

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY OF INDEGENOUS PEOPLES IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SIBERIA IN THE MODERN TIME

РЕЛИГИОЗНАЯ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ АВТОХТОННЫХ НАРОДОВ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ И СИБИРИ В СОВРЕМЕННЫЙ ПЕРИОД

GÜNÜMÜZDE SİBİRYA VE ORTA ASYA YERLİ HALKLARININ DİNİ ÖZDEŞLİKLERİ

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the religious identity of the Indigenous peoples in Central Asia and Siberian autochthonic peoples in the modern time. The processes of modernization and transformation which we are noticing nowadays had greatly influenced on the traditional worldview of the mentioned peoples and modified their religious identity.

Key words: religious identity, Mongolian and Siberian peoples, Religious culture and its evolution.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Статья посвящена религиозной самобытности коренных народов в Центральной Азии и Сибири автохтонных народов в современное время. Процессы модернизации и трансформации, который мы заметили в настоящее время значительно повлияли на традиционное мировоззрение упомянутых народов и изменения их религиозной самобытности.

Ключевые слова: религиозная идентичность, монгольские и сибирские этносы, религиозная культура, эволюция.

ÖZET

Makalede Sibirya ve Orta Asya yerli halkların günümüzdeki dini özgünlükleri incelenmiştir. Günümüzde dikkatimizi çeken çağdaşlaşma ve istihale yukarıda anılan

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halkların geleneksel dünya bakışını etkilemiş ve dinsel özgünlüklerine belli bir değişiklik kazandırmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Dinsel özdeşlikler, Mogol ve Sibirya Halkları, dini kültür, tekamül.

Modern ethno social and ethno cultural processes in the context of modern time are fixing a large extent of assimilation of the traditional structures of culture. Those processes, to our mind, also had greatly changed some axiological characteristic and parameters of religious culture both in general and in local options. Degree of an involvement and activity of the indigenous peoples in the modern structure of Society and the Person, as concrete subjects of Culture have to, as it seems to us, be discussed not only in the context of ethno social and ethno political processes, but also in the context of territorial, regional and local ethno cultural traditions. And Religious Culture of the indigenous peoples and all its characteristics, to our mind, are the most preserved and conserved structures in the traditional Culture. The analysis of field materials, carried out by us, shows that the modern processes of global modernization and integration, real-life cultural diversity of mankind, inter-and-cross-cultural relationships and contacts, migratory and demographic processes, which are taking place in the modern time, awaked in the modern society an aggravation of such a phenomena, as “ethnic roots”, “ethnicity”, “ traditional ethno cultural values”, ”religious and confessional identity” “ ethnic identity” and “self-identity”.

In this case, the Person, as the subject of its global and also ethno-socio-cultural measurement, is represented in the society as a unique phenomenon of social history of mankind with all implied characteristics of the values, caused, first of all, by the concrete historical religious traditions. The understanding and interpretation of a Person as Homo sapiens, as a certain social phenomenon can be developed through the concrete ethno cultural context, and taking into the mind many positivistic installations of naturally scientific knowledge (inductive, empiricism, biological laws of development, etc.). It is possible to note, that the problem of the Person is not so much a subject of social and cultural anthropology, but the all-humanitarian problem, focused, first of all, on understanding the values and symbols not only his own culture (and surely ethnically, ethno social and ethno cultural designated with specific markers and symbols), but also is focused on understanding the values and symbols of other cultures surrounding him. Thus the adequate perception and understanding these cultures has to be an indispensable condition of its unconscious and conscious understanding of the Nature of other Cultures.

The initial stage of development of the religious identity of many ethnoses in Central Asia goes to an extreme antiquity – a pal eolith and a neolith. In the course of the historical development it gradually evolved from the lowest forms to the highest under the influence of more developed national and world religions (the Tibetan Bon-po, the Iranian Zoroaster’s religious traditions, Easten branch of Christianity - nestorianstvo, etc.), gaining more and more difficult and systematized character therefore turned into the harmonious advanced and pantheistical religion having almost all components of developed religious system: the cosmology and mythology, ceremonialism, rudiments of the church organization, etc.

As the ethno genesis and ethnic history of many peoples of Inner and Central Asia are far ambiguous, their religious culture also has the ethno local distinctions expressed in local specifics of departure of religious ceremonies and cults.

There we must underline, that those historical and ancient religious systems which appeared to exist in Central Asia among the Tibetan and Mongolian peoples as well as in Siberia among the Turkish peoples (the Yakuts, the Tuvinians and the Khakas`) usually is identified as "shamanstvo" or "shamanism". To our mind it is not so correct and does not correspond to the real phenomenon of the religious system of the mentioned regions and peoples.

