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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. At the age of unity of mythology of the person with the nature it was highly appreciated. 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.

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1. Introduction

Kazakh and Mongol's ancestor's mythological world perception is interrelated with world culture. Representatives of structuralism cultural studies (Propp, 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 Turkic and Mongolian nations

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concepts about creation of the universe, including Kok Tangri (Blue Sky), Zher-Su (Ground, Water) and Umay Ana (Mother Umay) have been established from the earliest times. Concept of totemic origination is the significant core of world perception which means internal harmony of a man and nature. Scientists refer concept of origination both to a human, and either to whole universe and to the three worlds (upper, middle, the subland). For example upper is the world of Gods, middle is the world of the person, subland is the world of demons. As nomads relate each type of animals with one element: sheep is associated with fire, camel with ground, horse with wind, cow with water. These elements are the signs of the universe creation: cow is a symbol of death and the other world, camel is symbol of the ground, goat is symbol of chaos and emptiness. Later these traditional totemic concepts had been changed, but some of their elements were left in the mind of people. In mythology meaning of sacredness has man's biological life, his birth and death. The first division of a society was sexual division. On this basis it was formed one of absolute images, independent from time, concept of initial parents. If in religious perception Adam and Eve were created by God, in mythology they were originated from nature. Mythology covered the ancient culture of all nations and all ethnical groups. Scientists of Turkic Mongolian cultures confirm that matriarchy was the main way of social construction in Eurasian steppe for a long times. 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. Scientist in religious studies Mircea Eliade stated that mythological idea system finds a way to hearts at once. A man becomes positive, he gets inspired, simple man feels himself in unity with the nature, and he feels that he is responsible for essence and feels himself eternal. 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.

2. Features of myths about the Universe and a Man

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 (Tserensodnom, 1987, p.39). 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 (Qodar , p.17). Yung (2005) 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. 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 (Seven Thieves) 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 behind the Zheti Karakshi all night long. According to the most widespread

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