

## Ornament as a Symbol of Intercultural Communication

*Nadezhda Nikolenko*

Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abai Kazakhstan,  
050010, Almaty, Zhambyla Street, 25

---

**Abstract:** The present study focuses on ornament as a unique phenomenon of world culture considered within intercultural communication. An approach to analyzing the nature of ornament as a symbol of intercultural communication actualizes the study of the phenomenon in the era of globalization, when many cultures are subjected to substantial transformations and begin to lose their original traditions. In this paper I intend to investigate the specifics of ornament within the process of intercultural contacts in the space-time continuum. In order to provide the study with concrete examples I chose the case of the traditional nomadic ornament of the Central Asian region of Eurasia. In a compact symbolic form ornament acts as multi-functional communication means that can not only provide information about the cultural history of an ethnic group, but is also a powerful factor of self-identification in the society, contributing to further inculturation and spiritual self-development. Symbol, being a powerful communicative tool of culture, is the primary category used in the interpretation of Eurasian nomadic folks' applied art. We can define the symbolic component of ornament as one of the most important and most characteristic of its features. This is a sublimation of world experience in a particular visual symbolic form, a visual archetype of constant decorative forms. In the epoch of reevaluation of cultural heritage of Eurasia folks, the study of ornaments' symbolism could serve as a useful material for the formation of the international cultural image of the Central Asian region.

**Key words:** Communication • Intercultural • Nomadic • Ornament • Symbol • Traditional

---

### INTRODUCTION

**Ornament and Intercultural Communication:** In the modern world with its globalizing tendencies, we can observe the development of intercultural communication processes and its spatial-temporal expansion. An important factor of a successful functioning of these processes is the will and the capability of intercultural communication's subjects to establish a constructive intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. Symbol as one of the most fundamental elements of any culture acts here as a powerful non-verbal communicative tool that can influence significantly the intercultural communication process' essence and content. Symbols of culture, expressed in various forms of aesthetic reality (from applied arts to intangible forms of traditions, customs and folklore), represent a universal resource of communicative and semantic continuum that could actualize the intercultural communication processes.

Symbols in their concrete and formed with the time format reflect the accumulated socio-cultural experience and perform communicative and informative tasks, realizing the ideological, axiological, ontological internal and inter-ethnic cultural dialogue. The act of intercultural communication bases on symbolic interaction between entering into the intercultural dialogue actors. The discovering of the semantic content of symbols could lead to an adequate understanding of the communication process parties' cultural differences.

Ornament perceived not just like an element of art system but also as a meta-cultural phenomenon is one of the most ancient and constant forms of communication and mutual enrichment of cultures. Regarding this point of view on its essence, it is possible to substantiate the need for theoretical and methodological reconsideration of ornament as of a symbol within intercultural communication. Theoretical and methodological synthesis of cultural and philosophical approaches to the analysis

---

**Corresponding Author:** Nadezhda Nikolenko, Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abai Kazakhstan, 050010, Almaty, Zhambyla Street, 25.

of this role of ornament can become a significant contribution to the development of the modern humanities.

I suppose that a further disclosure of the traditional nomadic ornament's specifics and communicative potential is rather important at this stage, when the processes of a new cultural system creation take place in the Central Asian region. This system of culture will be capable to reflect the core values of the modern society in a compact sign-symbolic form. Theoretically and methodologically, the importance of this study is justified by the necessity of philosophical and cultural analysis of ornament and its interpretation as a symbol of intercultural communication. Ornament considered as a symbol represents the specificity of ideological and axiological transformations of the modern Central Asian region within the world culture.

Since ancient times Central Asia has occupied the central position between two parts of the world – a fast-paced young Europe and a traditional ancient Asia. Situated in the center of Eurasia, it has always been in the heart of the collision, interaction and convergence of all cultures of the continent. The uniqueness of such geographical situation gave undeniable advantages to the region because due to the ancient Silk Road all the ways of commercial and cultural exchange left their material and spiritual legacies along the whole Road. The reconsideration of the communicative potential of the Central Asian Turkic culture's ornamental symbols could serve as an additional source of information for the traditional nomadic culture's face reconstruction, as well as for the study of the interaction and the development of different types of Eurasian cultures.

The modern role of the Central Asian region in the intercultural communication process is invaluable. Unfortunately, nowadays Central Asia is been influenced by westernizing tendencies. Many changes happen due to the influence of the Western popular culture. Borrowed and different from the local culture symbols reflect ideas about alien political and economic system, aesthetic principles of art, ethics and philosophy. However, at the same time we can observe a strong appeal to the origins, to the cultural heritage source. This tendency assumes either its revision with further adaptation to contemporary living conditions or its complete adoption in spite of modern realities. The last approach acts like a sort of an attempt to slow down an unstoppable passage of time, like a desire to preserve and revive a forgotten ancient wisdom.

Today active researches and a fundamental reconstruction of various forms of popular culture (folklore, traditions, art and crafts) are in progress. A rich cultural heritage of Turkic nomadic folks should help the formation of the modern Central Asian region's new culture, as well as to become a powerful stimulus to develop morality, patriotism and cultural unity.

