

**Black bone button with nose in the shape of a whale fluke,
from an OBS II context, 3.9 cm.**



This button may be a representation of Kasak, the "master" of the whales, being the Eskimo counterpart of the Chukchi leather masks used at festivals in honor of Keretkun, the Spirit of the Sea and the "master" of all sea animals (see copy below of Bogoras, 1909, for "Ka'cak" and "Kere'tkun"). Kasak was apparently a zooanthropomorphic deity, as can be inferred from the evidence of later masks that combined the features of both whale and man. According to Ivanov (1975, p. 6) it was also quite natural that the Spirit of the Sea should be depicted as a huge monster with a black face. By comparing the front with the back of the button (which has no glossy patina covering its clearly detailed bone structure) it is apparent that the face has been deliberately blackened, and that the color is not a result of the soil conditions in which the button was buried.

Literature:

Bogoras, W. (1909): The Chukchee (Parts I-III), *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. 40, Brill, Leiden.

Ivanov, S.V. (1975): *Ancient Masks of Siberian Peoples*, Aurora, Leningrad

on tightly drawn ropes, appear as the object of the ceremony. A ceremonial of this kind is usually performed before starting on a trading-expedition.

Some Maritime families bring sacrifices also to the new moon, as was described for the Reindeer people. The drawing Fig. 270 represents such a sacrifice. People are slaughtering a dog. Numerous vessels with food are standing on the ground. I was told, however, that the people who brought

the sacrifice were the "people of spell."¹ The other dog in the drawing is also a "dog of spell," made of human excrement.

Ceremonial of Kere'tkun.

The ceremonial of Kere'tkun is more complicated, and lasts two, three, and even five days (or as many nights, the natives are wont to say) for each family. In some villages, for instances in Nu'nligren, the ceremonial of Kere'tkun alternates with that of his "assistant" every five years. The term of five years or days is mentioned also in connection



Fig. 270. Chukchee Sketch representing Sacrifice to the New Moon.

with other ceremonials and rites.² The ceremonial of the "assistant" is much more simple, and lasts only over night. The details of it are similar to those of the "genuine thanksgiving."

As a general rule, the performance of the ceremonial of Kere'tkun varies greatly, according to the degree of wealth of the performers. The poorer families observe it in a very hurried way, and the performance rarely continues longer than one night; while with the richer families it lasts several days, and is an important event for the whole neighborhood. The reason for this difference is pre-eminently the fact that large quantities of food are necessary for its celebration.

This rule is applicable to all important ceremonials of the Maritime people. Only the richer people — the boat-owners, those who have had good success in the hunt — arrange great feasts that last several days, and attract numerous guests. The feasts of the richer families must not occur simultaneously, but so that the nearest neighbors at least can visit them all, each in turn. The time for the ceremonials of the poorer people is of no consideration. They may take place on any day, by threes or fours, and no

¹ Compare Chapter XVI.

² Compare Chapters XVI and XVII.

one will notice it. On St. Lawrence Island the poorer people do not perform the ceremonials at all, but leave this duty wholly to the rich boat-owners.

The essentials of the ceremonial are as follows. All the members of the family, down to the smallest children, must put on light overcoats made of dried seal-guts.¹ The reason given for this is that Kere'tkun and his wife are dressed in such overcoats. On the Pacific coast, overcoats of this kind are prepared only by the Eskimo, the best and the prettiest of which come from St. Lawrence Island: therefore the Chukchee have to buy such overcoats from an "alien" tribe, which may imply that the whole ceremonial is of Eskimo provenience. It must not be forgotten, however, that in the "thanksgiving ceremonials" of the Chukchee, the overcoats are considered as quite necessary, at least for the women. The master and the mistress put on special head-gear (Fig. 271), which also is said to be imitated from Kere'tkun and his wife. Another essential appurtenance of the ceremonial is the so-called "Kere'tkun's net," which is made of sinew, and suspended from the vent-hole of the house. A special pole is often used for its support. This is set in the centre of the house, and the upper end projects through the vent-hole, similarly to that used in the "spear ceremonial." Sometimes there are three poles with their ends crossing in the vent-hole, resembling the three principal poles of the Chukchee tent.

