

FEATURES OF PRE-ISLAMIC BELIEFS IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract

In this article we have described the role of ancient turkish beliefs in kazakh nation's worldview, and features of turkish beliefs formation and principles, history of it's birth on kazakh territory.

The concept of tengri deeply was investigated and submitted opinions of various scientists to the reader's attention. Along with that, we have expounded about the role of tengrinism in kazakh nation's history and in the present lifestyle. Also, deeply was discussed about elements and customs of tengrinism, were submitted complete assessment of them. It was described about connection of the history of Kazakh customs and traditions which remained as national customs and belief of tengrinism. We tried to tell more about belief of tengrinism, it's importance and role for nomad people, and about role of harmony with nature for population of step.

Key words: *Turkish worldview, tengri, tengrinism, earth-water, Umai, Kut, aruak, spirit, Kazakh's belief.*

Introduction

Kazakh nation is peculiar nation which has peculiar history and established system of values. Kazakh land is saint land where located many nations and nationalities also interweaved different cultures and religions. Kazakh nation considered as nomad, has amazing world view. Because this great land has obtained their own system owing to building their own traditions and establishing their own vision non depending on strong neighbors as China. Iran, Byzantine Empire, India. Because Kazakh nation was not only part of Turkic culture, also Kazakh nation has one of founder's role of turkic world. Prior to Islam religion has come to Kazakhstan territory there were different cultural groups. But the system of tengrianism has remained peculiar trace for Kazakh nation and till present times still remains as one of a native culture.

The evidence is as digging works' (archaeological) findings, also ancient Turkic writings, and national traditions and ceremonies, beliefs, legends and folk-tale characters which can describe ancient Kazakh nation's world-vision. Memorial stones and writings and drawings carved on

stones and mountains gives us clear picture of our history. Bases on scientific researches we can see that ancient tengrianism and shamanism influenced the way of life Kazakh nation.

Nomad people has acquired superstitious beliefs, traditions and rituals in connection with real life, routine activity and lifestyle. It is not connected with fantasy and imagination of people. On the contrary we can see that reason and purpose of many traditions and beliefs are comprehensible. We can connect the worship to Tengri (God, The Creator), water, earth with a gratitude to nature. And we consider that it is result of willingness and desire to thank The Creator who took care of simple people, in difficult times presented them food. Such a discovery of truth brought them to logic belief that some kind of power from above (heaven) helps them and care about them. It seems logical that ancient turkic race called the highest summit of mountain which they knew as Khan Tengri. It was conserved till nearest past connecting the signification of human being with spiritual appearance with heaven. Kazakh nation was worshiped to Tengri which was the Almighty in his own understanding. It was conditioned or caused by their careful scrutiny of celestial as the Almighty and using the sky as identification of nomadic movements' direction.

1. World view issues in ancient Turkic area

We can say that the Tengrianism is much more evolutionally developed kind of system among ancient natural religions, because it has conception of "one creator" which was initiator of monotheismic religions. According to scientific arguments, information from calendares of Manchuria, China and ancient Arabic and Iranian writings, turkic statues found in VI-X serves as the evidences of existence of tengrianism. However, about tengrianism Kazakh scientists opinions are different, some of them say that tengrianism is completely religious system, other say that it is only world view, which is not belong to full-blown religion. Nevertheless, it is necessary to investigate deeply the reasons of appearance of those elements which belong to Kazakh nation such as conception of seven generations, clan, absolutely prohibition of matrimony between relatives up to 7 generations, history of Islam religion spreading, the world view of nomad nation on terms of cognizing world. Professor Baitenova N.Zh., wrote in her proceedings: – "According to summary of researchers of tengri eurasian nomadic peasantry is described as a belief which is suitable for necessity of cultural types, i.e., it comes from real life-style and perception of world [1]. Akataev S.N wrote: "He (Tengri) –is phenomenon which was created gradually as a result of different beliefs, worship to nature and it's elemental forces and distorted description of nature. Basic concept of tengrianism is natural philosophy hylozoism which considers that all things and events in the world are animated, finally it is foundation of pantheism which consider that nature is The God" [2]. We can say that the Tengrianism is much more evolutionally developed kind of