The present situation in the field of cultural policy in Central Asia grounds the necessity of ornament's reconsideration, viewed as a universal non-verbal means of intercultural communication. Moreover, the traditional nomadic ornament's research in the context of the intercultural communication phenomenon is relevant because of such trend of the modern society as the will of citizens to their cultural identity. Traditional ornaments act here as a real ethno-differencing feature allowing the subjects to identify their own uniqueness and difference in the process of intercultural communication.

The main hypothesis of the present study is that ornament in its symbolic form is a universal non-verbal means of intercultural communication, which role and importance increases in the age of globalization. As one of the most constant means of artistic expression, ornament in a compact form visualizes basic philosophical concepts of an ethnos.

In order to investigate the essence of the traditional ornament's symbolic structure the study of historical, cultural, ethnic, religious and artistic aspects of its functioning is required. The identifying of worldview and philosophical basics of some traditional ornamental forms' symbolism makes possible a further revelation of axiological aspects of the society as of culture's bearer. The actors of intercultural communication can give different meanings to the same symbol. This indicates the hidden factors that determine differences in the interpretation of symbols and as a result render the process of communication more difficult. Nevertheless, the interpretation of ornamental symbols in different cultural, social and time contexts reveals a more or less strong tendency to unify their meaning. By means of symbols, an individual gets involved in the intercultural communication process and ornament as one of visual communicative forms acts as a universal means of artistic expression. The purpose of the study is to make an analysis of ornament as of a universal symbolic language of intercultural communication.

The objective of the study is to analyze the scientific material that reveals basic conceptual approaches to the consideration of symbol in the intercultural communication process. I also propose to consider

ornament as a physical embodiment of symbol. In order to provide the study with some practical grounds I discuss the example of the traditional nomadic ornament of Central Asia within intercultural relations system.

The prior study of diverse sources concerning the research subject has allowed their further thematic grouping. The first group includes the material on symbol's philosophical essence as of a cultural phenomenon, as well as on the specifics of a sign-symbolic nature of ornament.

Symbol is one of the most complex and fundamental phenomena not only in the field of philosophy, but also in other areas of humanities – cultural studies, art history, sociology and art. E. Cassirer [1] theorizes the phenomenon of symbol as a form of the spirit's expression. The symbolic function is the main one for the human mind. According to Cassirer, language, myth, religion, art and science are basic symbolic forms. Symbol possesses ontological and epistemological functions and acts like a primary means of the creation of culture.

P. Ricoeur considers symbol as a universal means of a person's self-cognition. This process functions thanks to symbols transmitted through the culture in which a person acquires existence and speech [2].

In the second half of the XX century in the postmodern philosophy symbol correlated with the concept of 'simulacrum' (J. Lacan, G. Deleuze and J. Baudrillard). According to Deleuze, a symbol-simulacrum is a form of expression of chaotic destructive forces. This is as a copy of copies separated from the ideal, which resembles Plato's concept of eidos [3]. J. Baudrillard associates a symbol-simulacrum with a 'hyper reality' that does not have any basis or source [4].

Many prominent researches of western, Asian and American humanities investigated ornament as a symbolic structure. Nevertheless, after a thorough analysis of the literature on the subject we face a lack of works dedicated to the research of ornament as of a non-verbal means of intercultural communication.

The investigation of the nomadic ornament's essence has required the study of specific sources. The first work to mention in this field is the research of A. Kazhgaliy [5], who attempted to analyze philosophically the essence of ornament using comparative, hermeneutic and synergistic approaches in his study.

According to the author, ornament "is a special language that ancient man used to express on the plane his ideas about Time and Space, Life and Death, Cosmos and his place in it. This language possesses its contents

and everything that creates it within an autonomous system: syntax, grammar, lexical-semantic level and even phonetics – i.e. a tier of elementary, minimally divisible units" [6]. Moreover, putting forward the idea that ornament is nothing but a visual archetype, the researcher insists on the idea that "ornament can exist only within a system" [7].

Some researchers consider the traditional nomadic ornament as a "universal symbolic form of art interconnected with the entire mythological complex and characterized by a special conventional way to reflect sensory and imaginary data directly dependent on the way of life and economy" [8]. We can also find the consideration of ornament as of an "independent system joint by the type of functioning and the method of the world modeling" [9]. In addition, according to K. Nurlanova, it is by means of ornament, perceived as a form of everyday life aesthetic arrangement, that becomes possible to solve the most complex problem of art – "the problem of a peculiar artistic synthesis that could express the attitude to the world" [10].

The second group of sources included the study of the intercultural communication phenomenon, of the place and the role of symbolic structures in it, as well as of the essence of ornament as a symbol of intercultural communication.

Various authors study the role of symbol in intercultural communication, for example, R. Cogdell and K. Sitaram understand intercultural communication as a process of symbols' understanding by ??the audience-recipient [11]. At the same time, the division of intercultural communication on verbal and non-verbal actualized the study of symbol as of non-verbal communication means.