The majority of scholars and researchers, who had studied the ancient religious system in Central Asia and in Siberia, hold the opinion that the "shamanism" - is the whole religious complex of universal religious traditions which in fact is theory and practices of the shamanic tradition. But, we must say that all the communities and societies of our Planet on all the continents under different terms in their ethno social development passed in different forms through that religious tradition called during the modern period as "shamanism". (T.Yu Sem, 2006: 20) Thus, according to the phenomenon of "shamanism", it is possible to consider this phenomenon as the earliest religion of the mankind which has remained up to our days and in many cases competed some world religions. We are aware of the fact, that some representatives of European countries (German, France, Italy, Hungary, etc) nowadays are greatly interested in the religious system with the term of "shamanism" and in the modern time there appeared several shamanic centers in those countries.

The place of the shamanic culture and shamanic communities, on the latest theories of religious studies and philosophical anthropology in civil society, generally is defined by unique outlook, doctrinal and institutional criteria. The shamanic culture is not only different and complex picture of the world, but also social and ethno cultural life of society. It seems to be a kind of lifestyle of the peoples in Central Asia and in Siberia. But is it a real and classic "shamanism" or some other religious system which nothing has to do with "shamanism"?

The traditional religious outlook of the Mongolian people before adoption of the Buddhist theory and practice represents a unique and special form of the religious system of favoring the Nature objects. According to the most archaic representations drill, the center of the Earth and all the Universe is the huge mountain round which rotate the Sun, the Moon, planets and stars. This "The world mountain" connects Earth and the Sky, reaching heavenly spheres in which live deities - inhabitants of the Heaven (tenggeries). Penetrating down all the Universe, "The world mountain" serves as a link between all horizontal spheres (worlds) from which three worlds were considered as the main: 1) "The top, or upper world" (deede Zambulin – mong.), or the world of the Heaven itself and many heavenly deities (tenggeri – both - mong., turc.); 2) "World terrestrial, or Middle World" (delkhiyn dayda – mong.), that is the World of the people; 3) "The bottom world" (doodo Zambulin–mong.) - The underground World or the World of the dead. (Abaeva. 1992: 45).

By the way, in the Buryat mythology, the Master of the underground World is Erlik Khan, meanwhile the Master of such a place among the Yakuts is considered to be Kyday Baksy, but their ritual functions are very similar.

The earliest forms of traditional religion of the autochthonic population of Siberia (the

Buryats, the Evenks, the Yakuts (Sakha), the Tuvinians, the Khakasses) are the special, specific systems of beliefs and cults at the heart of which lies the spiritualizing and idolization of objects and natural phenomena. It was belief in possibility of magic impact on the world around and the people by means of the Sky and Heavenly deities, who in the condition of a certain mystical trance may influence on the person allocated with special magic force, communicates. This religious system, of course, get used to the earliest religious forms of magic, totemism, fetishism, etc. I gave them more systematized and institutionally issued character. Thus the identity of the specific person that is carrying out a set of religious and social functions in the tribal collectives played and continues to play a special role. In the traditional understanding of such a representatives in Mongolsphere community this individual and specific man/woman was a mediator (intermediary) between the Heavenly deities and the world of people, animals and spirits. Historically this religious system of a met ethnic Mongolian community goes back to ancient religious beliefs of the Turk - Mongolian people in Central Asia and a to classical shamanism of the Evenks. The Evenks`s shamanism, by the way, is considered to belong to the traditional beliefs and cults of the Tunguso-Manchurian people of the the Far East and Siberia.

As for the the Turk - Mongolian people in Central Asia the initial stage of the development of their religious system which subsequently has been incorrectly called by rather relative and common term – "the Mongolian and Turkish shamanism ", which inspired from extreme historical antiquity - Paleolithic and a Neolithic periods. Thus, it is necessary to emphasize here, that many scholars and researchers of religious culture of the Turkish and Mongolian peoples in Central Asia have the idea to interpret this religious phenomenon as "Tenggeriyn mypᠷᠠᠨ", either "Tengerism", or "Tengrianstvo" and that, in our opinion, sounds not absolutely harmoniously in the Russian language, but rather adequately reflects the phenomenon (Mongolian tenggerism. 2011: 448-451).