The net Fig. 272, *a*, is spread out horizontally, and each corner of it is fastened with strings to the sides of the house. All around the net are suspended images of birds and small toy paddles, painted ornamentally with seal-blood. The number of the paddles is about a dozen; the number of birds is considerably less. The birds (Fig. 272, *b*) are made of wood, clumsily enough, and are adorned with stripes of seal-blood painting. Their wings are represented either by two cross-lines or by two feathers stuck into cracks in the wood in the proper places (see Fig. 280). The birds represent probably sea-gulls: at least, the heads of sea-gulls figure in the boat-charms of the Maritime Chukchee. A similar net figures in the fall ceremonial of the Eskimo of St. Lawrence Island. It is spread on a wooden frame made of small



Fig. 271 (10.11.11 b). Head-Band used in the Ceremonial of Kere'tkun. Circumference, 46 cm.

¹ See Fig. 180, p. 247.

paddles, with the bodies of four sea-gulls carefully preserved for the purpose.¹ A few heads of walrus or seal are put on the ground as in the "genuine thanksgiving ceremonial."

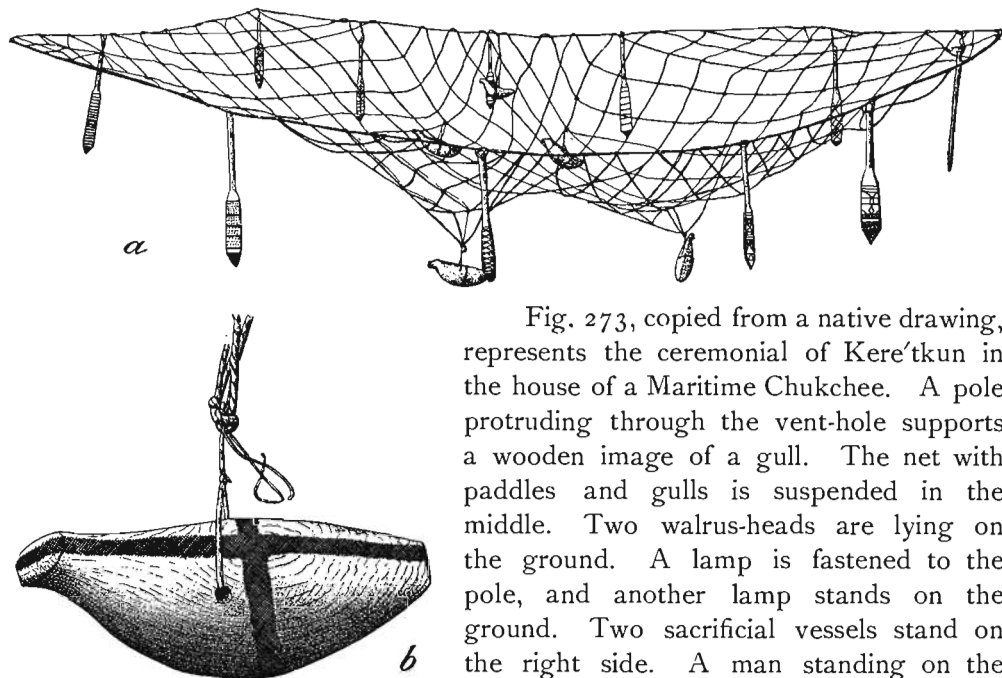


Fig. 272 ($\frac{10}{18 \frac{1}{2}}$), *a*, Net for Ceremonial of Kere'tkun (diam., 124 cm.); *b*, Image of Bird from Net (natural size).

Fig. 273, copied from a native drawing, represents the ceremonial of Kere'tkun in the house of a Maritime Chukchee. A pole protruding through the vent-hole supports a wooden image of a gull. The net with paddles and gulls is suspended in the middle. Two walrus-heads are lying on the ground. A lamp is fastened to the pole, and another lamp stands on the ground. Two sacrificial vessels stand on the right side. A man standing on the top of the sleeping-room pronounces an incantation. Two other men, before the entrance, are also pronouncing incantations.

