also is the cave Ostantsevaya, which first description we meet in the report of the cave explorer Yury Bersenev. He writes: " In the bottom part of a southwest slope of a mountain Vaida in separately worth rock is located the small cave Ostantsevaya ... Excess above the river Vitnitsa - 70-80 meters. It represents narrow (1-1,5 m) horizontal crossed galleries of height up to 2,5 m. The cavity has two entrance apertures. On walls of gallery are observed erosive steps. The floor is covered with ground and rubble. In the end of the cave there is a hole by depth 1,5 m- a mouth of the filled up pit....There was a small water dropping. In a cavity the old bones of the *badger* are found (?), modern bones of bats and traces of a bear winter sleep. The cavity, probably, was formed at a level of the ground water and, should be the most old of the all caves described earlier. "

Since 1988 the research of the cavities in the area of the mountain Vaida is conducted by the club "Aborigine". In 1989 r the participants of expedition N.Mikheev and P.Panin have examined cave Ostantsevaya and have collected some bones of animals on a floor of it at the entrance №1. In 1994 r S.V.Gorbunov in the test pit at the entrance №1 in the white lime loam (15-22 cm), has collected more then 200 bones of the animals, among which E.V.Alexeeva has defined bones of reindeer, wild horse, polar fox,

bear, изюбря (cervus elaphus xanthopygus) and others, and also 61 bone of the snow ram.

In 1995-97 гг the expedition of club "Aborigine" has carried out research of this cave. The depth of the pit prior to the beginning of the excavation was 1,2 m. During excavation was found out, that the real depth of the pit was 7 m. On depth of 2 m from the mouth of the pit from its basic trunk on northeast departs at first horizontal, then inclined hole, which gradually turning at first to the north, then to northwest and west, on depth of 7 m again incorporates to the basic trunk of the pit. In a place of connection of the basic trunk and the hole, on depth of 7 m there is a small site of a horizontal floor, in which the aperture - mouth of one more pit -depth 1,5m, diameter 0,3-0,5 m, covered by a plate of the lime stone was revealed.

As was found out, the friable sediments of the pit have an artificial origin. They consist of the macadam and limestone, many bones of animals, black humus soil and loams/ They differ in color from the white up to the light brown. The friable adjournment of the pit were over saturated by a moisture and have turned to a dirt, which stuck to tools, footwear and clothes of the participants of expedition.

Undoubtedly, the origin of friable adjournment of the pit is connected to the primitive man. The community of the primitive hunters mastering area of the mountain Vaida in epoch of the Early Holocene, having found out lowest above the river of Vitnitsa and could use most accessible cave, as a cult place and as a temporary settlement. As it was already marked, as the Nivkh say, in grotto, caves and pits, located in rocks "the mountain people " lived ". They sent to Nivkh animals during hunting, but for maintenance of the "exchange" and diplomatic relations with "the mountain people " it was necessary to return to their dwelling of a bone killed and eaten animals. It was what we found in the pit of the cave Ostantsevaya.

It is possible, that the bottom 1,5 meter pit, covered by a plate of the limestone and not filled by bones, on presentation of the inhabitants of the cave and it was dwelling " of the mountain people ". On the structure it reminds dwelling " of the mountain people " of the grotto Puzi. There we see a niche filled by bones limited by the log, here – the pit without bones, covered be the stone plate. Having covered bottom pit by a plate, the ancient inhabitants of the cave have begun to dump basically the pit by bones of the animals/ They buried them with the soil in order to prevent an unpleasant smell at decomposition of the animal rests. Sometimes together with bones in the pit the stone tools and even a skull of a bear with the point in it were thrown. Use of the cave and the pit in it was stopped only when the pit was filled with the bones. After that cave was left, and after some time ground water and the forces of gravitation have pressed friable adjournment up to such degree, that they become 1,2 m – the initial depth of the pit before excavations.

In total in the depths of 0,45 up to 5,75 m 19 artifacts were found. Among them there are 15 arrowheads, two blades, one scraper and a flake. The

scraper is made of red jasper, it could be used both – the scraper and the knife. The blades are made of gray flint; one is processed by a unilateral abrupt retouch. Most of the points were made of red jasper /12 /, of the triangular form. Two instruments are made of the siliceous argillite and alevrollite. The most interesting find is the triangular point of the black obsidian. According to the results of researches of Y.Kuz'min and the others this point is made of obsidian, occurring from the area of Shirataki of the deposit Acaishiyama and Horokasawa (Hokkaido).

The bones collected in the Ostantsevaya cave - some thousands of bones of the animals- while were not investigated by paleontology experts. The Japanese genetic R.Masuda studied skulls of bears from the cave, the rest of the bones are planned to be investigated by paleontologist E.V.Alexeeva. The bones of birds were published by A.V.Panteleev.

Stone instruments of Ostantsevaya cave

#	Material	Type	Position in the layer
1	obsidian	Point	147 cm
2	red jasper	Point	72 cm
3	red jasper	Point	58 cm
4	red jasper	Point	160 cm
5	grey flint	Point	64 cm
6	red jasper	Point	240 cm
7	red jasper	Point	475
8	red jasper	Point	320
9	red jasper	Point	Surface collection
10	red jasper	Point	Surface collection
11	red jasper	Flake	470 cm
12	red jasper	Point	285 cm
13	red jasper	Point	490 cm
14	red jasper	Point	483 cm
15	red jasper	Point from the bear skull	90 cm
16	Grey flint	Blade with the side retouch	215 cm
17	siliceous argillite	Point	126 cm
18	red jasper	Scraper-knife	115 cm
19	gray flint	blade	45 cm

The notes.

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