Introduction.

Sea shell. In the mythological representations of many peoples of the world, the seashell is identified with the feminine principle. Early symbolism gives the mollusk a connection with such concepts as fertility and conception. The sea depth from which the shell originates also symbolizes the source of the origin of all forms. Coming from the water, imbued with its memory, energy and knowledge, sea shells carry a powerful magical charge. Shells, along with sea creatures and pearls, are the attributes of the water deity – the goddess of fertility.

Cowry shells. Among all other seashells, the cowrie shell has become particularly popular. It got its name in honor of the goddess Kauri. The shell symbolizes the generative principle of the mother goddess. - Read more at FB.ru: As a reviving symbol, the use of these shells has been going on since ancient times. To this day, this attribute is valued in many countries around the world. In India, for example, the shell is used as a protective amulet against the evil eye. In Egypt and the Middle East, seashells are used as talismans to attract good luck, health, and fertility. In the Pacific Islands, cowries are also given magical powers that carry the energy of rebirth. –

Cowrie shells as a monetary equivalent. It is known for certain that the cowry shell was used as a monetary unit in some countries, for example, in China, Africa, Japan, India and others. For the first time, seashells were used as money in coastal areas. This is not surprising, because it was there that they were available in abundance. With the development of trade and navigation, the cowry has significantly expanded its "habitat". Its beautiful appearance has contributed to the fact that it has taken root as a monetary unit in many countries around the world. What is characteristic is that with the advance inland, the price of cowries increased significantly. In Africa, for example, shells could be used to pay for almost any product. Businessmen of that time noticed such a difference in the rate, and used it to enrich themselves. They bought tons of this product, which was then exchanged in West Africa for valuable palm oil. Merchants from England, Holland, and Portugal bought shells in India, only to sell them in Guinea for three times the price.

In Russia, during the moneyless period, the cash cowry shell was also popular. It was called the snake's head, or millstone. In Azerbaijan, the shell was used as a monetary unit until the XVII century.

Interesting facts

During the Second World War, when the Japanese army seized the traditional place of cowry mining - the shores of the Indonesian islands, the neighboring Dutch colonies experienced an acute shortage of currency shells. The economic life of the population was practically paralyzed. To somehow fix and stabilize the situation, the local authorities decided to start searching for a valuable shell on the Australian coast. The search was futile. And then one of the authorized walkers happened to be in a local department store. What was his surprise when he found the shells he was looking for on the shelves of the store as children's toys! Thus, the Dutch voyageurs did not return empty-handed. They managed to restore prosperity and stability to the people.

Cowries were decorated with costumes of all the ancient peoples who inhabited the territory of present-day Tatarstan. The ways of the Lord are inscrutable. We say this when we think about the fate of people, peoples, and civilizations. It is unlikely that in this context someone will think of a mollusk from the shallow waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Nevertheless, his small, porcelain-like, beige-yellow shell, nicknamed in dozens of different languages "snake head", in the old days conquered continents, ruled the destinies of peoples and economies for centuries, and many still believe that these shells bring happiness to women. This is the Cipreia Monetaria moneta, or cowrie. Our conversations about kauri with a former Kazan resident, a well-known marine zoologist from Kaliningrad, the author of the famous book "What the shells Sing about", a collector of shells, Professor Rudolf Burukovsky, followed this "agile" shell covered almost the entire planet. Wonderful adventures of thousands of years.

In the second millennium BC in China, the cowry began to be used as a small coin. This money was extracted on the Ryu-Kyu Islands and transported by sea to China, from there to Korea and Japan. In Yunnan Province, cowry money lasted until the end of the 19th century. For India, this "money" was harvested in the Maldives, on the shores of the Persian Gulf and imported in exchange for rice. In the countries of the Bay of Bengal, in Siam (Thailand), in the Philippines, cowry money has survived to this day. Thai silver tikal coin in the form of "Buddha's teeth" has the shape of a cowry. In Africa, cowries became money in the 12th century. In the 16th century, after the discovery of America, Portuguese, Dutch and English merchants successfully used cowries in transactions on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. After the opening of the route to India, merchants began to buy Maldivian cowries there, took them to Guinea, sold them for double or triple the price, used the money to buy slaves and take them to America. One slave on the Guinea coast in 1520 was worth 6,370, in 1718 - 31,000, in 1725 - 50,000, and in 1767 - already 80,000 cowries! In 1794, 12 tons of cowries were paid for 500 slaves intended for sale in Brazil. It is no exaggeration to say that American black slaves were bought for cowries.

