

MEDICAL IDEAS IN THE YUKAGHIR TRADITIONAL CULTURE

The article is devoted to the study of traditional medical concepts of the Yukaghirs. The information available in the works of travelers, missionaries and ethnographers of the 19th — early 20th centuries is often fragmentary and unsystematic, and the problems addressed in them have not yet been the subject of targeted study. The Yukaghirs' ideas about hygiene, health and diseases — that is, those values and meanings that accompany a person throughout life — have not been analyzed. The available material is systematized and analyzed in order to interpret its symbolic and semantic component. The study's methodology is based on Dilthey's hermeneutic circle, according to which any phenomenon must be understood by periodically ascending from considering specific details to a general panoramic vision. It was revealed that the traditional medical views of the Yukaghirs are characterized by mystical and magical ideas about diseases and treatment (personification of the disease, contact with spirits, etc.). These concepts determine the methods of treatment, which included both rational (herbal medicine, fumigation, cauterization, massage, etc.) and magical ones. They had a correct understanding of the anatomy of the human body and the functioning of its organs, as well as an irrational one. The ideas about hygiene, health, diseases and their treatment in the Yukaghir traditional culture were well-developed and have been preserved both in ethnographic records of the 19th-20th centuries and in the language, which allows us not only to create a picture of their folk medical knowledge, but also to some extent to determine their value guidelines and meanings.

Keywords: Yukaghirs, traditional culture, ideas about illness and health, sanitation and hygiene, spiritual values

Author Info: Popovkina, Galina S. — Ph.D. in History, Senior Resercher, Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far-East Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Science (Vladivostok, Russian Federation). E-mail: galina.popovkina@gmail.com ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6521-8658>

For citation: Popovkina, G. S. 2025. Medical Ideas in the Yukaghir Traditional Culture. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 3: 175–187.

References

- Efimova, A. A. 2006. Nizkozhirnoe zhiivotnoe maslo «Yakutskij hayah» [Low-fat Animal Oil “Yakutsky hayah”]. *Nauka i tekhnika v Yakutii* 1: 86–89.
- Zhukova, L. N. 2022/ Zlokozennyye sily v traditsionnykh verovaniyakh i fol'klore lesnykh yukagirov [Evil Forces in Traditional Beliefs and Folklore of the Forest Yukaghirs]. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriya* 77: 196–206. <https://doi.org/10.17223/19988613/77/23>
- Iohelson, V. I. 2005. *Yukagiry i yukagirizovannye tungusy* [Yukaghirs and Yukaghirized Tunguses]. Novosibirsk: Nauka. 675 p.

- Mainov, I. I. 1927. Naselenie Yakutii [The Population of Yakutiya]. In *Yakutiia* [Yakutiya], ed. by P. V. Vittenburg. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR. 275–320.
- Spiridonov, N. I. (Teki Odulok). 1996. *Oduly (yukagiry) Kolymского okruga* [Oduly (Yukaghirs) of the Kolyma District]. Yakutsk: Severoved. 80 p.
- Tugolukov, V. A. 1979. *Kto vy, yukagiry?* [Who are You, Yukaghirs?]. Moscow: Nauka. 152 p.
- Fedorova, G. V., S. V. Vialtsin, and I. E. Novokshchenova. K istorii meditsiny v Sibiri: Khanty-Mansiiskii okrug [On the History of Medicine in Siberia: Khanty-Mansiysk Okrug]. *Omskii nauchnyi vestnik* 2: 258–262.