**Methods of Study:** Generally, the analysis of scientific literature suggests that the problem of ornament's consideration as a symbolic structure has its research perspectives. However, methodological principles for ornament's symbolic investigation, as well as some basic concepts, allowing to study in a correct theoretical way the nature of ornament and its role in the culture were developed. In the modern conditions of globalization, a special significance takes the reconsidering of ornament as a symbol of intercultural communication. Nevertheless, due to the complete absence of monographs devoted to the problem we come to a reasonable assumption that it still needs conceptualization. These circumstances allow stating the theme of the present study as a relevant and innovative one.

A further investigation of ornament as a symbol of intercultural communication requires a synthesis of different theoretical and methodological principles used in cultural studies, philosophical anthropology, ethnology, social philosophy, philosophy of culture and art and other humanities. In my opinion, the application of such theoretical methods as the study of primary sources (research works of eminent scientists and philosophers, anthropologists and art critics), the method of cultural and philosophical analysis as well as the employment of basic principles of phenomenological and systemic-structural approaches will let perform the current study and prove its main hypothesis.

**Culture and Communication: Integrity and Interaction:**

According to Hall, culture is a communication [12]. The intercultural communication phenomenon as an independent object clearly states itself in the 50-60s of the XX century. From the very beginning, the researches of this new separate area of study began to apply different interdisciplinary approaches. Later, such a methodology became the basis for the subsequent formation of some new disciplines in the field of humanities, such as ethnology, linguistics, ethnic psychology and others.

There are several interpretations of this phenomenon in the western theory of communication. According to Casmir, communication is not just a cultural and social attribute of human life, but also a basic, vitally indispensable mechanism of both external and internal human existence [13]. Thanks to communicative processes, social subjects can comprehend culture and transmit it. Intercultural communication in its turn acts as a communication subsystem in general. According to Hall, the interaction is in the very heart of cultural universum and everything comes out of it [14]. Such an understanding of intercultural communication suggests its enduring significance in the normal functioning of culture as a whole. It provides an information link between social groups and communities across time and space and allows the accumulation and the transmission of social and cultural experience, as well as the organization and the coordination of joint human activities, the translation of ideas, knowledge and values.

Intercultural communication reflects almost all types of interrelations between individuals and groups from different cultures. A mutual exchange of knowledge “about culture, its symbols, language, meanings, customs, norms, traditions, etc.” [15] proceeds by means of this communication type. Intercultural communication is possible as in diachronic (between generations in time) as in synchronic (between the entities in space) dimensions.

Nowadays all main strategic directions and models of intercultural communication are developed mainly by Western European and American researches. These conceptions evidently possess a globalizing and standardizing orientation ignoring special cases of this interaction type. The discussion of the ways and the reasons of these settings’ application to the current social situation in the Central Asian region is inherently open.

The modern society of the Central Asian region is extremely multiethnic, where different nationalities should be able to find a common language, adapting to social, political, economic and cultural realities. It is because of these factors seems necessary to develop appropriate models of intercultural communication, both at the international level and at the local one, characterized by the interaction of different ethnic and social groups.

We should notice that the relation between cultural and linguistic components of the communication phenomenon is often considered within ethnic and cultural linguistics, concentrated on the study of verbal communication specifics. However, it is not enough to possess just a good knowledge of foreign language in order to render intercultural communication successful. It is also necessary to be familiar with a special cultural component that carries relevant non-verbal information about worldview and axiological orientations of a particular ethnic group.

Foreign languages as means of communication are to study in an indissoluble unity with the culture of the people who speak it. Gross believes that the central idea of education should be that of the acquisition of the capability for a symbolic behavior [16]. According to the researcher, the thinking acquires its implementation not only by means of the language, but also with the help of symbols and visual structures that are to convey verbally inexpressible information. It is interesting how Thass-Thinemann considers the communicative potential of signs and symbols. By him, a sign causes a reaction in the sensorimotor area of physical reality and a symbol gives the person not only the cause but also the sense of the phenomenon. Symbol is an instrument of thinking. This is not just a reaction to the physical reality. A person lives, thinks and acts in the world of symbols [17].

Thus, we conclude that the information transmitted in the intercultural communication process can be interpreted properly only in the case if the recipient possesses a necessary knowledge of the appropriate semantic-symbolic code.

A non-verbal way of intercultural communication is important in the case when cultural differences between subjects are so huge that they begin to interfere with

verbal communicative means. The means of non-verbal intercultural communication include various manifestations of cultural identity of the subjects. It is possible to understand intuitively a huge part of these manifestations, without the use of any verbal means of communication and then to transform them within the appropriate native culture, ideas and concepts. Contacting a different culture a person intuitively seeks the ways to interpret non-verbal communicative codes, which in a sign-symbolic form transmit the information about philosophical, aesthetic, axiological and other aspects of this culture.

A broad range of specific literature consider the problem of how to interpret various symbols. Nevertheless, only few research works examine the interpretation of cultural symbols per se. The present article focuses on the study of symbol as non-verbal means of intercultural communication where the traditional nomadic ornament acts as its “physical bearer”.