In this they point upwards wooden drum-sticks, which they have in their hands. A number of men are walking on the roof of the house, in order, as I was told, to cover the vent-hole. Other men inside are walking or sitting. The dance has not yet begun. On the lower part of the drawing a whale-hunt is represented.

A paddle of large size is used in the ceremonial of Kere'tkun, and is intended to carry a painted prayer. Therefore it is called "incantation paddle." A real paddle may be used for that purpose, or even a narrow plank shaped like the blade of a paddle.

The collections of the Museum contain several paddles with painted prayers destined for the ceremonial of Kere'tkun. All of them represent various game and hunting-scenes of ordinary character. On each end of the paddle is often placed a spread net, or drawn bow pointed at the game, thus indicating the desire of the artist to capture all those animals. The painting

¹ Wooden images of birds (grebes) appear in the ceremonials of the Yakut. They are, for instance, placed on the burial-place of a shaman.

is not infrequently done with considerable skill, and the style is similar to that of the etchings on ivory executed by the American Eskimo. Etchings are scarce in Asia, and those that I had an opportunity to observe are

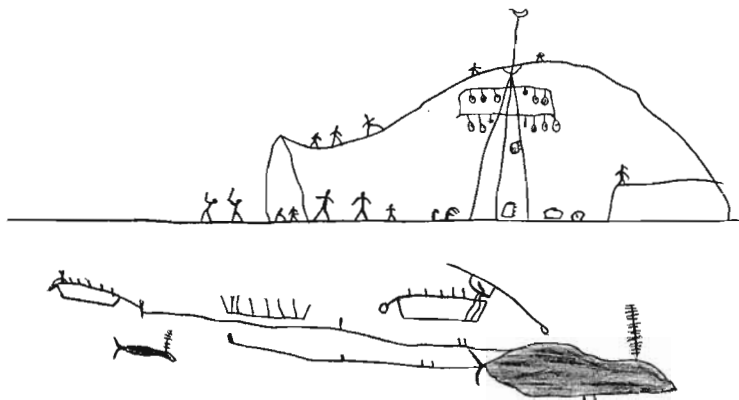


Fig. 273. Chukchee Sketch representing Ceremonial of Kere'tkun.

comparatively poor specimens of art. In some other paintings, however, the work is more clumsily done, and the style less pronounced, in accordance with the inferior skill of the maker.

Fig. 274, *a*, represents a painted paddle from Mariinsky Post. It has on each end a drawn bow. In the middle, three large shoals of fish, flocks of various sea-fowl, seal, and walrus are arranged somewhat symmetrically. A plank of the same provenience (Fig. 274, *b*) has a large seal-net spread

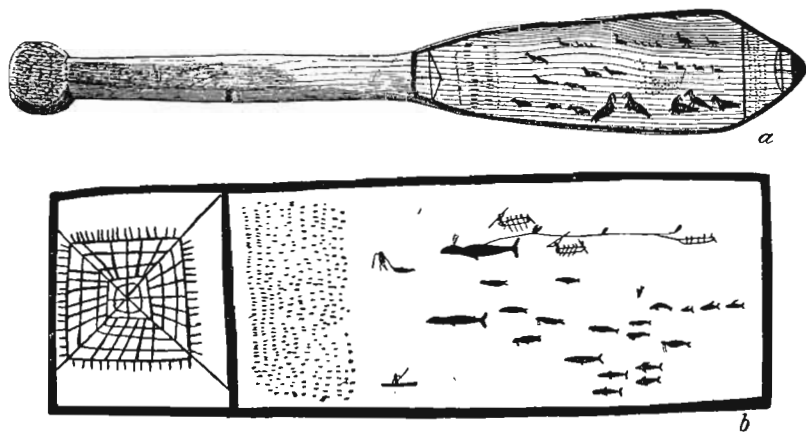


Fig. 274, *a* (10/11/17), Ceremonial Paddle (length, 69 cm.); *b* (10/11/17), Ceremonial Plank (length, 47 cm.).

on one end. A big shoal of fish and all kinds of game are represented moving towards the net. Killer-whales are charging a group of walruses. According to the explanation by the natives, they want to drive them into the net. Three boats are pursuing a whale. A man is dragging a seal, and

another one is paddling on a kayak. The part played by killer-whales is illustrated in a native sketch given before,¹ where killer-whales make a similar attack on a shoal of walruses, while another killer-whale asks the paddlers of a boat for a little tobacco. The native artist evidently wished to represent the killer-whales as friendly to men, and as helping them in their hunt in exchange for a small sacrifice. The supernatural rôle ascribed to the killer-whale has been discussed previously. Fig. 275 is from the village of Nu'nligren.