In northwestern Russia, cowries were money in the moneyless period of the XII-XIV centuries. The coin is still found in ancient burials of the Novgorod and Pskov lands. Sometimes shells are found in the form of hoards along with the so-called kufic coins from Yemen. The monetary period in the biography of kauri successfully continued until the XIV century, until almost everywhere metal coins returned to circulation.

Only in Azerbaijan, kauri money was used until the XVII century.

Kauri in a triumphal march on the planet did not pass the Volga region.

The passion for this shell came to us from the ancients. The farmers of Palestine, and later the Egyptians 12-13 thousand years ago, used the Monetarium coin in cult rituals. The name "kauri" Monetaria coin received in India. In the Sanskrit-English Dictionary by M. Williams (Oxford, 1872),"a Kaparda is a small shell or cowry used as a coin or chip in gambling."

The ancient peoples of the seashells cypraea Tigris - female amulet of fertility, and love. In China, the cowry shell is a symbol of the feminine principle of yin. Women in different parts of the world wore cowries to cure infertility.

African mask and Chinese cowry figurine

In the burial grounds of the tribes of the Afanasiev culture, which lived 4000 years ago in the Minusinsk region, kauri are found. During the excavations of burials in the territory of the ancient state of the Hunnu in Transbaikalia and Northern Mongolia, among the ornaments are cast from bronze Monetarii coins. In Tuva, in the mounds of the Scythian era of the VI-III centuries BC, among a huge number of gold jewelry, along with carnelian stones from India - cowries. In Tuva, Yakutia, and Altai, Monetaria is still revered, which is indispensable in national games and rituals. Cowrie shells, by-Khakassky cyclones, snake ?The head was imported to the territory of Khakassia in the Karasuk era 3 thousand years ago from India along the Great Silk Road through China, Tibet, Mongolia. In Khakassia?and now they decorate women's wedding dresses, children's and women's clothing, women's breast jewelry "pogo", women's saddles, cloth caps, children's cradles, and shamans ' clothing with a coin.

In Svaneti, the kauri is an amulet. And in Chechen villages, old people still hang cowries on the necks of cows and horses, attach them as a talisman in the nooks and crannies of the house and even to the separator, so that the milk does not sour. Not far from Baku, kauri are found on the ruins of the Azerbaijani settlement of Gyrk-Chirag, which was destroyed in the XII century. In Central Asia, on the caravan route that once crossed Ferghana, on the banks of the Syr Darya in the V-VII centuries AD, there was a rich city of Bab. During its excavation, along with beads made of quartz, dolomite, serpentine, calcite, rock crystal, Badakhshan lapis lazuli, turquoise and carnelian, the shells of Monetaria were found. The local history museums of Kerch, Sevastopol, and Volgograd contain ancient cowries found during excavations in these parts. They are also found in Scythian tombs of the VII-II centuries.

Jewelry on the old outfit of the muzzle

In Russia in the languages of all the peoples of Russia Kauri called ugolki, gaggi head. In the story of Nikolai Leskov "The Beast", the master sits "...on a saddle covered with a bearskin with pakhvami and papersyami, decorated with turquoise and snake heads" - cowry shells. The word "cowry" is heard in the Russian language: these shells were richly decorated with horse harness, and it is according to it in fairy tales that the horse is "prophetic cowry". Kaur.

In the photo album "Folk costume of the Penza province of the beginning of the XIX - end of the XX century" cowries on women's clothes of Russian Penza girls. In the Penza Museum of Local Lore, a girl's costume from the village of Bolshaya Izhmora with breast ornaments made of cowries is kept of extraordinary beauty and complexity. In a private collection ethnographer P. I. Kutenkov is ochipok the end of the XIX century in the village Kalugerovo Morshansky district, Tambov province (now Zemetchinsky district of the Penza region), embroidered with silk, beads, thread, mother-of-pearl buttons and cowries.