**Ornament: Symbol, Sign, Communicative Mean:** Symbol as one of the oldest phenomena of humanity exists in all cultures. Over the ages many symbols have sunk into oblivion, some of them have been deciphered and the others have remained undiscovered. Symbols like inherent to the human being phenomena are still present in modern cultures and will continue to exist through the centuries.

The role of symbol and of ornament as its “physical bearer” in the intercultural communication process is often underestimated. However, nowadays in the field of humanities we can find an array of interdisciplinary research works analyzing social, psychological and ethnic aspects of symbols within intercultural communication. Here such objects as peculiarities of national character, behavior models, prejudices, stereotypes, traditions, way of life, the meaning of certain gestures are under the consideration. These represent a purely external manifestation of a particular culture, but not essential, philosophical and axiological foundations determining a further form of their aesthetic expression.

Symbols in a specific visual form can express basic values, spiritual, ideological and conceptual orientations of a particular culture. Symbol per se is a high-capacity multi-level communicative structure that functions not only as an abstract category, but also at the level of sensory perception of reality in its esoteric and sometimes mystical form. Such handling of symbols allows the subjects of intercultural communication to contact each other not just at the level of synchrony, but also in the diachronic direction. Symbols here become able to transmit and receive cultural information beyond time and

space frames, thereby implementing the communication between different historical and cultural traditions and epochs.

In this aspect, it seems rather interesting the point of W. Turner, who claims that in any coherent cultural system there are several “dominant symbols”, which are central and show a clear polysemy [18]. According to the researcher, symbol is a prime non-verbal tool of communication that can inform about the nature of the considered culture. As for the structure of the symbolic system of culture and its functioning within communicative processes, Turner believes that it is possible to arrange groups of symbols in the way they become a message where certain symbols operate like parts of speech, according to conventional rules of their connection. This message is not about specific actions and circumstances, but about basic for the considered culture structures of thinking, ethics, aesthetics, law and ways to perceive new experience [19]. Ornament considered as a symbol sufficiently fulfills the above-mentioned opinion of Turner, because, firstly, an ornamental composition is readable only when it represents a combination of separate sign-symbolic ornamental elements; secondly, any ornament has its own rules of conventional compounding of these elements, similar to the rules and norms of verbal language and general linguistics. An appropriate argumentation here presents the theory of Kazhgali uly, who considers ornament a language with its own structure of minimally divisible units. According to the researcher this structure is similar to the linguistics’ one and possesses its content, “syntax, grammar, lexical-semantic level and even phonetics” [20]. In the language of ornament, the leading position belongs to visual experience, to its generalization in terms, thereby visual images functioning as signs and symbols. It is formed in a social practice, where are created the preconditions permitting to include the ornamental art phenomenon into the social communication sphere.

On the one hand, symbol is a close structure and on the other hand, due to its dialectical nature, it is open to new interpretations of meaning. This fact gives symbols a huge advantage over the other non-verbal means of intercultural communication. Here we face a contemporary phenomenon of ancient symbols revaluation. Today many ancient symbols are perceived quite differently compared to the period when they were born and which they belong to. Moreover, they are often filled with a brand new, original or reminiscent sense, which obscures their original semantics. According to Rasmussen, when we begin to interpret the historically preceding symbols, we

seek to analyze them in terms of our own experience. The same happens when we try to interpret the information from different cultures [21]. For example, if we talk about symbolic structures of the traditional Central Asian nomadic ornament, the question of their correct contemporary interpretation is rather relevant within cultural politics of the region. Centuries ago, these ornaments fulfilled strong symbolic functions and had their original unrepeatable meaning familiar to each representative of the nomadic culture. Unfortunately, nowadays practically no one remembers the core sense of particular ornamental elements in spite the fact that they are still in use in almost all spheres of visual culture.

We should emphasize that today the true semantics of many ancient ornaments is almost unknown. This fact causes their wrong or extremely distorted interpretation and therefore the misinformation of the intercultural communication subjects about the true sense of ornamental symbols and the culture they belong. Nowadays the application of sacred ornaments of the past shows that very often neither the artist nor the intended recipient of the subsequent creative product are not even aware of the true “message” encoded in ornamental structures. In many cultures (and the nomadic one is not the exception) there were ornamental symbols intended for defending of their owner and for destroying or cursing the enemy, for example, various tattoos of Japanese culture, stigmata of Western Europe, ornaments and amulets of ancient orient and Mediterranean cultures. Such a lack of knowledge of the semantics provokes a false impression about the harmlessness of some ornaments and a deceptive impression that they are open to an ignorant use. In other words, drawing a parallel with the present day, it resembles an intentional intrusion into a place designated by prohibitory signs.

The meaning of symbol depends on specific historical circumstances and is a part of historical and social context [22]. Thus, the context (social, philosophical, cultural, historical) is a determining factor in the interpretation of symbols transmitted in the intercultural communication process. Symbols cannot be adequately interpreted beyond their functional context, as “signs do not exist in isolation: a sign is always a part of a set of disparate signs that operate in a particular cultural context; a sign transmits information only when it is combined with other signs and symbols of the same context” (Leach, 2001, 21).