system among ancient natural religions, because it has conception of “one creator” which was initiator of monotheistic religions. Also, we cannot call it as a religion because as mentioned by professor Ayupov N., in tengrianism there is no peculiar attributes such as sacred writings, prophets, priests. According to scientific arguments, information from calendares of Manchuria, China and ancient Arabic and Iranian writings, turkic statues found in VI-X serves as the evidences of existence of tengrianism. Stone plates found in Upper Yenisei area it is drawn group of people in moment of their praying to Tengri painted by painter of those times. Influence to Kazakh nations worldview and system of perception comes from tight connection and dependence of nomadic people on nature and environment, and main idea of Tengrianism is not fear or considering objects of nature (stone and mountains) as the God, but believing that every nature’s object has sacredness and believing that these objects have spirit and in case of establishing relationship with them, these objects will response you. Feeling that nature has spirit, but perception that there has a creator who is observing and governing all around, but he is not fully known and he has no clear definition. He is the Tengri. Johannes de Pian del Carpine has stated that Turkic people believe in a God and added : “besides they pray to sun, moon, fire, and before taking food and water during breakfast they woship to water and earth who presented them these aliments”. Kirgizstan citizen, scientist-philosopher Omuraliev Choiun in his proceeding named “Tengrianism” has proved that worldview of turkic nations is not just a tale that came from fantasy of people, but a cognitive system which is closely interwoven with nature and not only condition of believing but a moral, cultural and economical doctrine which served as foundation of nomadic civilization [3]. As well as Kazakhstan scientis Nikonov A.Yu in his proceeding “Altun Bitig. Tengrianism” (ancient turkic myths conserved by oral and written commitment of world turkic nations)[4] described starting from symbolic substantiation of tengrianism till patterns of religios theories survived till present times. Videlicet, ancient worldview which we call tengrianism contains animism, fetishism, totemism which are elements of ancient beliefs. Because in world of nomad people each object has definite role and purpose of being. There was nothing left without attention, all animals were esteemed, nothing was wasted without purpose, it was strictly conserved principle that each thing has value, people were obliged to return everything received from nature, believed that otherwise The Tengri of heaven will be angered, each object is considered as part of whole world. “Everything has spirit, if spirit is not satisfied living people cannot achieve success”, this conception if still very popular among kazakh nation. Probably worship to ancestries existing from ancient times, (from times of formation of tengrianism) because giving meal to all relatives and neighbours for favour of died ancestries or relatives, sacrificing animals (killing animal and preparing food, treat relatives, friends and neighbours) for

favour of “aruaks” (spirit of died people) is one of the bright phenomenon of the tengrianism. The proverb "While deads are not satisfied, the living people will not gain success" is also sample of tengmrianism. “Aruak” is a spirit of died people. The word “Aruak” has figurative meanings as – strength, energy, breath, and plural form of word “spirit” [5]. Praying to aruak – inspiration through praying to spirit of people who considered to be saint according to their any special achievements during his life, shows tryings of people for ancestral responsibility. Among kazakh people praying to arual is widely popular, if we refer to history, we can find that before leaving for war the warriors organised meal for favour of aruaks and took blessings of elders and made war cry “Aruak, protect me!”. Tradition of praying to aruak is has social importance in breeding youth in sence of responsibility, to increase their sence of partiotism and will stay as it is in future. There is a belief that “Kazakh people usually consider that their parents aruaks are sacred”. [6].

2. Turkic beliefs principles (foundation) and their characteristics of formation

As to tengrianism principles according to ancient beliefs of Turkish nations all processes on space are governed by ninety nine tengries. Turkish called Tengri of heaven but they don't mean material object. Heaven as a epithet of mystery and creation. As well as the tegnri also water and earth are objects of worship for Turkic nations. Earth –water and the Tengri are source of survival and foundations supplementing each other. Body of human made from ground (earth) but soul is gifted by The Tengri. Turkic name of spirit is Khut. When human is born The Tengri gives the khut to his body. The protector and guard of khut in child's body is – Umai. These three creators are very important in Turkic pantheon. It is written “Heaven, creator Umai, saint earth-water, we need to recognize that they presented us the win” on memory of Tonykok. But in view of goodness earth-water and Umai are not equal to Tengri, they are considered as Gods of middle world. Life and destiny of human is depended only on Tengri, that's why Turkic nations pray to earth-water and Umai asking for much favour and protection. Favour means to give to human's destiny to good direction, means that destiny and predetermination are on Tengri's hand. The Tengri is not dependant on anything for it's activities and choice, but it's sentence is always fair. The Tengri will punish those who didn't keep their swear and went unjust. Such people's soul will go to down to lower world. In lower world governs Yerlik. The tengri executes punishment which suitable and assigned for everybody. In below world there is a river of Toimadim which never filled with tears of punished people. Yerlik is described as terrible, frightful. Despite that in Turkic nations belief has no conception of hades and sin but it is obvious that they had clear conception of that The Tengri will reward or punish each people according to their deeds [7].