Breast decoration of the bride of the Erzya woman of the XIX-early XX century

Numerous Finno-Ugric and Baltic tribes have long lived in the Baltic States along the shores of the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Riga, near Lake Peipus, on the territory of Novgorod, Estonia, and Latvia. Most of them have not survived to this day. Women of the Wod tribe, Novgorod women from the XII century wore temple rings with pendants made of cowry shells. Cowries are found in Slavic mounds on the islands of Bjorke and Gotland, in the burial grounds of Ancient Germany, England, Sweden and France. In short, the whole of ancient and medieval Europe and Asia were literally flooded with cowries!

To this day, girls in the Polish Tatras wear cowry necklaces and metal disks in which shells are inserted along with coins. In Macedonia, brides weave cowries into their hairstyles, and they trim the edges of their clothes in the form of a border. Young women before the birth of their first child wear jewelry made of red or green-blue wool, embroidered with red, white and black pearls, Turkish coins and cowries. In Greece, popular necklaces made of beads with leather pendants, which are attached to cowries.

In the State Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of Russia in St. Petersburg in the hall of the Volga region, cowry shells are everywhere on women's costumes. On posetila - rear blades headdress Bashkir women of the nineteenth century in three rows sewn on Monetaria. On the headdress of married women Chuvash hospo, on the maiden hood of tohya fringe from a number of cowries. And on the breastplate of the surpan-sakki they are the same, and on top of it is also a necklace made of shells.



Cheremis costumes with cowries from the collections of the Mari El Museum

Women besermyans, one of the representatives of the peoples of the Udmurt Republic, wore necklaces of shells, trimmed their handbags crespigny sling and hats. The breastplates, fibulae, necklaces, and headdresses of the Schurka Meadow Marians were everywhere with Monetaria. The famous collector and researcher of Chuvash folk costume, head of the Department of Decorative and Applied Arts of the Cheboksary Art Museum, author of a beautiful album about Chuvash folk costume Gennady Ivanov from Cheboksary devoted a separate study to Kauri, so these shells are important for the Chuvash. "Cowrie shells, "compat" snake head, from time immemorial has been a popular Mordovians. Seashells, especially in alternation with black glass beads, were considered a talisman by Mordvins. Girls and married women at the Mordva-teryukhan wore a crown of kauri. Mocenok on the headdress free Internet access and Breakfast to occipital lobes often was attached to a long suspension from the shells. In Atyuryevsky district and is now married Moksha public holidays are the temporal suspension of Monetarie. In the obligatory part of the costume of a married Erzya woman - a loincloth "pulogai" - along with other ornaments, cowry shells are sewn in.



Fragment of the costume of the bride of Erzya

How did these shells get from the shores of tropical seas to the far northern countries? The kauri, "wad" in Arabic, was harvested in large quantities by the Arabs. In the X century, Biruni wrote about it: "Wad is a kind of shell that is collected by the Zinji (Negroes) on their islands at low tide. They put them in pits, fill them up, and leave them until the snails die and their meat decomposes. The inhabitants of Dibajat do the same, using the branches of coconut palms to catch these shells. Dibajat -two groups of islands. Those from which the wad shells are brought are called Kure" (Maldives).

The caravans, which, among other goods, carried kauri, went from the great trading city of Ormuzd, which once stood on the coast of the Persian Gulf, to the southern coast of the Caspian Sea to the port of Mizandaran. There, the shells were loaded onto ships going north to the mouth of the Volga, to the city of Itil and up the Volga to the Bulgars -?the capital of the vast Bulgarian Empire. The land route from Khorezm also led here. In the Bulgars, the Kauri were bought by Slavic merchants who had their own settlement on the outskirts of the city. They went up the Volga to the system of dragging boats, then dragged them along with the cargo to the Volkhov River. From there, there was a direct route to the Baltic Sea and the island of Gotland, which had extensive connections with all of Europe.

Breast ornaments with cowrie shells

In Prikamye there are three ancient cultures: Mazunina in the heart of the city - I Millennium B. C. to the VIII century?Arskaya in the area of Agryz-Izhevsk-VI-VII centuries; Chepetskaya in the area of the city of Glazov-VIII-XIII centuries. Against each of these habitable places, the Arabs set up their trading posts: BisCembar, the blessed beautiful hill; Sarafuli, the main trading post; Jebel Sar, the farthest trading post from Ohak on the Kama at the turn of the river. In the XI century, these trading posts along the watersheds of the Izha, Vyatka and Iva received an internal land connection, which served as the basis of the famous Arskaya Road.