Thus, we can conclude that symbol represents complete universal non-verbal means of intercultural communication that in coded form transmits basic concepts, ideas, views, values and mentality of a

particular cultural tradition. Symbol in its poly-semantic form facilitate communication of subjects in both synchronic and diachronic dimensions, serving as a bridge between different historical epochs, spaces and cultures. The symbolization of particular cultural elements indicates their hidden, encrypted philosophical sense that requires an adequate interpretation.

Ornament considered as a symbol appears active non-verbal means of intercultural communication. Indeed, when we talk about different cultures, especially traditional, ancient Eastern or Western European culture before the Renaissance, our minds unwittingly begin to produce visual images, some kind of aesthetic models of a cultural tradition. For example, if we start to discuss the Arab Caliphate culture, we immediately imagine arabesques or luxury patterned carpets; considering ancient Chinese culture, first of all, we imagine refined hieroglyphic signs, which are also ornaments filled with symbolism and characterized by the multiplicity of meanings depending on the combination of the main structural elements. In fact, ornament acts here not only as means of intercultural communication, but also as graphically capacious symbolization of this phenomenon. Ornament in its symbolic form is always a message, which meaning and purpose are understandable only if the recipient is aware of the appropriate decoding key.

There is no doubt that ornament, as the intercultural communication symbol, possesses a multiplicity of meanings. This semantic multiplicity has always been ornaments’ inherent feature and depended on the historical period and the nature of the respective communicative processes.

Here we would like to discuss the case of ancient and the most typical for Central Asia’s nomadic culture ornamental element “koshkar muyiz” (from Kazakh – “sheep horns”), which has a form of stylized double sheep horns. This traditional nomadic symbol was born in the heart of Turkic culture many centuries ago. Different nomadic folks of the Central Asian region (Kazakh, Kirgiz and Uzbek ethnic traditions) assimilated then this ornamental structure, transforming it within their own cultural traditions. Later settled folks borrowed the element and, after several transformations, it entered their aesthetic system.

As for the semantics of the considered ornamental structure, its origins come from the ancient Turkic civilization where it had the following meanings: 1) the spirit, the soul, the life force; 2) happiness, grace, blessings; 3) in a figurative sense – the dignity, grandeur and in the religious – the condition of bliss. Kazhgali uly supposes that this ornamental element expresses the human figure and only in a figurative sense the horns [24].



Koshkar muyiz. A typical nomadic ornamental element

After its assimilation by medieval Turkic folks, the element began to symbolize male force and manhood in general. In Kazakh traditional applied art “koshkar muyiz” symbolized also a hero, a defender. That is why the main field of this ornaments’ application is the decoration of male clothes and typically mannish nomadic attributes, such as saddles, harness and arms.



An ornamental structure formed by koshkar muyiz element

Nowadays in the contemporary art of the Central Asia region we can observe an interesting trend. Recently many painters have begun to use traditional ornaments in their art-works, but only few of them definitely realize that these ancient ornaments are not just beautiful decorative elements, but do have some deeper meaning. Today the true sense of the traditional nomadic ornament has almost sank into oblivion. However, there are still some places, where we can find people remembering the basic meaning of some ornamental structures. These islands of traditionalism have become an invaluable source for a cultural rebirth of the Central Asia region, so they need protection and support.

Another traditional nomadic ornamental element that deserves our attention due to its importance in Kazakh, Kirghiz and Uzbek ornamental art is a so called “tuye taban” (“camel slot”). This element symbolizes wealth, a celebration of life and prosperity. However, according to Kazhgali uly, a camel can also be an envoy of death and

at the same time an embodiment of the Great Mother’s archetype. The last meaning appears because of the graphical structure of the element where we can discover an image of a stylized female. This is a personification of the mother bearing a child, a future hero symbolized by “koshkar muyiz” after his birth. At the same time, “tuye taban” is a plant symbol because the motive of gestation is quite comparable with the analogy of maturing seed in the ground.



Tuye taban. A typical nomadic ornamental element



An ornamental structure formed by tuye taban element

As we can see, the potential ambiguity of interpretations is one of the main features of symbol and of ornament as a possible form of its implementation within intercultural communication. The degree of the subjects’ readiness to understand each other during the communicative process conditions the result of interpretation, considered as a process of understanding of the transmitted symbolic meaning. Understanding here is a condition in which two or more individuals share the same level of the interpretation of the information they have [25].

Mutual understanding is largely dependent on cultural differences between intercultural communication participants. Members of one culture share the same system of ideas, concepts and images. It allows them to think, to feel and, thus, to interpret the surrounding world more or less in the same way. They share similar cultural

codes. Representatives of other cultures have to acquire some knowledge about cultural codes of their communicative partners.

A question about how intercultural communication subjects perceive ornaments of alien cultures is multidimensional in view of various factors. First, if we discuss the problem of understanding of the meaning of ornament's symbolic component, we should always remember about the space-time aspect of the communicative process. Different cultures, entering the communicative processes, cannot often comprehend the essence of the spiritual component of each other because they have different communicative aims. History knows many examples of this trend: the dialogue of cultures in already classic dichotomy of the East and the West and communicative processes of European and Asian parts of the Eurasian continent have always been complex and heterogenic. Changing from time to time initial orientations and purposes, in consequence these processes lacked for understanding between the East and the West. As a result, at some time there appeared a complete rejection of orient culture by the western one.