Fig. 275 ($\frac{340}{370}$). Ceremonial Paddle. Length, 41 cm.

It is painted on both sides. The painting represents hunting-scenes. In one a man is shooting a seal with a rifle. The seal is surrounded by rough ice represented in four big heaps made by several concentric circular lines.

The plank represented in Fig. 276 is from the village of Chika'yeva, on the Middle Anadyr. It was used by a family which trace their origin to one of the maritime villages, and therefore perform Kere'tkun ceremonials; while

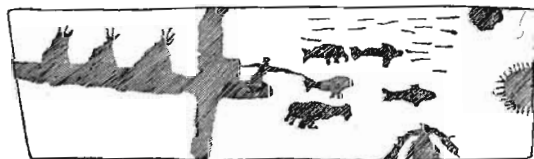


Fig. 276 ($\frac{380}{385}$). Ceremonial Plank. Length, 23 cm.

most of the other families in small villages on the Middle Anadyr follow the rites of the reindeer-breeders. The painting is clumsily executed, and represents a group of houses on the seashore. A man standing on the shore is

hauling in a seal captured with a harpoon. Several sea-mammals and a polar bear are swimming away. A little below stands the figure of Kere'tkun, with very long arms. The sun and the moon are in the right-hand corner of the plank. The houses represented on the plank are of the genuine house type, evidently houses of the Maritime people; while the people on the Middle Anadyr live in log-huts. All the details of the picture are also maritime, and have nothing in common with reindeer-hunting, which is the chief source of subsistence for Anadyr villagers.

The painting copied on Fig. 277, *a*, which comes from the Eskimo of Indian Point, represents, on the contrary, land-game, reindeer, wolves, and foxes. One boat and two kayaks are pursuing them, probably in water. The family which used this plank was considered, however, as a true Mari-

¹ See Fig. 231, p. 324.

time family. Another paddle from Indian Point (Fig. 278) represents sea-game and various hunting-scenes. At the top of the picture (Fig. 278, *a*) a



Fig. 277 ($\frac{511}{3019}$). Ceremonial Paddle of the Eskimo of Indian Point. Length, 33 cm.

group of men are practising shamanism. Two of them are beating the drum, and two others are performing a ceremonial dance. This evidently signifies

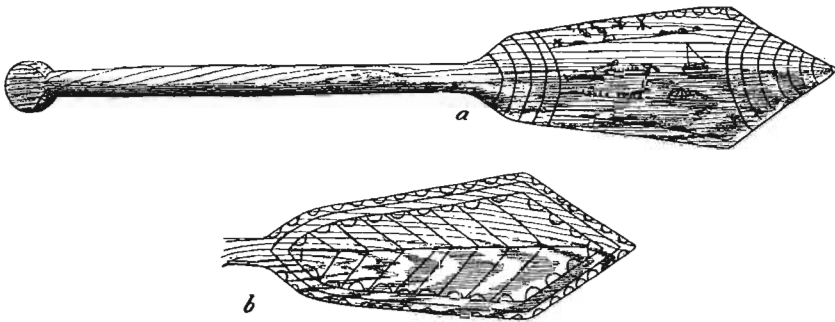


Fig. 278 ($\frac{60}{3090}$). Ceremonial Paddle of the Eskimo of Indian Point. Length, 54 cm.

magic influence on the sea-game, to draw it to the shore. Both ends of the picture are supplied with several semicircular lines, which probably represent conventionalized bows, though the natives were not able to tell anything about the matter. The other side of the paddle-blade (Fig. 278, *b*) is ornamented with a pattern of straight lines and small semicircles, in the style of the Eskimo.