The traditional religious outlook of the Mongolian people before adoption the Buddhist theory and practice represents a unique and special form of vision and knowledge of the Space. This religious system was aimed on the direct perception of the World, comprehension of interrelation of the Nature and the Individual (person). Being the phenomenon of the world civilization, known to many people of the world both far back in the past, and in the modern time, this religious system was created within the ancient dualistic outlook dividing the world on: ordinary, i.e. profane, and sacral. At the heart of its concept lies the animistic picture of the World: belief that all around "live" and capable, idolization of all natural objects and Nature, belief in "masters - owners" of various territories and districts. Thus this belief functions under definite laws of magic and mythological attitude: identities of the Nature and the Person when the Nature is attributed by human properties and communications, and to people — properties and nature communications. In it there is no opposition spiritual and corporal, part and whole, live and dead, micro and macrocosmic. In traditional culture of the Mongolian people this religious system was based on their religious and mythological outlook, wide ritual and cult practices, institutes of formation and an bringing up the mediator. And in this case we may interpretate this religious phenomenon as "The Heaven Warship".

"The Heaven Warship" includes in itself the general regularities of the most ancient forms of relationship of the person with forces of Nature and Space. They, thus, are expressed in universal religious phenomena and ethno cultural features of the Great Steppe. The mediator in this situation acts as the keeper of archaic experience of mankind at the level of ethnic traditions. Therefore "The Heaven Warship" in modern life of the traditional

culture of the Mongolian people is a repeater of their collective ethnic memory, the stabilizer and the keeper of spiritual cultural tradition and national mentality.

The scientists investigating a phenomenon of a shamanism define it differently. Some of them see in it "a natural polytheistic religious cult", others — the outlook including rudiments of national knowledge, religion, art, folklore; magic cult; ecstatic religion; archetypes of the unconscious. Shamans themselves define their belief as "a way of knowledge and force finding".

There we'd like to underline that the traditional shamanic culture among the peoples of the Far East and the Northern peoples to some extent represented in due time a certain stabilizing factor of stability and preservation their ethnic identification within the ethnical and cultural traditions of their community. But what is common between the Tungus – Manchurian classical shamanism and "The Heaven Warship» of the ancient and medieval Mongols, - from the beginning of their historical evolution all of them have similar picture of the World, the central place in which occupies an image of the Mountain, which evidently is seen and found in their mythology.

In the religious structure of "The Heaven Warship" - "Tenggeryin Murgel or Zaya" of the Mongolian people there are, firstly - common, general and universal characteristics and, secondly - the local features caused by ethnic and regional tradition. The leader of the religious ceremony (usually - a khan, or khagan) — as a mediator (intermediary) between the World of Tenggeries (the deities living in the Top World) and people (living on the average the World) according traditional outlook of the Mongolian people had the opportunity to elect any "tenggeri" or spirit in the wide range of "tenggeris" and spirits. The representatives of the Central Asian communities in their representation and understanding believe that their lieder – khan – himself was originated from the Heaven and had global ability to see and visit other special reality and even travel inside and outside of it. An important role in formation of the identity of the khan's sacred role in "The Heaven Warship" played the ceremonies of dedication, increasing the status khans` sacred force.

In the modern time in Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, Shinying and other Mongol speaking territories, there exist religious tradition with the term of "shamanism". The main functions of the Mongolian shamans were and are still nowadays, first of all, - treatment the relatives of the definite clan, fortune -telling, a prediction, searches for the "lost soul" and farewell to the other world. Besides, respective and most educated shamans could and can do many rituals connecting with the nomadic lifestyle, which is considered to be rather dynamic way of life.

T.Yu.Sem claims that "Each people have own names for shamans who can differ even at one people depending on functions and categories of the shaman: at Yakuts shamans were called ойун, and shamanka — удаган, at Nenets — tadeby, at the Buryat — a boa, at Khanty — yolta-ku, Kets have Sining, at Yukaghirs — алма, Evenks have an adobe, the shaman, at Altaians — кам. From the Turkic word a lump there was also a word a kamlaniye designating ceremonial action of the shaman in a condition of ecstasy which was comprehended as weeds on the Universe worlds".

In shaman culture of the Mongolian people the shaman the man was called as "boa", and the woman "удаган" with various dialektalny variations of breeding groups of the Mongolian people.

In our opinion, unlike world religions, nevertheless some limitation a framework of rodoplemenny ethnic communities was inherent in a shamanism of the Mongolian people, both this rather unique and peculiar religious culture didn't become national religion of the Mongolian people though attempts of creation of national religion on the basis of a shamanism and more archaic beliefs and cults were undertaken even during creation of the Mongolian empire. During an era of the Middle Ages and later it covered all spheres of life of the all-Mongolian ethnic community, influencing formation of culture, a way of life and psychology of ethnic collectives, reflecting nature of their economic activity, their communication with the nature, and also features of the social organization – rodoplemenny, territorial and communal, early feudal, etc. structures. Its social functions were active and various: world outlook, regulatory, communicative, medical, cultural and educational.