Besides, there is a temporal determinant in the considered processes. Ancient cultures with their deep spiritual and aesthetic traditions always remain somewhat incomprehensible, because any culture exploring another one "filters" it through proper life determinants. It "superposes" proper characteristics and specific features on the cultural layer under consideration.

In this case, ornament like a symbolic form remains subjected to the influence of axiological and aesthetic orientations of the recipient and in some way reflects them. We should interpret each symbol only in the light of its specific function in a particular historical and cultural context. Ornament, being a "physical bearer" of symbolic meaning, transmits appropriate cultural information. The question is to what extent personal interpretation of the given information corresponds to the real one.

Today the meaning of ancient ornamental symbols is almost lost. Due to the historical circumstances, the true meaning escaped, so the interpretation can never be entirely accurate. It happens because we consider all these elements within alien context in entirely different historical conditions and basing on disparate philosophical, axiological, moral, aesthetic and other orientations.

Indeed, the perception of the same symbol, sign, ornamental element can be quite different in diverse cultures and directly related to the interpreting subject. At

the same time, there is a completely different view on the considered problem, based on the assumption that the biggest part of symbols is universal and embodies the collective unconscious archetypes [26]. In many cultures, there are universal symbols and ornamental structures characterized by close correlations between their inherent elements. In ornament, all its elements possess multiple simultaneous interconnections. "Even a cursory glance at any ornamental fragment detects the presence of various interrelations and these interrelations manifest themselves just like grammatical categories are manifested in a complex expanded expression, organizing a given set of words in a correlated text" [27].

According to Kazhgali uly, a myth before its verbal formulation in words appeared graphically on a two-dimensional plane [28]. In a symbolic form, ornament relates about myths, legends, traditions and worldview. Here the action is encoded by means of ornamental elements and structures and may be compared with the verb; protagonists correspond to the noun expressed by the subject and the object. Consequently, the function of signs in ornament is to reflect the structure and the order of elements in the myth.

Thus, signs that symbolize various phenomena assume the function of signs- indices sending the recipient to a particular interpretation of the transmitted within the process of intercultural communication information.

At the same time an index indicates something or a direction to somewhere just like in a letter its zip code indicates a country, a town or a post office. Therefore, ornament is the index that refers to the appropriate culture, to the whole community and its worldview.

The nature of any ornament is twofold: being a sign-index, a direction indicator in the intercultural communication process, at the same time it is a symbol. It contains cultural messages of communicating ethnic groups in a compact form.

As we mentioned before, the correct reading and interpretation of any sign or symbol is in straight dependence on the context. Hence, no ornamental sign is inherently arbitrary. We should specify that in ornamental symbols there is always an invariant constant represented by the principle of their organization – the rules and laws that coordinate all component signs of the ornament. "We call these invariant structures 'visual archetype'" [29]. Kazhgali uly believes that ornament is a universal sign system capable to decrypt the nature and the origin of sign itself.



There remains a question of how we can interpret, comprehend and reconsider ornaments as symbolic forms of intercultural communication. If the communication is limited to one common cultural tradition (for example, nomadic culture), in this case interpretative processes of transmitted ornamental symbols will proceed more efficiently. It happens because the interpreter shares the symbolic system of the communicator and possesses the knowledge of the corresponding symbolic code, which is the key to an adequate understanding of the considered ornamental structures' semantics. In the case if the interpreting subject has no knowledge about the appropriate symbolic code, there exist certain ways to understand the transmitted cultural information. In the context of intercultural communication in order to transmit cultural meanings there can be used the analogical method of interpreting alien symbols. This is an attempt to reveal the meaning of own, familiar symbols that in ideological, conceptual and sensory-figurative sense can be identified with the meaning of alien symbols from another culture. It means that in order to facilitate the understanding of the symbolic structures' meaning, we should find analogues of the element in the culture of the recipient. For example, some symbols of the nomadic ornament may have analogues in the ornamental culture of settled folks (astral, solar and plant symbols). Then, in the case of effective intercultural dialogue and with the direct participation and leadership of the communicator, the recipient may have a possibility to learn to interpret adequately the transmitted ornamental symbols.

Ornamental art as a symbolic system expresses worldview and ways of existing of an ethnos. For each individual the acceptance of this worldview and existence models is closely related to the notion of "cultural identity", considered as an individual's personal identifying with a particular cultural environment, society and tradition. Interacting with the representatives of proper and alien culture, the subject transmits spiritual orientations acquired both explicitly and implicitly during his social adaptation. Therefore, for the communicator the translation of ornamental symbols in the process of intercultural communication is a way to inform the recipient about the specifics, nature, basic moral and aesthetic connotations of the proper culture. Ornament as a symbol represents a form that verbal language acquires after its translation to the language of art. Besides, ornament is a material form of ideological orientations' embodiment. Thus, as a material object, ornament is to indicate or to refer to another object.