The whole performance of the Kere'tkun ceremonial in the village of Nu'nligren lasts three days, and with most families is carried out with the following details. On the first day, in the morning, the outer tent is carefully swept, and a net with appurtenances is suspended above. On both sides of the hearth are spread reindeer-skins, which represent two inner rooms. The place for Kere'tkun is either on one of these skins, or inside of the real sleeping-room. A big lamp filled with the choicest oil is lighted, and placed accordingly in either of the indicated places. Kere'tkun is supposed to enter, and, taking his place on the lamp, to wait for the sacrifice. He is represented by a small wooden image (Fig. 279), which is put on the lamp, and remains there till the end of the ceremonial. Opposite the lamp, on a small patch of bare ground scraped clean for the purpose, a small fire, which has a special name ("pi'nte"), is built. This fire is supposed to be the place where



Fig. 279 ($\frac{70}{3370}$). Image representing Kere'tkun. Length, 17 cm.

Kere'tkun desires to accept the sacrifice: therefore it is kept up all the time, from early in the morning until late in the evening. Small chips of wood, bones, and blubber, serve for fuel. The Asiatic Eskimo substitute for the fire another big lamp; or they sacrifice to Kere'tkun on the lamp where he has taken his place. This difference is significant, as the lamp in the place of the hearth, is better adapted to the woodless tundra and to arctic maritime life than the hearth of the Chukchee ceremonial.

Quantities of pudding made of edible roots and stalks mixed with oil and liver are considered necessary for the ceremonial. We find the same feature in the ceremonies of the Reindeer Chukchee, the Koryak, and, formerly, in those of the Kamchadal, who declared that Kutq was exceedingly fond of pudding.

Families of friends and relatives take part in preparing the necessary pudding, and their women come every morning to the house where the celebration is going on, bringing a new supply. The guests gather a little later, and each woman brings a vessel in which she receives part to take home. Besides the pudding, all kinds of food are distributed in profusion to those assembled, and considerable time is used in eating and in drinking tea.

The first day of the ceremonial is considered as belonging to the inmates of the house, who beat the drum, sing their tunes, and prepare ceremonial dances in a way similar to that of the Reindeer Chukchee. The drummers are men, who stand in the usual place, — on the outer side of the hearth, facing the sleeping-room. The dancers, who are women, stand on the inner side of the hearth, facing the entrance. All the participants are singing, each his own tune. Some of the people have small whistles of wood or goose-quill, by means of which, from time to time, they send forth a short, shrill sound (see Fig. 281). This is done mainly by the children of the family, who have to skip around the hearth.

The second day belongs to the guests, and particularly to the shamans, who have to show, in turn, their skill in drumming and singing.

The third day belongs to the women, who act both as drummers and dancers. The drummers stand in the usual place of the men, — on the outer side of the hearth, facing the sleeping-room; and the dancers, in the usual place of the women, — on the inner side of the hearth, facing the entrance. All this is similar, even in the minor details, to the customs of the Reindeer people in the fall ceremonial and the "thanksgiving." A new detail is that of a night-watch, which must be kept for the sake of Kere'tkun, who is supposed to stay in the house all the time. This watch is kept by an old man or woman. A shaman is often invited especially for this purpose, and at the end of the watch he receives a coil of new thong in pay for his services. During his watch he sits on a whale's vertebra which is used as a stool, with his back toward the entrance, and with his face toward the

hearth. All this time he sings, and beats the drum, but in a subdued key in order not to awaken the supernatural guest slumbering on the lamp. The last night a woman occupies the stool, and keeps the watch.

On the last evening, meat of a whole reindeer is cooked in a big kettle suspended over several lamps, one of which is the lamp on which Kere'tkun is placed. The cooked meat is distributed among the guests, who carry their shares home. Even comparatively poor families take care to reserve for the ceremonial a reindeer-carass, either from their hunt or from the provisions bought from reindeer-breeders.

The image of Kere'tkun is burned over his lamp. Then the whole house is carefully swept. The rubbish, stray hair, etc., are gathered together, as well as the crumbs of sacrifice from Kere'tkun's lamp and from the small fire, and then they are thrown into the sea. This is considered as returning to the sea all the game killed up to the time of the ceremonial. The same act is performed also in the other method of celebrating the fall ceremonial, the "genuine thanksgiving," and, indeed, in almost all ceremonials of the Maritime Chukchee, especially in the "ceremonial of heads" of midsummer and in the "ceremonial of the whale."