Russian Empress Catherine II, after traveling along the Volga from Tver to Simbirsk in 1767, realized that it was necessary to study Russia and its peoples, and equipped an expedition for this purpose under the leadership of 26-year-old Russian academician Peter Simon Pallas. From 1768 to 1774, scientific expeditions covered the territory of Russia from the Barents Sea to the Black and Caspian Seas, from the Baltic Sea to the Trans-Baikal Region, and the borders with China. One of Pallas ' detachments was led by Johann-Gottlieb Georgi, a physician, ethnographer, naturalist, chemist, professor of mineralogy and academician of the Imperial Academy of Sciences and Arts. In 1776-1780, Georgi published the first ethnographic work in Russia in four volumes, "Description of all the peoples of the Russian state, their way of life, religion, customs, dwellings, clothing and other differences". Descriptions of the costumes of the peoples of Russia were accompanied by colorful illustrations. In the books of Georgi Kauri, women's dresses of all Finno-Ugric peoples of Russia - Finns, Izhorians, Cheremis, Chuvash, and Mordvins-are lavishly decorated. Snake heads are covered with their hats, aprons, soul jackets, a leather belt suspended from the back of the cap to the knees, imitating a scythe. The same Siberian otakou.

Cowries are plentiful on the outfits of Kazan and Orenburg Tatars. "A rich Tatar woman covers her chest with a kerchief made of crowns, or covered with scaly coins. From Orenburg Tatar hats hanging from the back of the ornament the width of the palm, around the Cheremis similar to the calf". The same is true of the Astrakhan, Turaly, Tomsk Tatars, Bukharans, Khivins, Bashkirs, and Teleut women. Buratto, Tatar tribes that roamed along the Yenisei, Mongolian and Chinese borders to lake Baikal and on "...the girls are in some generations of postilla, as well as Tatar, beaded, Kiev, brushes. In other generations, it has come into use to wear over caftans small soul-jackets, whose backs are covered with snake heads, beads, snurks and trinkets."

In the middle Volga basin monetaria the coins in the old days bought from wandering traders-Tatars. The funds of the National Museum of Tatarstan contain Finno-Ugric costumes decorated with shells, coins from the excavations of the X-XIII centuries of the village of Alekseevsky near the mouth of the Kama River and the largest Bulgarian city of the pre-Mongol period, Bilyar.

But there is no coin on the old Tatar costumes either in the exposition of the National Museum of Tatarstan, or in the colorful albums of the national costume of the Monetarium. When did the shells disappear from the outfits of the Kazan Tatars?

The author of books about the ancient costume of the Tatar Muslims, kryashen and mishar Ramzia Mukhamedova headed the ethnographic department of the Kazan branch of the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the USSR Academy of Sciences for thirty years. She said that cowries were numerous on the costumes of all the ancient peoples who inhabited the territory of present-day Tatarstan. The Tatars called kauri kort-bashi-the head of the snake. When silver coins spread from the east, Tatar women began to sew them on their clothes instead of cowries. But Islam came, and the Muslim Tatars became sharply isolated. The mullahs objected to pagan customs and banned female charms from the coin's Monetarium. So the cowries, and after them the silver coins, disappeared from the costumes of the Kazan Muslim Tatars, giving way to embroidery and silver skani. In the people there was such a saying: if a Tatar woman had two silver coins, she went to a jeweler, paid one for the work, and from the second he made a beautiful lace decoration for her. Until the beginning of the XX century, kryashen and mishare continued to be worn on clothing and cowries, and a large number of silver coins. However, in remote Muslim Tatar villages, where Ramzia Giniatovna collected ancient national costumes for decades in ethnographic expeditions, cowries were still found on them. In kryashen, they are still sewn on the corners of the neck decoration of the muens. In the exposition of the Ethnographic Museum of St. Petersburg, a Tatar children's skullcap with a button, a double nut, a saying from the Koran and a cowry shell sewn on it is displayed.  
  
Millennia have not erased the interest in this shell, completely inconspicuous among the luxury of other seashells. The Internet is full of suggestions: Kauri wholesale loose on them guessing, they do massages from evil eyes they hang out in large siskami in dwellings are in necklaces, woven into braids, hang on the neck of Pets. In the age of the Internet, people believe in the magical power of cowries. And somewhere in the distant warm ocean, as if nothing had happened, live and multiply unsuspecting mollusks with a small beige-yellow shell, very similar to porcelain.

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