We should notice that spatial and temporal aspects of the ornamental symbols' interpretation undeniably impose several restrictions. For example, in the context of modern culture the interpretation of ancient ornamental symbols becomes difficult because in the modern era, that has different spiritual and axiological orientations, the worldview of ancient folks is no more to share. That is why it is extremely difficult to read the text of ancient symbolic ornamentation. Eventually it turned out that the more ancient is an ornamental symbol, the more it assumes solely decorative properties. Thus, in the modern ornamental art the ancient symbol has reduced to the level of sign and later, perhaps, in some cultures, to a simulacrum. We believe that once almost all ornamental symbols were readable in a concrete well-defined manner. Now the meaning of many ornamental motifs is lost.

Thereby, we consider quite legitimate the statement that ornament as a complex symbolic system represents non-verbal means of intercultural communication, as well as a special form of materialization and visualization of ideological orientations.

**Discussion Points of the Study:** To summarize the fulfilled investigation of ornament as of a symbol of intercultural communication we must recall the main aspects of the problem and represent the results and conclusions.

An important independent result of the present study is the statement that ornament represents universal non-verbal means of intercultural communication and also a complex symbolic form of ideological, axiological and worldview orientations' visualization. In the traditional culture of nomads, ornament has a sign-symbolic nature and acts as the most distinctive ethno-differencing feature of the Central Asian nomadic culture. Today within the development of Central Asian cultural policies ornament as a form of cultural heritage is of paramount importance and acts as an indispensable structural element of culture.

The study aimed to analyze ornament as a symbolic structure functioning as non-verbal means of intercultural communication. In view of its relevance, the problem requires further thorough and detailed investigation.

To summarize all the considerations of the present research it is necessary to highlight its main aspects. In the process of intercultural communication ornaments as a symbolic model of culture's content expression transmits in a coded form philosophical foundations, worldview, axiological, moral and aesthetic connotations of an ethnos. Being an objectively expressed symbol, ornament as a non-verbal means of intercultural

communication implements the relationship between the subjects of communicative process, both in spatial and temporal continuum.

In the context of intercultural communication, symbolic interchange between the subjects manifests itself at both the inner and the outer levels of culture and represents one of the main processes on the way to a successful implementation of intercultural dialogue. If the recipient during the interpretation of the transmitted cultural information does not possess knowledge about the current encoding system, it leads either to a not very accurate interpretation, or to a complete lack of understanding of the symbols transmitted by the communicator. Depending on the extent and the nature of differences in the subjects' cultural characteristics, the interpretation of symbols will differ. For example, if the communicating cultures are close to each other from the point of view of their inner spiritual content and the nature of worldview, it is quite likely that in the context of cultural information field of each of these ethnic groups there will be similar symbols. These symbols will express similar concepts and will have similar forms of material embodiment in ornamental structures or in other forms of material culture. If the communicating ethnic groups have fundamentally different philosophical and axiological foundations, then the probability of having some common symbols is very low. In this case, the recipient interprets alien symbols finding parallels and similar elements in his own culture. The interpretation here can be a multi-level one. It can occur at the level of purely external decoding, which concerns only material realization of symbol. For example, it can be a search for analogies of the ornamental form under consideration and its artistic expression. In addition, the interpretation can process at the level of pure symbol's semantic component in the form of a search for analogical meanings in the context field of the interpreter's culture.

Communication is a constant element of human reality. The development and optimization of intercultural communication processes is a strategic challenge for contemporary society of Central Asia due to the nature of its multiethnic, poly-confessional and multicultural structure.

In my opinion, the basis for the Central Asian region cultural consolidation can be constituted by a definite ideological and axiological system embodied in symbols. Each ethnic group has its own unique traditions, customs and ways of existing in the world, but, at the same time, all nationalities have stable

axiological categories and conceptions beyond time and space. Here we consider such common categories as good and evil, love, wisdom, beauty, truth and other that often have a particular form of symbolic objectification, whether it is ornamental, musical or another art.

## CONCLUSION

Ornament as one of the most versatile sign-symbolic element of culture represents the oldest means of artistic expression. This phenomenon has an undeniable spiritual depth and diversity.

I proposed to assume that the symbolic component of ornament is one of its most important and characteristic features. Ornament is a sublimation of world experience in a particular visual symbolic form. Here we can observe a transformation of a particular thing in a sign and then in a symbol.

We have discussed the concept of intercultural communication and the role of ornament in these processes and proved that ornament in its symbolic form represents universal non-verbal means of intercultural communication. In the process of intercultural communication ornament as a symbolic model of culture's content expression transmits in a coded form axiological, worldview and other spiritual orientations of an ethnos. Ornament as an objectively expressed symbol and non-verbal means of intercultural communication correlates the communicating subjects in time and space.

The role of non-verbal means of intercultural communication is mostly characteristic for the nomadic culture's ornamental structures. In the course of the study, we revealed that in the traditional culture of nomads ornament in its symbolic form really acts as non-verbal means of intercultural communication, both in time and space.