If we compare with world religions we see that in tengrianism had no necessity to build big and ceremonial prayer houses. The Tengri didn't required from Turkic nations to pray everyday or to visit prayer houses. Also tengrianism had no canonized lectures (prayer). But in the mornings the Turkic were awakening and remembering The Tengri and asking him to protect and help, to bless their deeds. The Turkic Tengri requires from human to be active and energetic. Each turkic man must serve to his family, to his nation, and government, it is only way to pay out his duties. It is not only moral duties, but also social-legal conception. Conception of duties served as Turkic nations' and government's fundament. Duty – not only a mystery which is connecting The Tengri and Turkic people, it is also instrument of harmony and development. Ogdilmish –is a image of person who understand it deeply. Such a attitude to life was handed over to each generation of Eurasian nations' during many centuries.

The scientist K. Karamanuli listed below peculiar characters of tengrianism in his proceeding called "Bowling to Tengri": Religion of Tengri – is a national religion created by world view of our nation, worship to nature, treating the Sky (heaven) as grandfather, earth as mother, praying to aruak, respecting and following to examples of people with strong courage. The Tengri (heaven) – is a sacred power which created whole the world. It does not require everyday praying. The followers of tengrinism pray and worship to aruak only if they have definite problems. The tengrianism has it's own traditions and custom such as worship to Tengri, making sacrifice, giving meal for ancestor's aruak and etc. Also when they wake up they bowed to east, it is compulsory. Followers of tengrianism have their own holidays such as Nauriz (New Year in Spring), celebration of first horses milking, celebration of end of harvesting, celebration of winter butchering (slaughter), and customs as treating the Wednesday as sacramental day and etc. The Tengrinism has no such rules as angels and prophets which "are conveying the God's will" and has no conception of "sin", "hades", "destiny". Has no necessity of gathering people and organizing rituals of worship to God such as in church, mosque, cloister. The Tengri is in heart of everyone. Telling your wishes and desires to tengri, praying, entreatment, is made according to everyone's own will. Tengrianism has no religious fanaticism, because the followers of tengrianism keep the principle that "The Tengri is common for all nations in the world, and each nation respect their own ancestors. The people are appreciated according to their intellectual capacity, honesty and human being. The tengrianism is propagandizing the honesty and human being. The followers of tengrianism are obliged to fulfill 3 duties. They are-duties before the Tengri, parents and next generation. Vision of tengrianism , is not consists in accepting austerity, it is a happiness of living, not consider the life is temporarily, the life is considered as whole world, understanding of relationship between the creator and human, principles of tengrinism to establish

life. [8]. Professor Ayupov N., who researched the tengrinism deeply, named 3 periods of this belief such as formation, development and transformation to other religions. We can suppose that such advantages of shaman to be choosen by spirits and prophecy , that is prediction of future events is played important role in formation of idea of prophet in other world religions. Also perception of the tengri as pure spirit is also influence of shamanism. In common we could say that, the roots of idea of creator-god is coming from worship to nature, perception of nature as creator, and worship to nature's aruak and spirit. Kazakh nation consider the tengri as mystery. Mystery is sacred secret stands unattainably high for human, that cannot be reached by human intellect. In philosophy the mystery is called transcendentalism. Mystery means that nature and world are infinite. The human becomes confluent with nature through mystery, feels in harmony with nature, try not only observe the nature but also understand, thus puts learning and understanding of nature higher than cognition of mystery. The human realize his powerlessness when face the mystery . The turkic acknowledge the tengri as powerful creator which has gave harmony to whole world, but it is not humility and resignation., because the tengri gives freedom to human, the conception that if in this life you worship to the God , you will be in paradise in that life is not existing in tengrinism, the tengrinism do not stimulate human to stay inactive saying "what will be will be", because fatalism is alien phenomenon for tengrinism. «Everlasting heaven , - said L.N.Gumilev, not only for giving help, also require from the believers to be active". The tengrianism teach people to be in charge for their activities, behaviour, and intention and purposes. If turkic people are lucky and achieved success they say "The tengri favoured and protected" , if they made wrong things and erred they say "Forgive me tegnri". [9].

