



Image of a Man and the Universe in Kazakh and Mongol Myths

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ABSTRACT

Myth can be defined in three ways: 1) ancient fable, story; 2) creation of myth, mythological cosmic genesis; 3) historically, culturally symbolized peculiar state of mind.

Along with information about creation of the universe, animals, plants and humankind, myths transfer significant information about vital events in the history of mankind. It always informs us about 'creation' of something, it always informs us of how something happened. In myth we stay in the initial origins of some creations.

In mythological time and space continuum there is no any borders between a man and the universe. Words and actions of mythological character are in syncretic and in unified feature. Power which realizes its unity is peculiar system of customs and traditions. In the age of mythology unity of a man with nature was highly glorified.

Interlacement of the different cultures and worlds, intersection of different time lines, alternation of unbelievable and imagined scenes with the scenes of true life are appearances of mythological consciousness.

Keywords: Steppe mythology, Tengrism, Genealogical consciousness, Archetype, Symbol, Totem, Ternary world, Sacral, Nomadism, Source of origin, Indigenous culture, Cultural variance, Syncretism.

1. Introduction

Kazakh and Mongol's ancestor's mythological world perception is interrelated with world culture. Representatives of structuralism cultural studies (V. Propp, C. Levi-Strauss) after analyzing myths and traditions of different cultures came to conclusion that their structure is similar. For example, the ancient Greek tale about cyclopus and Turkic Tobekoz have the same content and the same construction [1, p. 439].

Each nation, culture, religion has its own myths. But level of its fame is different in different nations. It is related with historical difference of different nations, hence results of comprehension of mythical heritage is different.

If to investigate myths of Mongol and Turkic nations, the main topic of their myth is about relation of the sky and a man. The main plot urges that Tengri (the Sky) created the universe, and the other creations of environment were created by men's actions. For example, some animal, or a man by mystical power rose to the Sky and turned into star. Legends about creation of the universe related with the very ancient times and cover themes of creation of the Sun, the Moon, and stars [2, p.39].

A.Kodar gives his own description about the universe construction: "Nomads didn't lag behind the Sun circulation. They were there, where the Sun was. From this we can see that, they surrounded the time with the circle, and drove it with the sheep. This circle, circulation of the Sun, derived the nomads from settled people who always were in search. The Turkic-Mongols stayed in that circle and other nations were left behind this circle. Because they thought that they were higher than the time. When the settled people considered themselves from time concept, the Nomads accepted themselves as the securities of the Space. It seemed that they lived freely in the space. They also did not want to leave the time. It was a picture of idea of eternity which was based on the circulation of the Sun and equality of the Earth and the

Sky. Of course, it was an immature idea which was invented in the low stage of the humane history. But surprisingly we can notice that this idea came up till the beginning of the 20th century without any changes. It is not fortuity. It is one of the special systematic courses of ideas which came to our days without any changes as Islam, Christian, Buddha, and Zoroaster [3, p.17].

C. Yung says that we have lost the substantial of life in ourselves in the result of forgetting archetypes and sacred symbols. Contemporary men differ from previous people, their energy and emotions have begun to disappear [4, p. 6]. So in Mongol myths about the universe and creation of a man it is said that when the people were born there were neither the Sun, nor the Moon. But each man has his own light, own ray. Afterwards the God hanged the Sun and the Moon on the Sky. If we take this myth from the symbolic point of view, many things become clear. The main God of the ancient Turkic and Mongol people was Kok-Tengri (the Sky). High esteem to the Sky and the other sky bodies is one of the main features of all nations which belong to the civilization of the Turks and Mongols.

If Kazakhs call the Great Bear, which looks like a scoop, Zheti Karakshi (the Seven Robbers), the Mongols call it Dolon Burhan (Seven Gods). According to Kazakh legend there lived seven thieves. They engaged in theft at daytime and felt shame for their deeds at night. They were cursed and after their death their souls became stars and flew to the Sky. The bright star at the top of the Zheti Karakshi is Kiran Karakshi (the Eagle Guard). The star next to it which shines less bright is a girl in capture –Ulpildek. Urker (Pleiades) who is trying to get back his daughter runs behinds the Zheti Karakshi all night long [5, p. 90-92].

According to the most widespread variant about the origin of these seven stars among the Mongols the star has following legend: ‘in the ancient times two hunting brothers met a man on their way. He says them that he was waiting for the bird which flies on the other side of the sky and which was shot by him. After midday the bird fell to the ground. Now they continued their way as three brothers. On their way they met a ground-listener, a big man who can move the rocks, a runner and a big man who can drink the whole water of the sea and joint all together. Seven skilful young men attacked Shazigay Khan and won him, as a result did a useful thing for people. When they were dead, they turned to seven stars [2, p.40].