Ornament as the main method of visualization and artistic reflection of nomads' reality was always of paramount importance for the Central Asian nomadic folks. Being the most mobile of all creative means of nomads' artistic expression it still covers all spheres of their life and continues to exist in Central Asia's contemporary settled culture. In a universal concise form, ornamental structures have the capacity to reflect the essence of spiritual world of nomads and their specific culture, becoming symbols of intercultural communication.

As a primary means of nomadic aesthetic expression and non-verbal symbolic means of intercultural communication, ornament continues to live in the contemporary art of Central Asia. However, nowadays the discussion concerning its communicative effectiveness remains unclosed because modern means of communication have completely different characteristics, but their functioning has a sign-symbolic nature as ornament once had. This gives a further basis to consider ancient ornamental symbols and their essential specifics as a model for contemporary means of intercultural communication.

### REFERENCES

1. Cassirer, E., 1953. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: III Vol.* Yale.
2. Ricoeur, P., 2013. *Hermeneutics: Writings and Lectures.* Cambridge Polity Press.
3. Deleuze, G., 1990. *The Logic of Sense.* Columbia University Press.
4. Baudrillard, J., 1993. *Symbolic exchange and death (Theory, Culture and Society).* Sage Publications.
5. Kazhgali uly, A., 2003. *Organon Ornamenta (The Organon of Ornament).* Almaty.
6. Kazhgali uly, A., 2003. *Organon Ornamenta (The Organon of Ornament).* Almaty, pp: 7.
7. Kazhgali uly, A., 2003. *Organon Ornamenta (The Organon of Ornament).* Almaty, pp: 6.
8. Shevtsova, A., 2007. *Kazahskij Narodnyj Ornament: Istoki i Tradicija (Kazakh Folk Ornament: Origins and Tradition).* Moscow, pp: 4.
9. Ibraeva, K., 1984. *Ornament Memorial'nyh Pamjatnikov Kazahov (Ornament of Memorials of Kazakhs).* Kazakh State Univ., Almaty, pp: 6.
10. Nurlanova, K., 1993. *Simvolika Mira v Tradicionnom Kazahskom Iskusstve (Symbols of the World in Traditional Kazakh Art).* Kochevniki. Jestetika. Poznanie Mira Tradicionnym Kazahskim Iskusstvom (Nomads. Aesthetics. World Cognition by Traditional Kazakh Art), Almaty, pp: 225-226.
11. Sitaram, K.S. and R.T. Cogdell, 1976. *Foundations of Intercultural Communication.* Columbus: Charles E. Merrell publishing company.
12. Hall, E.T., 1987. *Hidden differences. Studies in international communication.* Tokyo, pp: 16.
13. Casmir, F.L., 1978. *A multicultural perspective of human communication.* In *Intercultural and international communication*, Ed., Casmir, F.L. New York: University press of America, pp: 241-242.
14. Hall, E.T., 1959. *The silent language.* New York: Anchor press, pp: 62.
15. Ruben, B.D., 1984. *Communication and human behavior.* New York: Macmillan publishing company, pp: 296.
16. Gross, L., 1974. *Modes of communication and the acquisition of symbolic competence.* In *Media and symbols: the forms of expression.* Communication and education, Ed., H. Kichey, Chicago: University of Chicago press, pp: 57.
17. Thass-Thienemann, T., 1968. *Symbolic behavior.* New York: Washington square press, pp: 22-23.
18. Turner, W., 1983. *Simvol i Ritual (Symbol and Ritual).* Moscow, Nauka, pp: 36.
19. Turner, W., 1983. *Simvol i Ritual (Symbol and Ritual).* Moscow, Nauka, pp: 42.
20. Kazhgali uly, A., 2003. *Organon Ornamenta (The Organon of Ornament).* Almaty, pp: 7.
21. Rasmussen, D.M., 1974. *Symbol and interpretation.* Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, pp: 3.
22. Thass-Thienemann, T., 1968. *Symbolic behavior.* New York, Washington square press, pp: 21.
23. Leach, E., 2001. *Kul'tura I Kommunikacija: Logika Vzaimosvjazi Simvolov (Culture and Communication: the Logic of Symbols Relationship).* Moscow, Vostochnaja literature, pp: 21.
24. Kazhgali uly, A., 2003. *Organon Ornamenta (The Organon of Ornament).* Almaty, pp: 285.
25. Guardian, M., 1999. *Communicating across cultures.* London, Macmillan press, pp: 59.
26. Jung, C.G., 1968. *Man and his symbols.* New York, Dell.
27. Malayev, A., 2008. *Ornament kak Fenomen Kul'tury: Semioticheskij I Semanticheskij analiz (Ornament as a Cultural Phenomenon: Semiotic and Semantic Analysis).* Kazakh National Univ., Almaty, pp: 58.
28. Kazhgali uly, A., 2003. *Organon Ornamenta (The Organon of Ornament).* Almaty, pp: 48.
29. Malayev, A., 2008. *Ornament kak Fenomen Kul'tury: Semioticheskij i Semanticheskij analiz (Ornament as a Cultural Phenomenon: Semiotic and Semantic Analysis).* Kazakh National Univ., Almaty, pp: 97.