However, as show our field researches conducted by us in the Republic Mongolia, in the Inner Mongolia the People's Republic of China and ethnic Buryatia, more than four hundred-summer presence of Buddhist culture at this region, didn't prevent many representatives of the Mongolian people to return to a bosom of religious tradition previous the Buddhism – to a shamanism. Moreover, at a turn of the twentieth and twenty first centuries, there is a certain phenomenon of the Renaissance of shaman traditions in the territories which have been rather strongly mastered by the Buddhist theory and practice. In this regard, those historical roots of ethnic consciousness and self-identification which developed and developed in a subsoil of the uniform Mongolian metaethnic community presented during the modern period by the Mongolian ethnoses of the republic Mongolia, the autonomous region of the Inner Mongolia of the People's Republic of China, the Sintszyansky autonomous region of the People's Republic of China, ethnic Buryatia (together with the former Agin Buryat Autonomous Area, Ust-Orda Buryat Autonomous Area, the Republic of Buryatia) as most northern part of a mongoloyazychny area and the Republic of Kalmykia being in the European part of the Russian Federation, probably, nevertheless gravitated to shaman religious culture which from a point of profanny outlook of some representatives mongolosfer and pragmatical realism of the present satisfied their requirements.

Religion as the steadiest component in ethno cultural history of the people of Central Asia has the regularities of development and traditional stereotypes which can be designated as system of religious culture. We mean the certain historically developed religious institutes created by the Central Asian ethno cultural environment and functioning as norms, ideals, stereotypes of thinking and behavior, the valuable and orientation structures given from generation to generation by religious culture. Thus, the religious culture is almost the most dominating and priority link, the integral component of any human culture, a necessary condition of its existence and development. And, the level of development of each concrete Mongolian ethno cultural community developed change of those methods and ways of regulation of religious system which at this stage would correspond and were organic in a valuable kernel of this culture. Continuity most the general paradigms of religious culture of this region and their historical stability were dialectically combined with processes of its forward development in which experience of the previous stages, all its achievements weren't rejected, and remained and synthesized in complete system of religious consciousness and behavior. One of the highest stages of evolutionary development of religious culture of the mongoloyazychny region, undoubtedly, the system of the religious traditions which has developed as a result of

synthesis of the Buddhism with their traditional beliefs is, which developments at different stages that act as dominirushchy religious tradition, (for example, the Buddhism after its wide circulation in a mongolosfer), as though again reviving classical form of shaman traditions, but already in other – a neoshaman form.

Religious symbols in religious culture of the Mongolian people in the course of the evolution only lost the completeness, but nevertheless remained in priorities of their religious customs, ceremonies and rituals.

Dynamics of development, transformation and modernization of ethnic cultures at a turn of centuries registers a phenomenal situation when a samoindentifikation of concrete ethnic subcultures and cultures, having lost many classical paradigms of the theory and practice of ethnoses (for example: some ethnoses appeared outside the autochthonic territories; the dominating economic and cultural type owing to the objective social reasons naturally changed; language, as a communication medium and as the complete information system including not only a sign language and a mimicry, and also huge layer of language of the culture which must adequately to perceive concrete cultural phenomena, stays in quite critical situation; the culture with all the productive and creative potential as the tradition as the transmitting structure represents fragments and relicts of actually ethnic culture) plays huge role in preservation of ethnic consciousness of society and that special complete psychological warehouse which, speaking the modern language, it is possible to qualify as ethnic mentality of the individual.

In religious culture of the metamongolian community, in any ceremonial and ritual situation, as a rule, always a certain mythological character was a mediator (intermediary) between the world of people and heavenly objects. Historically this phenomenon of religious system of a metaethnic Mongolian community goes back to ancient archaic religious beliefs of the people of Central Asia.

In the course of historical development it gradually evolved from the lowest forms to the highest under the influence of more developed national and world religions (the Tibetan check, the Iranian Zoroastrism, a nestorianstvo, the Buddhism, etc.) gaining more and more difficult and systematized character therefore turned into the harmonous advanced almost monotheist religion having almost all components of developed religious system: the cosmology and mythology, ceremonialism, rudiments of organizational structure, etc. At the same time unlike world religions, this phenomenon nevertheless was territorially limited in a locus of the Great Steppe of the period of the Mongolian Empire. During an era of the Middle Ages and later it covered all spheres of life of the Mongolian people, influencing formation of culture, a way of life and psychology of ethnic collectives, reflecting nature of their economic activity, their communication with the nature, and also features of the social organization - tribal, territorial and communal, exterritorial and other structures.

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