Another variant runs: in the old days one old man’s cow bore a calf with a human body. A one year calf had grown up; performed heroic deeds, protected the people from the enemies. People called him a white nose calf. Due to people’s gratitude he flew to the Sky and met the White Sky King. The King told him: “You had helped your people so much, but they betrayed you. Every day I fight with a demon. Today I will fight in an appearance of a bull. Help me!”. The one year calf entered into the demon’s palace as a physician and made enemy action against the demon. A witch had known his deeds and threw her steel stick and divided him into seven parts. These seven parts became seven stars [2,p.40]. We can notice mix of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic conceptions from this myth.

The main commonness in myths of the Kazakhs’ seven robbers and Mongols Dolon Burkhan is transformation of a soul into a star. There can be noticed reflection of this belief today in daily life. The Kazakhs have an omen to say “My star, be higher” when they see the falling star, but the Mongols’ say “It’s not my star, it’s somebody’s star” [6].

Kazakhs and Mongols have many myths about the creation of animals, their characters and attempts to explain their peculiarities. For example, How the Deer had horns? Why the wool of the ounce is spotty? The reason for rabbit’s cut lips. The reason of camel’s not becoming one of the twelve years. The reason of wallowing in ashes. The reason of birds’ hole-ridden beak. The reason of cock’s morning cock screams. The reason of swallow’s flies around the man on horseback in the evening, etc.

Summary of the myth about the appearance of fire is as follows: in ancient times, there was no fire. They admired the fact that those who lived in the heavenly world used fire. In one day they consulted among themselves how to get fire. Who can send, because we cannot send a man because he does not have wings and cannot fly? If an eagle, it is too large and it may be noted. A little swallow, besides fast and they decide to send it. Swallow to deliver fire soared to heavenly peace. She flew to the appointed place in the evening, when everyone went to bed. Once she caught coal, and it was noticed by a woman and she shouted, "She steals the fire!". She tried to catch it with nippers for coals. Before she could catch her and tore a ponytail. A swallow brought fire to people, but became the doubled tails [2].

Erkhy-mergen ("arrows Thumb") (Tarbagan-mergen ("shooter groundhog")) - in mythology of Mongols - the wonderful hunter archer, the cultural hero.

Very long time ago once upon a time there was one shooter. On this earth there were 7 sun, there was very much hot. Erkhy-mergen swore: "If I am not able to shoot 7 sun 7 arrows, I will cut off to myself a thumb, I will stop being the husband, I won't drink transparent water, I won't begin to eat a last year's grass, I will live in a dark hole! " Erkhy-mergen shot 6 arrows of 6 sun and only was going to shoot at the 7th as before him the swallow flew by — he couldn't shoot the 7th sun. Erkhy-mergen became angry,

pursued a bird, but the horse it couldn't catch up with it. Again Erkhy-mergen became angry and the last arrow shot feet of the horse. After that his horse became a jerboa. Here why at a jerboa forward feet short. Erkhy-mergen, as well as swore, didn't begin to drink transparent water, is a last year's grass, turned in tarbagan (groundhog) and began to live in a dark hole. At tarbagan between shovels there is the place, called human meat. People say that Erkhy-mergen's this meat and don't eat it.

This plot breaks up to two parts, communication between which though strong, but is obvious not the primordial. The first plot — about several sun which scorched the earth in the ancient time (and/or have to ascend before her future death) — is widespread on extensive territories of the Central, East and Southern Asia (The Far East, Southern Siberia, Mongolia, Tibet, Northeast India, Indochina and some other regions [Mot A720.1, A1052; Berezkin, Catalogue: A. Sun and moon. 2A]). The subject of the second part has much narrower distribution. So, in the Kazakh folklore there is a similar plot about the furious hunter who exterminated a huge number of animals and in punishment was turned into a groundhog. In the mythology of the culture hero (eng.-culture hero, french- heros civilisateurs, deutch.-heilbringer)- a hero of myth who taught mankind Game hunting, art, etc. So the myth of swallow that helped people to make fire is not inferior to the myth of Prometheus. She, too, is a culture hero. Secondly, the swallow can be considered as one of the archetypes of Mongolian culture. Because archetype of culture describes the existence of human life [10].

Borte-Chino was one of the sacred protectors whom the Mongols worshipped in the ancient times. S.Yu. Neklyudov in his dictionary “The legends and fairytales of world nations” translated the word Borte-Chino as “Gray Wolf”. In materials in Sakha language the words ‘borte’, ‘bolto’ mean black ornamental patterns on the front foots of the wolf. Also calling the wolf “bori, boru, bory” in Sakha in the ancient times was connected with black ornamental patterns on the front foots of wolf. The fact that both of ‘Borte-Chino and his wife Hoo Maral’ in “Secret Pedigree of Mongols” were protectors for worshipping for some tribes is seen in many historic compositions [2, 154 p.].

G.D. Bayaliyeva in her work about Kyrgyz's' belief before Islam says that the totem of the ancient Turkic and Mongols was a wolf and also gives G.Potanin's research about the ancestors of the tribe Bersyd whose creation began from a boy who was born from a deer and a wolf which lived near one lake. It is not a simple coincidence that the name of the tribe Bersyd is called closer to the name of tribe Besud in 119th, 120th, 138th data of “Secret Pedigree of Mongols”.