According to this belief every event and object has sacred owner. Also, Kazakh nation has conception which is conserved till present days. According to ancient legends the world consists of 3 degrees: higher, middle and lower worlds. All these there worlds are depending on the Tengri. The evidence is that ancient people sacrificed animals, sheep or cow, horse or camel for achieving protection and blessing of Tengri. The meat of killed animal divided into 3 parts, 1st part, head of the animal hanged to upper place, it was for upper world, 2nd part was cooked and feed to relatives, friends and neighbours, it is for miidle world, 3rd part are bones of animal, buried to place which is not stepped by people, that's for lower world. Also was very important that sacrificed animal was to be healthy, well bred and not old, appearance is to be good, if animal does not meet these requirements it was not suitable for sacrificing.

3.The role of Turkic beliefs on Kazakh nations worldview

In ancient tukic-mongolian beliefs heaven and earth both considered as tengri. Moldabekov M.,

wrote: “Ancient Turkic worshipped to both to heaven (they called heaven Tengri) and to earth (earth-water)”[10]. That’s why on tombstones and monuments and chronicles often mentioned heaven and earth together. For example sentences such as: „With support of tengri and earth, we subdued the kerei clan”, “sacred and saint which have tasted golden sherbet from tengry earth”, “it is right to worship to heaven”, “energized from heaven and earth” [11] and etc.

Gumilev (1912 - 1992) confirms that ancient Chinese had concept of heaven tengri similar with Turkish concept. [12].

Ancient Chinese, Egypt, Rome, Mesopotamia countries had also belief about heaven tengri. These countries’ rulers usually called son of heaven, son of sun, child of sky. According to this myth the Tengri which created heaven and earth , left the earth , and went to heaven. That’s why he is called high heaven that is heaven tengri.

Religious beliefs explains appearance of authority and government, ruling capacity along with common world and give them characteristic of mystery. We can say that it is typical for all ancient nations. It can be also proved by investigation of ancient Turkic facts. In Orkhon-Enesai writings along with facts about main characters also written about facts of Turkic beliefs, statehood, principles and methods of ruling by government, concepts of human law. According to them, after the heaven and earth and human between them was created , authority and ruling in human community was committed to turkic khans. The Khans made laws of turkic governments. The main duty of khan –to ensure stability and development (prosperity) in state. The core purpose of these written heritages are authority and unity of nation. The authority is granted by tengri. The tengri is patron and protector of not only Khan but also of Turkic nation. The ruler governs in compliance with the requirements of the tengri, the ruler which achieved the authority must remember the duties before the tengri . And also the tengri require from Turkic nations to serve faithfully to the ruler. The acknowledgement of The ruler’s authority gifted from Tengri by people put the authority of ruler to level of sacred. The issues of government, nation, authority, leadership and subjection in ancient Turkic writings deeply discussed in proceeding of Zhusip Balasagun “Kutti bilik”. That’s why we can consider this proceeding as an important memory of ancient Turkic law.

The word “Kut” which often used in Turkic government title not limited only meaning of happiness and wealth. In Kazakh language it is also used in meaning energy and strength. But, if we turn to ancient literature we can see it’s meaning is little different, because “kut” gifted to Kagan (The ruler) by Tengri’s power. The present synonym of “kut” is “bak” - success. But who gained “kut” must recognize it and must realize/arrange it properly. He must keep kut with strong hand in order to not lose it, and use it for serving to government and nation, to strengthen the

nation and government and for their development. Such task before kagan requires him to be strong, brave, indefatigable, ambitious, knowledge, judiciousness, equity and fairness. All these qualities accepted as the will and precept of the Tengri. If Kagan do not care about nation, if nation do not subordinate to kagan then turkic nation will become weak, will loose the solidity, kut will leave them. The main precondition of nation is unity. The advantage of Turkic nation was that they deeply admitted this precondition, what is also showed Turkic nation's political and legal consciousness has achieved high degree, and it was their peculiarity. Zhusip Balasagun described this idea by method of comparation of Ogdilmish and Odgurmish. Ogdilmish who devoted his intellect and prudence to social and governmental interests, suggested to his friend from childhood Odgurmish a position if ruling system and to serve to his nation. But Odgurmish didn't accepted his proposal , on the contrary tried to prove the advantage of his own practice and lifestyle. Odgurmish was follower of asceticism and very soon he has got sick and died. Ogdilmish has devoted all his life and talents , his power and energy for developing his nation and government. Principle of Ogdilmish is same with living (vital) philosophy of ancient Turkic nation. The meaning and purpose of human's life in creativity and labour, in turning the environment to shining world. The scientist who investidated tengrinism M.Adji wrote "Turkic religion has entered it's signature not only in step, but in whole europian culture" [13].