Exchanging of Presents. — In many villages, on the second day, the so-called "exchanging of presents" (čukê'irgin) takes place. It is performed with different details in various places. In the most common method, the female guests gather at the entrance of the sleeping-room, bringing all kinds of household things, which they thrust under the fold of the skin wall, and loudly demand the thing they want. The mistress must immediately take the offered object, and replace it with that required by the guest. Sometimes the objects offered and demanded are of no value whatever; for instance, an old woman will bring a piece of old skin, and ask in exchange for a lamp-support. This is done because the exchange is considered a part of the ceremonial and a special sign of friendliness on the part of the guests. On the other hand, if a guest asks for something of great value, it must be delivered promptly and without demur. If the mistress has not the desired object, she must borrow it from her neighbors in order to satisfy the guest. After the present has been delivered, the people standing by have the right, each in turn, to ask for it. To refuse it is unbecoming; and a desirable object may change owners two or three times before it is carried away from the house.

In some places young children are sent instead of grown persons. They come in, shout to the mistress, and say, "Do not refuse! So-and-so asks for such-and-such a thing." The mistress gives the required object, exclaiming, "Ta ha! ta ha!" After that she has the right to send her own child immediately to ask for an equivalent. In most cases, however, she will wait till the observance of the ceremonial by the other party, when she will seize this opportunity to obtain an equivalent of her gift.

on only, while the woman dances before him. He must provide a reindeer-skin, however, to spread on the ground under her feet while she is dancing. While the dance is being performed, the other dancers remain quiet, and look on together with the spectators. After the dance, the man must give some present to the woman; and the following night they sleep together, leaving their respective mates to arrange matters between themselves. On the next day, the husband of the woman, and the wife of the man, perform a similar dance, in which the man gives an equivalent of the present of the day before; and each newly-mated couple sleeps together for another night. Such dances are arranged chiefly among cousins or other relatives, who, among the Chukchee, frequently assume the bond of compound marriage. Conversely, a new bond of compound marriage may be concluded through a trading-dance. This is closely analogous to the customs of the Alaskan Eskimo as described by Nelson;¹ but with the Chukchee an exchange of wives leads, as a rule, to the lasting bond of compound marriage, or to what is so called. So often is this the case, that even the women who mix with the sailors from whaling-ships consider them their husbands by compound marriage. Among the Chukchee, clandestine intercourse with another man's wife is called by the same name. When the affair first comes to the knowledge of the husband, a quarrel may ensue; but an amicable adjustment is soon brought about by a bond of compound marriage.

CEREMONIALS OF ASIATIC ESKIMO. *Ceremonial of Ka'cak.* — Among the Asiatic Eskimo the ceremonial of the winter is connected in most villages, not with Kere'tkun, but with the Big-Woman. Some families in the villages Wute'en and I'wtun, however, connect the ceremonial with Kere'tkun, who is called by them Ka'cak. The name of Ka'cak as identical with Kere'tkun is known also in Uñi'sak and on St. Lawrence Island. In Uñi'sak, some families are said to perform a simple "genuine thanksgiving" ceremonial analogous to that of the Maritime Chukchee. The ceremonial of Ka'cak or of Big-Woman is performed with the same details as that of Kere'tkun among the Chukchee. Even the net, the wooden birds, and the painted paddles² are of exactly the same character. The differences have already been referred. The most important of them is the complete replacement of the ceremonial fire by the lamp.

Eider-Duck Ceremonial. — There is also the so-called "eider-duck ceremonial," in which, besides the usual net with wooden sea-gulls, is a net (Fig. 280) supported by a long pole painted over with patterns of straight lines. Wooden images of eider-ducks (Fig. 280, *a*), which, however, do not differ markedly from the sea-gulls mentioned before, may move on a special loop along separate lines of leather. Each line is held by one person, who,

¹ Nelson, p. 360; compare also p. 384.

² Compare Fig. 277, p. 397.