If we observe Mongolian heritage from stone pictures to customs and traditions, and samples of literature compositions, we can notice that they worshipped deer as sacred. For instance wide spread legend in Mongolia about a deer which flies with help of his horns, similar to the another legend about three deer stars. The ancient legends about creation of the sky and the stars, characterizes animals from one side and from the other side they characterize humans. Probably they describe stage when people slightly become more humane after primitive level.

Significant place have legends and myths in Kazakh and Mongolian culture about creation of environment, flora and fauna.

Academic A. Veselovski wrote about 3 stages of transformation into plant. In the first level nature and man are presented equally. A human can be born from any plant or animal. Scientists proved that this is a reflection of totemic concepts. Secondly, a man transfers into a plant. In the third stage in the grave grows up a flower or a tree. This is symbol of spirit's revival in other form.

If Kazakh culture has myths about transformation of human's body parts and blood into a plant, Mongols have myths about human's whole body's transformation into a plant.

Mongol people have myths explaining how trees such as Christmas trees, willows and spruce always stay green. According to myth when a crow was bringing eternal water from God, it accidently poured water to trees and since then trees always stay green. There is another version: ‘To Sulkharnai was brought the water of eternity. But the king said that he doesn't want to live forever without his relatives, if he drinks it then he will regret it forever and poured the water. Some splashes of that water touched some trees and since then some trees stay green in all seasons. However, in Kazakh culture this myth was changed slightly. Since Kazakhs rejected Shamanism and became Muslim, they accept color of tress as Allah's miracle. There are Kazakh versions which are described in Islamic manner, stating that Alexander or Lukhpan Khakim was in search of water of eternity. The secret of usage of crow in the legend is related with long life ability of crows. According to Mongol legend, the God gave a crow water of eternity. It tried the water and wanted to take it with him. But when he was sitting in a tree an owl shouted and crow accidently split the water. After this, those trees had quality to stay green all seasons.

In the other myth of Mongols water life is brought by swallow. But a mosquito made a trap to it, and a swallow poured the water. A. Belosludev stated one Kazakh legend where Alexander king searched the water of eternity. Spirits helped him and he got the water. The king thought that after drinking the water

he will live for thousands years. But he was not sure for his future, and he decided to live a life which was given him by God. He left this water in the branch of a tree. But a crow came and pecked up this ware. After this crow began living till thousand and trees began to stay green all seasons.

There is another version about alive water. King Alexander was carrying the alive water and stopped at larch tree to rest and felt asleep. At that time raven poked the bottle and made a hole in it. Hence all water poured out. A fox licked the left amount in the ground. Since then foxes live long until their fur is white and ravens also live long because they also drank the water.

There is a myth about how trees fought for living on the earth, in N.Minjanuli's book 'Kazakh Mythical Legends'. «'Very long time ago trees like pine, saxaul all grew together on Greenland. But they used to fight for the land. Nobody could get in between them. Poplar advised with other trees and sent hurricane to this place. Saxaul tree ran away from wind and went to a desert. Pine tree ran away from water and went to the mountains. Saxaul was a good rifleman, and shot many arrows towards a pine tree. After this, these arrows stayed in it as its branches. Pine tree also shot his arrows to saxaul, and they left spots in the body of saxaul. From then these two trees can never get along. Since then, one of the trees lives in desert and other lives in mountains. The green land was left to poplars and other trees' [7].

In Mongol culture there are two kinds of tales about trees quarrel. In Kazakh culture alder and a birch had arguments, meadowsweet was gossip, but in Mongol elm and pine-tree didn't get along. An elm is a gossip in that tale. In the end elm ends up at the desert and pine-tree tree ends up in the mountains [7].

Time passes by and myths are changed according to time requirements. Each age has its own truth; hence truth is changed according to time. If it is related with human qualities, if it has enough power, then it is spread in the form of myth. In this case, basis of this history and people in that are usually forgotten and only its part related to truth is remembered. This case is peculiar to Kozy and Baian legends. In some times there happened a story with geo political event which was important for that time, but only the part related to eternal truth is memorized. The love of a young girl and a boy who sacrificed their lives in the sake of love, since the love is eternal [8]. Through the quarrel of trees we can see nomadic life which fought for the land.

The ancient myths and legends are like significant signs of initial people. From their symbolic content people comprehended and achieved their environment and time. Kasymzhanov states: 'Mythology is the initial indivisible form of thinking peculiar to primitive people. It includes elements of poetry and science, religion and moral, rational influences» [9, p.26].

Concluding this paper, we can state that through analysis of symbolic meaning of those animals and plants in myths of Kazakhs and Mongols which give us comprehension about world perception of the universe construction, we can find out conceptual ideas and answers for our questions concerning their life philosophy.

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