The worship to heaven and earth-water appeared as a result of everlasting duty of human before nature, and willing of human to thank the gods and patrons for kindness and goodness of providing food and protecting from hunger and elemental forces. The knowledge and experience from real life established their conception about a powerful world of heaven which can help them. Ancient turkic called the highest summit Khan Tengri. For ancient Turkic nation it is not occasional to name the highest summit as Khan Tengri. As we can see the Tengri is not only God which has sacred meaning, but also the creator of all around. .. The role of Umai is described as given birth to human. In place of Bilykol in Zhamul oblast was found a monument, it is alike a plates found in Kudirgyn where were imaged turkish people praying to Tengri and Umai couple. It shows that importance of role of tengri and Umai is increased [14].

Kazakh people considered that everything in the world including animals, birds, each house, each person even insects has their own owner-spirit. As shown in reseraches of S.A.Tokarev each clan has their own patron, means that have power which is called "mos" and which accompanied them. And spirit of died people are becoming "kormos", but without connection [15].

"Spirit o heaven", "Spirit of earth-water", "Spirit of mountain" and etc., according to definition of L.P.Potapov "worship to mountains, earth-water, and heaven is connected with clannish property, professional stylelife " [16]. It is not honouring the scared aruak of mountains, rivers, lakes, but

honouring the mountains, rivers, lakes itself, we can see worship not to spirit of nature, but to nature itself as to alive object. It is called animatism, it is an ancient type of animistic view [17]. In common, animatism was fundament of all modern religious systems and from simple phenomenon turned to complex system.

In Kazakh traditions and customs we see that after Islam religion was entered into kazakh steps the characteristic of tengrianism has been changed, it's initial meaning and found harmony along with islam. But tengrianism still used in routine traditions and customs of kazakh nation. But as we already mentioned it is conserved not as religion but as traditions and customs. Some customs are combined or get along together with islam religion, such as wearing "tumar" (amulet, talisman), in ancient times each clan was wearing sign of their own totem, later this custom turned to new version such as wearing claw and teeth of animals (mostly wolves and bears, tigers, lions) and claw of birds, plumes of eagle-owl and etc., as a protection from jinx and whammy. At the present times, it is popular to keep in amulet a piece of paper where it is written ayah (fragments from Koran). As an evidence we can refer to ancient writings where it is mentioned about "kirgiz or kazakh women wear triangular amulet with fragments of ayah written inside. They believe that it will protect them from misfortune" [18].

4.Conclusion

Analyzing many proceedings about history of ancient Turkic beliefs on Kazakh territory, we can gain understanding of Kazakh nation's essence and principles, and our culture's pricelessness. It is a big achievement to make travel to history of your fore fathers, to understand their essence through investigation of history. Islam religion is developing in Kazakh territory during more than 10 centuries, it is peculiar quality of Kazakh nation, becoming followers of Islam and being the Hanafites, they continued keeping the best of their own customs. Harmony and tolerance were always actual for Kazakh nation. Nowadays Kazakh nation consider themselves as followers of Islam from beginning of world, but each Kazakh agrees that ancient Turkic culture is important. The culture of our turkic forefathers cultivated in heredity of Kazakh nation braveheartness, respect to parents, responsibility before environment and nature, to harmony with nature what is very important for nomad's lifestyle. Tengrianism left big trace in history of Kazakh nation as well as later shamanism, zoroastrism continued to do. It is not a picture of only one religion, it is a synthesis of belief system. It is interweaved with ruling policy and ideology of tengri. Kazakh national holiday "Nauriz", which is celebrated as beginning of new year shows that Kazakh nation had knowledge of science's world such as astronomy, astrology and had a tight connection with environment and nature. As often meet in historical writings and facts, in folklore literature the

aulie (Saint), baksi (shaman), saint temples (build on died people's grave) are important. It is obvious and moreover historical fact that Kazakh people had knowledge of treatment (medical), forecasting the weather and natural disasters and achieved progress in farming and live stock farming. It is not result of magic or incantation but evidence of civilization and knowledge of nature's language. The ancient belief which is a fundament of monotheist religions, nowadays still has been survived, and despite the acceptance of Islam religion, in society still considered as a nonseparable history of Kazakh nation in frame of worldview and historical culture.

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